

THE PERSISTENCE OF *IWETO* MARRIAGE AMONG THE
AKAMBA CHRISTIANS OF KANGUNDO DISTRICT,
MACHAKOS COUNTY, KENYA

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DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

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DEDICATION

To my late mother Elizabeth Mumbua Kilonzo. Her conviction on the importance of education ensured my earlier education.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AIC:	African Inland Church
AIDS:	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome.
AIM:	African Inland Mission
CC:	Catholic Church
DC:	District Commissioner
FGD:	Focus Group Discussion
HIV:	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
K I E:	Kenya Institute of Education
KM:	Kilometers
SA:	Salvation Army
UNICEF:	United Nations Children Fund
USAID:	United States Agency for International Development

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. Christian: A person who attends Church regularly or occasionally and believes or professes to be a follower of Christ.
2. Female husband: A woman who marries another woman to bear children on her behalf.
3. Marriage: This is a relationship between a woman and another person, (male or female, real or envisioned) which provides that a child born is accorded full birth status and rights common to all the members of the other person's clan.
- 4 Positive elements: These are the beliefs and practices within the Akamba religio-cultural system which do not compromise or contravene Christian teaching and are life- giving.

ABSTRACT

For centuries, a woman marrying another woman has globally been practiced. This study has focused on woman to woman marriage among the Akamba Christian of Kangundo district, Machakos County. This form of marriage is referred to as *Iweto* marriage, (plural *Maweto*). It is observed that *Iweto* marriage is contrary to Christian teaching where marriage is between man and woman thus exclusively monogamous. The purpose of the study was to establish the factors behind the persistence of the *Iweto* marriage among the Akamba of Kangundo District, Kenya. The study had four specific objectives. First, to examine the significance of the *Iweto* marriage among the Akamba of Kangundo. Second, to identify the changes that have taken place in the marriage and establish the reasons for the changes. Third, to establish the factors that continue to sustain the *Iweto* marriage among the Akamba Christians of Kangundo. Fourth, to assess the response of the Christians towards the *Iweto* marriage. The study employed descriptive-statistical research design. Data were collected from primary and secondary sources. Questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussions were used to generate the required data. Simple random sampling procedure, purposive sampling method and snowball techniques were employed to select the respondents and the three locations for the study. A total sample of 102 respondents were interviewed. The locations selected were Kangundo, Kakuyuni and Kawethei. The respondents included *Maweto*, female husband, pastors, priests, church members, clan elders, local administrators. Data analysis comprised qualitative and simple quantitative method. The data was analyzed and discussed using Maslow's Hierarchy of need theory (1970) and Shorter theory of culture change (1973). Maslow looks at behavior as a product of need while Shorter observes that some aspects of culture are easily changed depending on their level in the culture. This conceptual framework helped to provide a comprehensive perception of the persistence of the *Iweto* marriage despite the influence of Christianity. The research findings revealed that several factors are responsible for the persistence of the *Iweto* marriage in Kangundo. However all these factors point towards a net work of traditional beliefs and practices which still influence the local social economic sphere. It was evident that women's life in Kangundo is still controlled by laid down patriarchal structures which are created, maintained and perpetuated by the society. It was established that adherence to the traditional beliefs and practices has not changed much with the coming of Christianity. The study concluded that, *Iweto* marriage is one of the preferred options available for women without sons though it contravenes Christian teaching. The society has not come to terms with other available solutions such as adoption hence without a suitable substitute, resistance to change is inevitable. It was noted that the Christians face several challenges as they respond to the *Iweto* marriage. The study observes that there are certain cultural practices like *Iweto* marriage that cannot be discarded by the society without giving a suitable alternative hence the need to add Christian values to the practice and to give the society more time to acknowledge the alternative.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1. Background to the Study

The future of the human society and the church relies heavily on the family. The family is the basic social unit that forms the fundamental building block of the society. In African traditional society, the family is an important institution which is highly respected and everything possible is done to ensure that the institution continues to grow. This way, the society's future is assured.

The family institution is deeply rooted in marriage for it is within marriage that individuals lawfully exercise their procreative rights (Magesa, 1997:115) and the family is extended. Marriage is also an important rite of passage intended to make a significant change in the state of the individual and the family as a whole. According to Mbiti (1975:104), marriage is central in the African culture; It fulfills the obligation, the duty and the custom that every normal person should get married and bear children. Marriage is not optional, everyone must participate in it. Mbiti further observes that marriage and procreation are closely related for marriage unites all the members of the community, the dead, the living and those to be born. Without procreation, marriage is incomplete. Burke (1999:110) concur with Mbiti that the unity of the marriage bond comes second after procreation. This is an indication that children are very important to the African family. This study, in concurrence

with Mbiti (1975:106) observes that, through different forms of marriage procreation was assured. The different forms of marriage in African traditional society ensured that no one was left out of marriage and that children were produced for each family concerned. The importance attached to procreation is, therefore, reflected in the development of different forms of marriages in Africa. These forms of marriage include monogamous marriage, polygamous marriage, ghost marriage, child marriage, and woman to woman marriage which is the focus of this study.

Globally, woman to woman marriage has been practised. While writers like Patricia (1992) and Jagga (1993) have shared the awareness of women marrying other women, their views have varied. In Western civilization, when a woman marries another woman and engages in sexual activity, this is referred to as lesbianism. Patricia (1992) and Jagga (1993) note that the two women marry because they are in love and sexual activities are part of the relationship.

In the African context, woman to woman marriage exists as a means of ensuring the continuity of a household in the absence of a son. According to Amadiume (1987) and Cadigan (1998), ethnographic studies have revealed that woman to woman marriages have been documented in more than 30 ethnic groups in Africa. Examples include the Igbo and Yoruba (Nigeria), Bamileke (Cameroon), Lobedu and Zulu (South Africa), Shona (Zimbabwe) and Bemba (Zambia). Amadiume observes that a wealthy Igbo woman

without a son can play the role of a husband by marrying another woman to provide a son and an heir to her property. In Yoruba, a daughter can raise children in her father's name if the father did not have a son. She is seen as a male daughter. Among the Zulu and lobedu, the marriage is common among traditional healers and diviners. One may use the wealth earned from divination to marry a wife then assumes control over her and her offspring. Cadigan notes that a lobedu widow without a son may use the cattle coming to her house from a daughter's marriage to marry another wife and provide an heir to her house while among the Shona, Bamileke and Bemba; an elderly woman may marry a young girl to beget children on her behalf.

Records in Encarta Reference Library (Marriage, 2003 and 2005) show that, woman to woman marriages have been noted in 14 different ethnic groups in Eastern Africa. These include the Nuer and Dinka of Sudan, the Baganda of Uganda. In Kenya, they include the Nandi, the Luo, the Luhya, the Kikuyu, the Meru, the Gusii, the Kuria, and the Akamba. (Appendix 3: Map no: 1 and Map no: 3). In all the above ethnic groups, the main objective is to provide an heir on behalf of the other woman. This way, the lineage is maintained.

This study focused on the persistence of woman to woman marriage commonly referred to as *Iweto* among the Akamba. The elderly woman *mwaitu*, unable to have an heir marries another younger woman *Iweto*. Amadiume (1987:31) uses the term 'female husband' to refer to such a woman. *Mwaitu* is seen as a husband in the sense that she provides food,

shelter, identity, and any other material support the family may require. A close relative like a nephew is identified to have children with the *Iweto*.

Children are highly valued among the Akamba and marriage is not complete until procreation has taken place. Failure to give birth especially to a boy puts the marriage in a state of uncertainty. This is because the Akamba traditional society is patriarchal in structure. Women are assigned the role of nurturing and are expected to bring new members to the society. The study notes that in the traditional African society, a woman status is based on procreation. The fact that man has a role to play in procreation and in determination of the sex of a child is ignored. In Kangundo, a woman who cannot give birth is humiliated and called unpleasant names. This is because she is an obstacle to the continuity of the society. Mbiti (1969:107) argues that traditionally “Failure to bear children is worse than committing genocide because one is not remembered after death” This is an indication of the magnitude of the problem.

The insults and humiliation of a barren woman are extended to her family of origin thus putting future marriages from such a home at stake. Men are discouraged from marrying from such a family for to them barrenness is a sign of a curse. Relations with the in-laws are strained and out of humiliation, the family may consult a medicine person (*Mundu Mue*) who may make some marks on her body then apply some herbs (*Thoo*).The family may also go

back to the family history to see if a taboo may have been broken. If so, several rituals are conducted to cleanse the family.

If all the above fail, there are several options, though all the option could happen at the same time. One option could be divorce but this is not encouraged. Second, a man can remedy the situation by raising children through polygyny. In the third option, the woman without a son can marry another woman to produce children on her behalf. This is what the Akamba's refer to as *Iweto* (plural –*Maweto*). This study established that this type of marriage is still practised, even by the professing Christians though it contradicts Christian teaching on marriage. In the Christian context, marriage is a union of one man and one woman primarily for human companionship. God said, (Genesis 2: 18-24)).

It is not good that man should be alone, I will make him a helper suitable for him ... For this cause, man will leave his mother and father and be united to his wife and they will become one flesh.

The issue of companionship features again in the books of Matthew (19:40), Mark (10:7), Ephesians (5:31). Based on the Scripture, this study deduced that marriage is God-ordained and is exclusively monogamous. The two sexes, male and female are involved in Christian marriage but procreation is not a fundamental feature of the marriage. This is an indication that marriage is not only for propagation of the human race. Paul in Ephesians (5:22-6:4) elevates Christian marriage by comparing Christ' relationship with the Church to the relationship between husband and wife. Christian marriage is,

therefore, both spiritual and physical. Paul emphasized on commitment love and loyalty which do not change with circumstances yet *Iweto* marriage is a reality in Kangundo. It is against this background that the researcher went to the field to find out the factors behind the persistence of *Iweto* marriage among the Akamba Christians despite their belief in Christian values about marriage.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Before the advent of Christianity in Kangundo, the Akamba practised different forms of marriage which included woman to woman marriage. When the missionaries arrived, they preached that, marriage is a holy union between a man and a woman. Mugambi (1989: 199) notes that; Christianity came with new teachings about marriage. Monogamy was the rigid rule and anything contrary was against God's will. Other types of marriage were seen as sinful unions and any Christian involved was expected to denounce such marriage or be ex-communicated from the Church. Today the situation is different. One who does not live within the community may think the *Iweto* marriage has ceased to exist but for anyone who is in close contact with the community, it is a form of marriage accepted and is even practised by professing Christians, yet Christianity is one of the most important agents of change in rural communities in Africa, (Mbula: 1977:13). The main problem of study therefore was, to find out why the *Iweto* marriage has persisted among the Akamba Christians of Kangundo District despite over a hundred years of Christianity in Kangundo,.

1.2 Objectives

The study was undertaken with the following objectives.

- i. To examine the significance of the *Iweto* marriage among the Akamba of Kangundo.
- ii. To identify the changes that have taken place in the *Iweto* marriage and establish the reasons for the change.
- iii To establish the factors that continue to sustain the *Iweto* marriage among the Akamba Christians of Kangundo.
- iv. To assess the response of the Christians towards the *Iweto* marriage.

1.3 Premises

The following premises were formulated for the study.

- i. The *Iweto* marriage has a significant role among the Akamba of Kangundo.
- ii.The *Iweto* marriage has undergone certain changes as a result of Christianity.
- iii. Adherence to some traditional values and practices continue to sustain the *Iweto* marriage among the Akamba Christians of Kangundo.
- iv.Some Christians in Kangundo have continued to support the *Iweto* marriage.

1.4 Research Questions

Given the above, some fundamental questions arose pertaining to appropriate relationship between Christian teaching and Akamba marriage practices to day. This study sought to establish the following;

- i. What is the significance of *Iweto* marriage today?
- ii. What are the changes that have taken place in the *Iweto* marriage? What has brought the changes?
- iii. What are the factors that continue to sustain *Iweto* marriage today?
- iv. What is the response of the Akamba Christians towards the *Iweto* marriage?

1.5.1 Significance of the Study

This study will contribute to the literature on family and gender relations, value of children and status of women in Africa. This study raises the awareness of stakeholders and all those dealing with gender issues, of the existence of *Maweto* and the challenges they pose. The information that has accrued from this study is very useful and significant to future scholars who would like to further the study in this area. The study has isolated the main forces sustaining the marriage and noted that the boy child is still given priority when it comes to education and inheritance of property. It is hoped that the information gathered during this study will sensitize the parents and the brothers who are yet to embrace the Kenyan Succession Act, and consequently continue to deny their daughters and sisters their rights to inheritance.

The information from this study will be useful to church leaders, especially those who are missionaries in Kangundo. It will create awareness of the existence of the practice and why the marriage is still practised. This will

make them aware of the need to develop programmes to take care of women already in such marriages. It was noted that the changes that have taken place in the social and economic environment have affected the marriage hence the need to develop programmes aimed at empowering women to be economically independent. It is hoped that these programmes will reduce the chances of the *Maweto* being involved in sexual activities in order to get financial support for their families. The programmes will also reduce the chances of single mothers getting married to other women for economic gain.

The study looked at the adoption procedures in Kenya. The complexity of the procedures works against the method and this makes the *Iweto* marriage a friendlier alternative. It is hoped that this study will be useful to the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development to come up with special guidelines under which adoption can be considered and the procedure made affable.

1.5.2 Justification of the study

The study of *Iweto* marriage in Kangundo was necessary because of the following reasons. First, it is predominantly occupied by the Akamba community and the researcher had first-hand information through natural upbringing in the district and marriage in a family where the marriage is practised. Second, it was noted that a study on *Maweto* marriages in relation to Christianity has not been subjected to scholarly investigation in the region. Third, the African Inland Mission built a mission station in 1896 at Kangundo

before relocating to Mumbuni in 1902 (Bahemuka: 1982). Thereafter others churches including the Catholic Church and the Salvation Army Church moved in and by 1930, the districts had many churches, schools and health facilities. There is one district hospitals, four healthy centers, four dispensaries and a children's home, (Mutiso, O.I.11.9.2010). It was observed that these facilities are important in the dissemination of information related to childlessness. Lastly, the researcher noted that it is approximately about 63 Km from Nairobi Business District to Kangundo town. The district proximity to Nairobi, a metropolitan city gives it the advantage of early exposure to westernization. A study in the district not only enabled us to access the response of Christians on *Maweto* marriages but also helped us to examine the influence of modern methods of dealing with infertility and adoption of children as alternatives to *Maweto* marriage.

The implication of the changes noted in the marriage on the wellbeing of the *Iweto* has been highlighted. It was noted that the traditional structures that protected the marriage from abuse are no longer in place and the *Iweto* risks being infected with sexually transmitted diseases including HIV and AIDS which was not the case before. It was further noted that their male partners are mainly married persons hence their involvement with the *Iweto* endangers their families. This study notes that war against HIV and AIDS will be won if all loopholes are identified and sealed. Changes in the organization of *Iweto* marriage has been identified as a loophole. It is hoped that this information will be useful to those involved in HIV and AIDS prevention programmes in

Kangundo. The information can be used to sensitize the elders and local administrators for they are in charge of the traditional justice systems where family matters and land succession issues are most likely to be referred to than in formal courts.

1.6 Scope and limitation of the Study

The scope of this study covered the factors behind the persistence of the *Iweto* marriage among the Akamba Christians of Kangundo. The study also examined the changes that have occurred in the practice and the Christian response towards marriage. This study was limited to three divisions in Kangundo (Appendix 3: Map 2) and the findings were generalized to the Akamba Christians of Kangundo District. The study focused on two Churches in Kangundo, mainly the Salvation Army and the African Inland Church though the district has many other denominations. Different forms of marriage were noted in the district but this study focused only on the *Iweto* form of marriage.

1.7 Literature Review

1.7.1 Introduction

A lot has been written about the compatibility of Christianity and culture but very little attention has been given to some of the African cultural practices related to marriage and procreation. Previous studies done on some cultural practices in Ukambani by Ngundo (2000), Katola (1987), Kasomo (2000), just to mention a few, tend to have concentrated on witchcraft, taboos, and worship.

While Writers like Hastings (1973), Maillu (1988), Ndeti (1972), Shorter (1973), Hillman(1979) and Philips (1953) have shared their views on marriage in general and laid a lot of emphasis on polygamy, very little has been documented on woman to woman marriage yet this form of marriage continues to exist among the Akamba Christians of Kangundo. The practice is a traditional institution which is seen as natural hence normal and part of the Akamba culture. Based on the above context, many scholars have not given it much attention and this study attempted to bridge the gap in the study of cultural marriage and Christianity among the Akamba of Kangundo. Four categories of literature were reviewed based on the following themes:

- 1) Marriage and procreation.
- 2) Factors that contribute to a woman marrying another woman.
- 3) Christianity and Culture change.
- 4) Christianity and African cultural marriage

1.7.2 Marriage and Procreation

In African society, like many other traditional societies, marriage is associated with the growth and survival of the society. Ndeti (1972:67) notes that marriage is central in the life of the society for in marriage family relationships are formed, nurtured and different generation meet. Mbiti (1969:110) looks at marriage and notes that;

In African traditional society, marriage is not optional but a sacred duty and it is not complete until the wife gives birth especially to a boy child. Marriage and procreation are therefore inseparable. Unhappy is the woman who fails to get children for whatever other qualities she might possess.

Ndeti and Mbiti have made an attempt to illustrate the significance of marriage and its relation to procreation. Both gives marriage a spiritual dimension and pinpoints procreation as a distinctive quality which created a special status for a married woman. This study sought to show how the spiritual dimension contributed to the development of the *Iweto* marriage. The study also sought to find out whether procreation is the climax of marriage in modern society and if the male child still holds the earlier significance among the Akamba Christian of Kangundo.

Magesa (1997), Mutuku (2003), Hillman (1979), Hastings (1973) and Mugambi (1975) look at the significance of marriage and procreation. In their discussion, they concur with Mbiti that there is a strong relationship between marriage and procreation. Some forms of marriage mentioned by the scholars

include polygamous, levirate, child marriage and woman to woman marriage. They are there for life fostering purposes. In their discussion of different types of marriage, they seem to agree that each marriage type has its own advantage and disadvantage. All the above scholars have given a strong case for polygamous marriage but have not looked at woman to woman marriage in detail. This study sought to specifically examine *Iweto* marriage and to illustrate that this marriage is a means of ensuring that the childless woman's stream of life does not dry.

To fully understand the importance of *Iweto*, one needs to understand what childlessness meant to an African woman. Maillu (1988:3) refers to childlessness as a calamity. This is because a tree that does not bear fruits brings an end to its own kind. Every marriage calls for bearing of children and there is no marriage unless the fruits of the marriage can be seen. This is in agreement with Burke (2006:3) when he notes that the fact of a couple being childless brings with it immense suffering. Contrary, Bahemuka (1982:64) notes that "the birth of a child was the most welcome event among the Akamba. Failure to have a child overcome the unity of marriage and could easily lead to a divorce or different forms of marriage. She looks at the different types of marriage including *Iweto* marriage and notes that the underlying reason for the marriage is procreation. All the above scholars have highlighted the significance of procreation. This study examined *Iweto* marriage as a coping strategy to what would otherwise be in an indigenous Kamba worldview a disaster. The study sought to establish the significance of

the *Iweto* marriage in modern society. A recent high court ruling made in Mombasa by Justice Ojwang, noted that woman to woman marriage is valid according to Nandi customary law, (*Daily Nation*, 7.7.2011). His verdict concurs with study done on the Nandi community by Singoei and Choge (2006) who note that the Nandi customary laws recognize the marriage.

Other studies on the Gikuyu by Wairimu, O'Brien, William (2000) indicate that this marriage is accepted in these communities. They emphasize the social economic importance of this form of marriage. All the above scholars have not said whether Christians who believe in eternal life in Jesus Christ share the same view on life after death. This study sought to establish if the desire for an heir and continuation of genealogy supersedes obedience to Christian teaching. Nditi (2002) notes that, the ancestral worldview of the Akamba contributed to the establishment of the institution. She further notes that children in this marriage are born legitimately in the family because a relative is identified to beget children with *Iweto*. She however does not tell us the effect of Christianity on the practice and whether it is still possible with Christianity around to get a relative to beget children with *Iweto*. What is the significance of marriage to a Christians today? This study sought to unveil the relevance of the *Iweto* marriage among the Akamba Christians of Kangundo.

1.7.3 Factors that Contribute to a Woman marrying another woman.

Globally, woman to woman marriage has been practised for various reasons but in the African context, the main reason is to ensure the growth of the

family tree. Amadiume (1987) while exploring the concept of male daughters and female husbands found in South Eastern Nigeria among the Igbo ethnic group notes that there are different reasons why a woman may marry another woman, for example, economic power, search for land but the main reason is the search for an heir. She does not say why the marriage has resisted the changes in the modern society. This study endeavored to identify the reasons as to why the *Iweto* marriage has persisted among the Akamba Christians of Kangundo.

Iglitzin (1976) argues that to understand a woman's place and role in society, one has to look at the type of society she is brought up in, whether it is matriarchal or patriarchal. In a patriarchal society, male superiority and female subordination are stressed and women achieve their highest fulfillment as wives and mothers. The Akamba community is a patriarchal society. Traditionally, inheritance is passed through the son (Penwill, 1951) and this has made woman to be more dependent on men. This study sought to establish how the patriarchal cultural practice has contributed to the persistence of the *Iweto* marriage in Kangundo.

Stott and Coot (1980:285) assert that the centre of a hungry man is his stomach, not his heart hence the need to look at both the physical and spiritual needs. The above study looks at cultural practices in general but this study examined specifically the *Iweto* marriage in Kangundo and sought to establish whether basic needs have played any role in sustaining this marriage

among the Akamba of Kangundo. Do physical need supersede spiritual needs?

Research done by Montagus (1992), Helen and Irigaray (Encarta 2005: Radical feminism) shows that women have a moral superiority. They are tender hearted, caring, loving, sympathetic and easily moved by other people's needs. Waruhiu (1995:139) advanced the same view. She argues that few women have the time to explore their own needs. They are pre-occupied with the needs of other people. They relate their achievement in terms of what they have been able to do for their children. The above scholars have looked at the caring nature of women but this study went further to establish whether it is out of sympathy that the *Iweto* accepts the marriage and the Christians take part in the marriage ceremonies. The study is an attempt to bring out the factors that have continued to sustain the *Iweto* marriage in Kangundo.

1.7.4 Christianity and Cultural Change

Research has been done to show that Africans are deeply rooted in their religio-cultural heritage. Even after they are converted to Christianity, many of them slip back to their religio-cultural practices in times of crisis. Notably among the researches, is the work of Shorter (1988,1994) Mbiti (1969), Mugambi (1995) Martey (1989), Baur (1994), Walligo (1986), Stott and Coote (1980), Idowu (1965), Mbula (1977), Gehman (2005), Phillips (1953) and Setele (1981).

Shorter (1988:55, 1994:46) refers to the Church as an important agent of change but like Mbiti (1969:228) notes that African indigenous beliefs and practices are so central in African life that they keep on resurfacing even with Christianity around. According to Mbiti, the changes that occur at conversion are generally on the surface and that is why in times of crisis, the Christians revert to the traditional method of handling the situation. Idowu (1973:205) and Gehman (2005:3) are in agreement when they point out that the deep seated traditional worldview is held simultaneously by those who embrace either Christianity or Western thought. To these scholars, Christianity has not penetrated deeper than the skin surface of the African people. Perhaps this is why this marriage has persisted. This study sought to throw some light on the issue of resistance to change in the face of Christianity.

Kangethe (1981:25) observes that the African culture has inherent ability to respond positively to any type of change. This study sought to identify the changes in the *Iweto* marriage and whether they are viewed as positive or negative changes from the traditional and the Christian perspectives. It was noted that issues related to fertility and marriage are very sensitive and people approach them with precautions. Based on the above argument, this study was more specific and looked at *Iweto* marriage as a practice which has persisted despite forces of change like Christianity. This study sought to find out how *Iweto* marriage has responded to religio- social economic changes in the society and why it is still appreciated by some Christians in spite of the changes.

Mbula (1977: 13) identifies different levels of change and is in agreement with Kangethe (1981: 31) and Shorter (1973:14-21) when she notes that some elements are easier changed than others. She further observes that monogamous marriage is the most common form of marriage however she is silent on why other types of marriages co-exist with Christianity. She also does not tell us whether there are changes if any that have occurred in the *Iweto* marriage as a result of Christianity. This study sought to find out why the *Iweto* marriage continues to co-exist with Christianity in Kangundo yet Christianity is capable of bringing cultural change.

All the above studies are important in this study because they demonstrate the relationship between Christianity and cultural change. The studies however have generalized certain issues like marriage in Africa. This study was more specific for it looked at the *Iweto* marriage as a cultural practice that has continued irrespective of Christianity.

1.7.5 Christianity and African Cultural Marriage

During the missionary era, many Christians were ex-communicated from the Church due to refusal of the missionaries to recognize the different types of marriage they found in Africa. Kitembo, Magesa and Shorter (1977: XV) note that African marriage to the missionaries was not a marriage but “Concubinage”. This study noted that marriage was wholly oriented towards the transmission of life and the missionaries did not take their time to

understand the purpose of different types of marriage in the African culture. The importance of securing legitimate descendants accounts for most characteristic features of African marriage and this was contrary to the message of the missionaries.

Nasimiyu (1990) and Gibbs (1990) observe that the attitude of the European missionaries towards African culture was generally very negative. This is in concurrence with Bahemuka (1982) and Phillips (1953) when they note that the missionaries insisted on the Africans adopting Christianity and Western mannerisms and that is why when missionaries brought Christianity in Ukambani, many people responded heartily and were willing to abandon their cultural practices. It was noted that Christianity and Western lifestyle were viewed as one and the same thing. Some of the Africans accepted the Western concept of marriage as the Christian marriage without considering the values attached to different forms of marriages. However, these studies have not told us why certain marriage practices have not been dropped with the coming of Christianity if the people simply accepted the Western concept of marriage as the Christian marriage. Considering the above observations this study tried to establish how Christians deal with those in the marriage.

Phillips (1953), Setele (1981), Mbiti (1969) observe that in the African customary marriage, there is a collective aspect of marriage transactions, it is first a communal affair and only in secondary aspect is it between two persons. Marriage is wholly oriented towards the transmission of life and the

clan has the mission of protecting and developing new life. The above scholars looked at marriage and family in general. This study specifically looked at *Iweto* marriages in Kangundo and based on the above context tried to investigate the role played by the clan in times of need and how this has influenced Christian response to *Iweto* marriage. The study sought to establish whether the desire to be with one's kinsmen surpasses the desire to remain faithful to the bible teaching.

Kisembo, Magesa and Shorter (1977) advise Christians to show sympathy to women married to other women. However, they have not gone further to elaborate on what they mean by sympathy nor have they brought out the response of the Christians towards those in non-monogamous marriage. This study provides a detailed and critical analysis of the Christians response towards this type of marriage. Muthiani (1973) observes that the African persons are in a dilemma as they try to be truly African and truly Christian; therefore, they are caught in between the two worlds. Perhaps this could be used to explain the involvement of the Akamba Christians in *Maweto* marriages hence account for the dual personality noted. This study sought to establish whether there are other reasons why the Christians are involved in the *Iweto* marriage.

It was noted that there was need for inculturation to avoid double standards and guiltiness. Baur (1994) notes that, a lot has undergone inculturation but marriage has been a difficult issue. He does not give the reasons why it is

difficult to inculturate marriage. Best (1995) observes that though monogamy is God's design for marriage, each Church should seek that way which on one hand will not weaken her standard of faith in the eyes of the world and on the other hand will not arbitrarily place upon some who desire its blessing a burden the consequence of which may be in opposition to the very message of the Gospel. Based on these observation, this study went on to establish whether it is possible for the Christians to respond to the issue of *Iweto* without losing touch with the realities of daily life and without contaminating Christianity.

Kisembo et.al., notes that there are certain issues, which must be considered in regard to Church and marriage in Africa. They examine polygamy in relation to Christianity. This study sought to find out what happens to the *Iweto* when she is converted and how best the situation of childlessness can be handled without compromising Christianity. Mugambi (1995:12) prefers to use reconstruction instead of liberation or inculturation. Martey (1994:2) in his work on inculturation and liberation argues that the Church should not ignore cultural practice for they influence the physical and spiritual wellbeing. This study sought to find out how the *Iweto* marriage can be reconstructed so as to be more responsive to changed circumstances for example, the new religio-social economic environment. It was noted that to a certain extent, it is possible to overhaul the *Iweto* marriage.

Stott and Coot (1980:281) and Nthamburi (2002:35) argue that it has not been easy to change some of the traditional marriages hence the need for inculturation by picking on the positive values. They argue that Christians need to distinguish between those things which are undesirable hence forbidden and those which represent differences in habits and traditions. Stott and Coot gives polygny as an example of practice that Christians should be patient with because it has a function like taking care of childless marriages. Nthamburi notes that Christianity has to come to terms with repudiation of childless marriage. This study looked at the *Iweto* marriage as a cultural practice that takes care of marriages without sons in Kangundo and Christians have been patient with it though it contravenes Christian teachings. Kitembo et.al., (1977) argue that solution to problem of childlessness should come from the people so as to include elements proper to each culture in to the marriage. The study sought views from the people of Kangundo in an attempt to unify the solution to the issue of childlessness.

1.7. 6 Conclusion

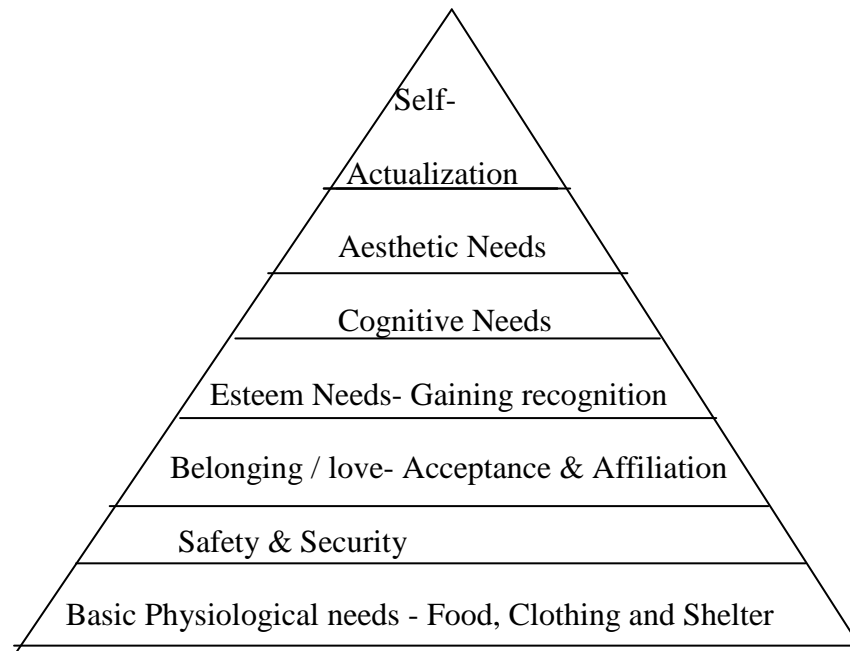
The foregoing review confirms the existence of substantial literature on marriage, Christianity and culture change but it is evident that not much has been done on woman to woman marriage among the Akamba. The gaps which this study attempted to fill have been highlighted. These gaps are seen in the significance of *Iweto* marriage today, factors behind the persistence of the marriage, the extent of change in the *Iweto* marriage and the response of Christians in regard to the *Maweto*. The above review will provide a firm

foundation for one to understand why *Iweto* marriage is still practised and accepted by the Akamba Christians even with over hundred years of evangelization in Kangundo.

1.8 Conceptual framework

The conceptual frame work used in this study explores two main theories, namely; the Maslow's theory of Hierarchy of Needs (1970) and the Social cultural change theoretical model developed by Donald Jacobs and used by Shorter (1973). The two were used to give some light on the development of the concept of *Iweto* and the reason behind the prevalence or persistence of the *Iweto* marriages long after Christianity arrived in Kangundo.

Maslow's theory of Hierarchy of Needs states that all human beings have needs and their actions are geared towards attainment of those needs. The anticipated outcome influences the action taken and the behavior depicted. Maslow's argument is that the key to human development and growth is the gratification and actualization of the basic needs. He designed a theoretical pyramid to illustrate fulfillment of human needs and how it influences their action.



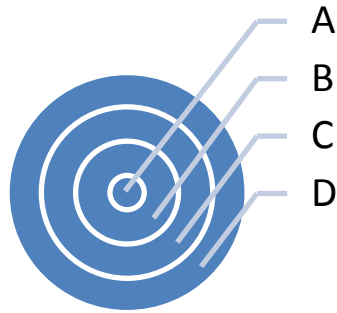
Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs pyramid.

His theory further stipulates that, the needs are arranged in a hierarchy and the lower needs are fulfilled first. This theory is relevant to this study because it helped the researcher to explore the needs of women in Kangundo and to show how the desire to fulfill them has influenced the course of action taken by the women. For example; the *Iweto* quest for the basic needs, a family she and her children can identify with, new status (esteem), encourages her to be married as *Iweto*. While the childless woman quest for safety, security, property and higher status finds rest by getting an *Iweto* to give her a son to enable her to inherit property and to take care of her during her old age. Having a son gives her a sense of belonging and safety. She now faces old age and later death with courage.

Women's needs have varied from time to time as a result of the change from subsistence economy to a money economy. Traditionally, property was seen in terms of land, cattle and goats. Today, a wide variety of things are valued because they can bring money. The theory has been used to help establish how the desire to fulfill the new needs and Christianity has contributed to changes in the organization of *Iweto* marriage.

The study further intended to find out why the form of marriage has persisted despite Christianity. This called for a different theory which was used in the analyses of the other premises. This study used the social cultural change model adopted by Shorter (1973:20-21) to explain social cultural changes in society. This theory, together with Maslow's theory helped to provides a conceptual framework to explain persistence of *Iweto* marriage in spite of Christianity.

Shorter notes that, culture is divided into four levels and there is a hierarchy of importance among the levels. The outer layer is the industrial technical level, followed by domestic technical level, value level and lastly, the deepest level which is the worldview level. This is the core of culture. The diagram below illustrates these levels of culture.



KEY

D – Industrial Technical Level.

C – Domestic Technical Level.

B – Value Level.

A – The worldview level.

According to Shorter, culture is a tradition of accumulated choices or alternatives in which, the selection and acceptance of external ideas keep culture in the process of change. However, some cultural practices change faster than others while others resist and keep on resurfacing depending on the level of culture. He further emphasizes that change starts from the periphery increasing in resistance towards the core level. This is because; it is at this level that the society teaches a person about his/her relationship to the world and his/her destiny. This level provides a religious understanding of reality. The study found out that values related to the survival of a group; for example fertility and immortality are derived from here. It is here where one finds reasons why people marry and why fertility is important in marriage. Society is interested in its survival and this explains the resistance to change seen in the traditional function of the *Iweto* marriage.

Shorter's theory therefore proved useful in this study for it sheds some light on the reasons behind the persistence of the *Iweto* marriage among the Christians in Kangundo. This theory together with Maslow's theory helped to provide a comprehensive perception of resistance to change in the face of Christianity.

1.9 Research Methodology

This section describes the research design, the location of the study, methods of sampling, research instruments, data collection and analysis.

1.9.1 Research design

The study used descriptive research design to obtain information on the factors behind the persistence of the *Iweto* marriage among Akamba Christians of Kangundo. Primary data were collected using in-depth interviews, questionnaires, focus group discussion, and observation methods. This design was appropriate for it enabled the researcher to collect information about people's opinions and attitude. This brought out the community's view towards the *Iweto* marriage and this helped to explain the persistence of this form of marriage. The design further enabled the researcher to categorize and to describe the factors sustaining the practice. The data were summarized in a manner that provided the designed descriptive information.

1.9.2 Area of Study

The study focused on Kangundo District in Eastern Province. Until early 2007, Kangundo was a division under Machakos District. Information given by the District commissioner (Chepkonga.O.I, 11.10.2010) indicates that the new district is divided into two administrative Divisions, namely; Kangundo with a population of 73,378 and Kakuyuni with a population of 73,012. The two divisions are further sub-divided into five locations. Kangundo Division has Kangundo and Kanzalu locations while Kakuyuni Division has Kakuyuni, Kawethei and Kivaani locations (see Appendix 3: Map 2). In total, the area covered by the districts is about 135 sq km.

1.9.3 Target Population

The target population consisted mainly of the Akamba community inhabiting Kangundo District. They are central Bantu speaking people found in Eastern Province of Kenya. According to 2009 national census report the total population is approximately 218,557. ([http://mars group Kenya.org/census 2009](http://mars.groupkenya.org/census2009)). Information obtained from the districts commissioners' office (Mutunga, O.I, 11.10.2010) show that approximately, over 80 % of the population was professing Christians who were mainly small-scale farmers with coffee as the main cash crop. Others were involved in business or were employed as civil servants and in this category were non-indigenous persons. Different categories of respondents were identified for the study. They include *Maweto*, female husbands, Christians, Administrators, Elders and young adults from *Iweto* marriage.

1.9.4 Sampling Technique.

Different techniques were used to identify the respondents from the two divisions. This includes random sampling, purposive sampling and snow-ball technique. Random sampling was used to identify the locations to be included in the study. Three locations out of five were picked by the researcher and the two assistants through lottery technique. The five locations were written on pieces of paper of equal size and color, folded, placed in a container and mixed. All the locations had equal and independent chance of being selected as members of the sample. This implies that the selection of one location did not affect in any way the selection of another location. Three locations were picked at random. These are Kangundo, Kawethei and Kakuyuni. Purposive sampling was used to identify the Churches while random sampling was used to pick the Church members. A Snow-ball technique was used to identify the *Maweto* and the female husbands. Here, the *Maweto* helped in identifying other *Maweto*. Various personal networks of *Maweto*, their relatives, local women groups (*mwethya* groups) and church women groups also assisted in identifying the *Maweto*. Thereafter random sampling was used to pick the respondents in this category. Administrators, elders and young adults were picked randomly.

1.9.5 Sample Size.

In total, there were 102 respondents involved in this study. Six *Maweto* were selected from each location to give a total of 18 *Maweto*. A large number was targeted in this category for they provided first-hand information on this type

of marriage. They gave information on how they got married, the importance of marriage, the problems they faced, awareness of succession laws of Kenya, Christian attitude toward them, and their male partner.

Four female husbands were selected randomly from each location to give a total of twelve. Most of the respondents in this category were aged sixty years and above. A focus group discussion was organized to generate data. They gave information on the reasons why women marry others, changes noted on the practice, awareness of the biblical teaching on childlessness, the succession laws of Kenya and modern methods of adoption. A smaller number was selected in this category because most female husbands marry after all their daughters are married (over 55 years) and many do not live long after they marry due to age factor.

Fifteen young adults, five from every location were selected randomly from *Maweto* families. This group was chosen because they had experience of growing up in this type of a family. They gave their views and attitudes towards the marriage.

Six elders were selected randomly from each location to give a total of eighteen elders. They were very useful in identification of the *Maweto*, female husbands, and the young adults. This group was chosen because of their involvement in traditional marriage ceremonies. Information gathered from this category focused on why and how the *Iweto* marriage was

conducted, awareness of succession laws and adoption methods. They gave a lot of information on the changes that have taken place in the marriage. A large sample was selected in this category because the elders are directly involved in the organization of the marriage ceremonies.

Six administrators were selected, two from each location. Information from this category focused on issues arising from this marriage, succession laws of Kenya, adoption and the government position on the practice.

Six Church members from each location were selected randomly to give a total of eighteen members. The researcher categorized the Christians into three groups of equal number of respondents - the Salvation Army members, the African Inland Church members and Christians from other denominations. The two churches were among the first churches in the region and their approaches and doctrines are different. Church members gave information on Christian marriage, Christian response toward the practice and the reason why they take part in the *Maweto* ceremonies.

In the category of Church leaders and elders, fifteen respondents, five from each category of Christians were selected randomly. They include pastors, priest, choir leaders, women ministry leaders and youth leaders. They gave information on how Christianity came to the region propagating church teaching on marriage, how their church handles childless marriages and those persons involved in this marriage. They were very useful in offering a

theological basis for handling the issue of childlessness and those involved in the marriage. The following is a summary of the respondents:

Table 1. Sample Size

Respondents	Number
Church members	18
Church leaders/elders	15
<i>Maweto</i>	18
Female husband	12
Family elders	18
Young adults (18-20)	15
Administrators	06
TOTAL	102

1.9.6 Research Instruments

Both field and library research were used to generate data. Primary data were collected using the following instruments.

Questionnaires

Different questionnaires were used to generate data. One was administered to the church leaders/ elders and members, and a second one was for the young adults from *Iweto* marriage. The researcher and two research assistants clarified any questions that the respondents failed to understand. The questions were open-ended or closed. The open-ended questions elicited in-depth responses from the respondents. This brought out clearly and in details, the reasons behind the *Iweto* marriage and the responses of the Christians towards the *Iweto* marriage.

Interview Schedules

Interview guide were used to collect information from female husbands, *Maweto*, elders and administrators. This allowed for in-depth explanations and clarification. Translation to Kikamba language was done where necessary. Short notes were taken whenever it was possible but tape recording proved to be more useful especially with the elderly who were co-operative.

1.9.7 Methods of Data collection.

Different methods of data collection were used. These include focus group discussion, observation and case study.

Focus Group Discussion.

Three focus group discussions were organized. The first group was made up of *Maweto*, second one was for female husbands, and lastly Christians from different denominations. Each group had a minimum of six members and interview guides were used during the discussions..

Observations

Through observation of the *Maweto* and her children's way of living, shelter, clothing, business (if any), facial expression during the interview, a practical picture of the practice was obtained. Observation method was also used in case studies conducted. The case studies brought about deeper insights and better understanding of the *Iweto* marriage. Observation method helped to

clarify and to ascertain some points. Documentation was done through note taking.

Secondary Data

The following libraries were visited- Kenyatta University library, University of Nairobi library, Hekima college library, Catholic University of Eastern Africa library, Pan Africa Christian University (PACU) library, Tangaza College library and Scott Theological College library. Secondary sources used include: books, thesis, newspapers, journals, district reports, church records and the internet. This helped to expand the topical areas and in definition of concepts and terminologies.

1.9.8 Data Analysis

The information in cassette tapes was transcribed into English. To achieve the stated objectives, all the information generated during the study was categorized according to the objectives and premises of the study. The main themes included the significance of *Iweto* marriage, changes in *Iweto* marriage, factors behind the persistence of the *Iweto* marriage, Christian response to *Iweto* marriage. The primary data were interpreted then synthesized with the secondary data. Both qualitative and simple quantitative methods were used as analytical methods. Percentages were calculated and tables drawn. These were used as methods of determining the responses and levels of awareness. Based on the above, interpretations were done and this

led to approval or disapproval of the various premises. Conclusions were drawn thereafter and recommendations made.

1.9.9 Ethical Considerations

Care was taken not to interview those below 18 years. Before any interview was conducted, the reason for the interview was well-explained and permission granted by the concerned parties. The term childless woman was used in this study instead of the term barren woman as a polite way of addressing the issue of childlessness. Confidentiality was kept throughout the exercise and for those who did not want to disclose their identity, real names were withheld.

CHAPTER TWO

MARRIAGE AND PROCREATION AMONG THE AKAMBA

2. Introduction

This chapter examines marriage and procreation among the Akamba. To understand *Iweto* marriage, it is necessary first to examine some features related to marriage and their significance among the Akamba. The chapter lays down the necessary foundation used in attaining the objectives the study set out to accomplish. The information is based on primary and secondary sources of data. To achieve our purpose, the chapter has been divided into the following sub-sections: This first section explores marriage and procreation among the Akamba community as pick moments in the life of an individual. The importance of marriage and procreation is discussed in detail. The second section briefly analyses the mythical origin of the Akamba people, of whom the Akamba of Kangundo are part of, and its relation to marriage and procreation. The sacred nature of marriage is discussed in detail. The relationship between marriage and the birth of a male child is explored. This sheds light on the value attached to procreation and laid the necessary foundation to understand the reason behind the development of different forms of marriage. Reference to modern society is made to show the strong linkage between marriage and the birth of children and how this relationship has persisted among the Christians of Kangundo.

The third section examines the traditional role of women in procreation. This is intended to provide the necessary insight for us to understand why a

woman takes the initiative to identify another woman to give birth on her behalf. The fourth section examines the different forms of marriage practised among the Akamba. The *Iweto* marriage is discussed in detail. It is noted that many of these forms of marriage are on the decline as a result of Christianity. However, the *Iweto* marriage is a custom that has persisted irrespective of the changes in the society.

An analysis of the *Iweto* marriage based on the following discussion is made. Maslow's Theory (1970) is used to explore and explain the roots of the marriage. This theory has helped to bring out the strong relationship between the *Iweto* marriage and the birth of a boy child. It is noted that the marriage was developed to meet the interest of the childless woman. Through the marriage, some basic needs like: food, shelter, emotional security, identity and the need for status are met. It is noted that due to the significance of marriage, some feature of African marriage have persisted. Using Shorter's (1973) theory, areas that have resisted change are highlighted. This chapter has laid the necessary background for us to understand the changes and continuity of the *Iweto* marriage which will be discussed in the next chapters.

2.1 The Significance of Marriage and Procreation

The Akamba are one of the Eastern Bantu communities occupying the area south east of Mt Kenya. Marriage in the community is respected and highly valued. It is considered a normal or natural occurrence when one attains adult age hence an important turning point in the development of an individual.

Traditionally, a child grew into adulthood not only physically but also socially and religiously. All were expected to marry with only the exceptions of men and women with severe mental problems or physical disabilities. Without marriage, a person was not considered complete for marriage was an indication of maturity and responsibility. It promoted a person in the social hierarchy of married people thus acquiring new family responsibilities.

Refusal to marry portrayed one as a failure. Consequently, the family pressured the person to marry. In case the person failed to find himself a suitor, then the family assisted him to get a marriage partner. It was noted that it was because of the significance attached to marriage that marriage preparation was more or less a family affair. This encouraged the family to remain united. After marriage, procreation was expected to follow. According to Mbiti, (1975:105)

The supreme purpose of marriage according to African people is to bear children, to build a family, to extend life and to hand down the living torch of human existence. For that reason, a marriage becomes fully so when one or more children have been born. It is a very tragic thing when no children come out of a marriage.

Mbiti's observations illuminate the place of children in African marriage. Mugambi and Kirima (1983: 23) express a similar opinion with Mbiti when they observe that in the African traditional society, the birth of the first child was a sign that the marriage was now complete and the mother was a full member of her husbands' family. They further note that the birth changed the social status of the parents. Kimotho (O.I 6.6.2009) says that children are

highly valued among the Akamba community and that is why the birth of a child brings a lot of joy to the family. There is much celebration to mark the new life in the community and different gifts are brought to the new-born and the mother. This is an indication of the physical and emotional involvement of the community.

Kimotho further observes that failure to give birth brings a different mood contrary to what is experienced when a child is born. This is because children assist their parents at home and are also important to the society because through them, the society continues to grow. When the parents become old and weak, it is the responsibility of the children to take care of them and to bury them when their time to depart comes. This is an indication that children have different roles to play in the family. According to one respondent Mukui (O.I. 3.8.2009), in the traditional view, children prolong the life of their parent and through them; the family name is perpetuated. Traditionally, boys had a more significant role to play in the family than the girls for it was through them that, metempsychosis took place. This is in agreement with Mbiti (1975: 109) when he notes that where inheritance is through the father, it is very important to have sons so that the family line of inheritance may be maintained. One elder, Makau (I.O, 26.8.2009) concurred with the above observations when he notes that “Marriage is not only an important stage in the life of a person but it was traditionally an institution for enhancement of the family tree through the birth of a male child. That is why failure to give birth, especially to a male child, raises a lot of concern from family members

and the community at large. Without marriage and procreation, the society's future would be bleak". The researcher notes that, the above observations are in agreement with Mbiti (1969:133) when he argues that, through marriage and procreation, the society's future is assured. This explains why the community is uncomfortable whenever procreation fails to take place in a marriage. Children have a religio-social economic value and this explains why failure to have a son is not and was not a pleasant experience as reported by some informants during the study.

Another respondent Mumbua (O.I.8.9.2009) notes that marriage and procreation are sacred. She observed that traditionally marriage and procreation were viewed as a direct command from the Creator, *Mulungu*. Marriage is therefore seen as a divine command right from the creation of man. Failure to procreate implies that one is an obstacle to god's plan of creation. Such a person does not have the interest of the society at heart and is therefore an enemy of humanity. Mumbua further referred the researcher to the mythical origin of the Akamba community. The researcher noted that this myth is well-documented by Ndeti (1972:28) and it is still a popular myth among the elderly Akamba people.

2.2 The Mythical Origin of the Akamba Community

According to Ndeti (1972:28), *Mulungu* conducted the first marriage in *Matuni* (heaven). After some time, *Mulungu* dropped the couple from heaven

to earth and they landed on a mountainous area called Nzau. He loved them very much and decided to give them a lot of livestock including cattle and goats, to assist them not only in milk and ghee but also to plough their farm because *Nzau* is a rocky area. *Mulungu* wanted to make the first couple comfortable so he blessed them with sons and also rain so that the animals could have enough grass hence they could have enough milk in return. As soon as it rained, many ant-hills with big holes sprouted out of one of the holes, from which another couple came out. This couple was blessed with many daughters.

The sons from the first couple looked at the girls, liked them and wanted to establish friendship but God told them to first pay the girls' parents by giving them part of their livestock. The sons obeyed and consulted their parents. The second couple was given three goats and herd of cattle for each girl. This came to be referred to as *Ngasia* (bridewealth). The sons took the girls after payment of *Ngasia*. God also commanded them to procreate so that they can increase their numbers. He was happy because they had obeyed and so he blessed them with many more livestock and children. From that time, children were seen as a form of blessing and a fulfillment of a sacred command. The main idea behind the myth as documented by Ndeti is to express the belief that the creation of man was an accomplishment of God.

2.3 The Importance of the Akamba Creation Myth to *Iweto* Marriage

It was noted that in his documentation Ndeti (1972) he does not bring out the relationship between the myth and the *Iweto* marriage. The study notes that this myth portrays marriage and procreation as sacred acts since they are part of creation. The concern of the myth is to popularize God as the creator and provider of mankind but this study used the myth not only to throw light on the sacred nature of marriage but also to bring out the strong relationship between marriage and procreation. This is meant to lay the necessary foundation for us to understand the importance of the two stages in the life of an individual and how this influenced the formation of the *Iweto* marriage. Three important features were identified from the creation myth. First, is the sacred nature of marriage which makes marriage, an important obligation. Second, the significance of the male child that coerces people to search for a male child and lastly, the strong relationship between marriage and procreation. These are useful features which will enable us to understand the development of the *Iweto* of marriage.

2.3.1 The Sacred Nature of Marriage and Procreation

It is evident from the myth that marriage from the Akamba perspective has a divine origin. Bride wealth and birth of children are sacred features of the marriage. Setele (1981:55) and Mbiti (1975: 98) are in agreement with the myth when they observe that marriage and procreation are a sacred duty and every member of the society must participate in. Mbiti refers to marriage and procreation as a 'solemn obligation'. This is because you are fostering God's

creative works in the world and this is a serious sacred responsibility hence not optional. One respondent Muema (O.I.28.8.2009) is in support of the above argument when he observes that, 'the sacred nature of marriage and procreation is clearly seen in the Bible'. He noted that in Geneses 1:28, 2:24, God commanded the first couple to multiply and fill the world. The researcher took this as one of the reasons why the modern society still expects every member of the Akamba community to marry and there after procreation to take place.

2.3.2 The Superiority of the Male Child in the Akamba Community

The Akamba creation myth reveals that the survival of the community is very important to the members and this survival is ensured through the male children born within marriage. This myth portrays the boy child as a superior child compared to the girl child. This is evident from the superior position given to the boys in the myth. They were the first ones to be born. Second, they initiated the relationship for they were the first to admire the girls. Third, they were given power to exchange their livestock for the girls after making their proposal. This myth elucidates the reason why a girl could not be entrusted with the family property. She was expected to change her residence at one point in her life and to join the boy's family. The boys remained at home to uphold the family name. They became the heads of families with power to identify whom to marry and to enhance the family tree. Penwill (1951:28) states that, among the Akamba community, sons are the heirs to the family property. This is an indication that the Akamba are a patrilineal

society. In this kind of society, descendants trace their roots from the father's lineage and property is passed on to the son.

Using Shorter's theory, this study noted that reasons for survival of the community are deep-rooted in the religious level of the culture. At this level, the society teaches people about their destiny. This observation concurs with Ayisi (1992:7) when he refers to the spiritual dimension of marriage as the foundation of the community which also seeks to preserve the human community. Shorter (1998:33) is in agreement with Ayisi when he notes that marriage is associated with the society's growth and development. It was observed that it is not easy to accept change if the change threatens the future existence of the society. The myth gives some light on why a family without a male child will not rest until it gets one to perpetuate the family name. It was deduced that the search for a male child contributed to the development of different forms of marriage which include the *Iweto* marriage, the focus of this study.

2.3.3 Relationship between Marriage and Procreation among the

Akamba

From the myth, we can identify the strong relationship between marriage and procreation. In the myth, children were born after the marriage—"god loved the married couple very much hence they procreated and became numerous, as did the livestock", Ndeti (1972: 29). They were therefore born within the marriage setup and seen as part of blessing in marriage. This is in agreement

with Burke (1999:110) and Magesa (1977:115). Burke acknowledges the relationship and notes that the unity of the marriage bond comes second after the begetting of children. Magesa observes that, it is within marriage that individuals legally exercise their procreative rights. This myth gives procreation a religious dimension similar to marriage and goes further to explain why procreation is central within the Akamba marriage.

Setele (1980:54) stresses that marriage is wholly oriented towards the transmission of life. Kyengo (O.I.6.11.2009) is in agreement with the Akamba creation myth and Setele when he observed that immediately after the initiation rite, one was expected to marry and thereafter give birth. This implies that, as a person was being prepared to marry, he/she was also prepared to give birth. That is why during initiation into adulthood, lessons were given on marriage and parenthood. Mbiti (1969:133) in an attempt to bring out the linkage between marriage and procreation observes that in African communities without procreation, marriage is incomplete. From the African perspective therefore, every marriage is expected to bring forth some offspring. This study deduced that marriage and procreation not only have a religious base, they are also well-intertwined. That is why failure to marry or to give birth caused and still causes uneasiness in the society. This study is in agreement with Oluwole (2008:8) when he notes that inability to have a child is a source of pain, anxiety and shame especially in a patrilineal society.

It was noted that the relationship between marriage and procreation has not changed. Matheka (O.I.3.9.2009) observes that a Christian couple with intention to marry is encouraged to attend pre-marital counselling in family matters including procreation for children are seen by many couple as a form of gift from God. He adds that the family is deeply rooted in marriage and consequently, failure to give birth is seen as a form of Christian trial and puts the marriage in a state of uncertainty. He notes that it is the wish of many young couples that after marriage, God will bless them with children though this is not the main goal of Christian marriage. This position is supported by the responses obtained through an opinion question that was given to the respondents to establish the main reason for marriage today. The responses were summarized and expressed in percentages as shown in table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Reasons why the Akamba of Kangundo Marry.

Reason for marriage	Number of respondent	Percentage
Procreation	80	78.43%
Love	10	9.80 %
Companionship	4	3.92%
Others	8	7.84 %
TOTAL	102	100%

Of the people interviewed, 78.43% were of the opinion that people marry for procreation purposes. Nine point eight percent gave love as the reason for marriage while 3.92% said that marriage partner make good companions. Seven point eight percent observed that some people are forced by

circumstances hence do not know exactly why they marry. Circumstances cited include pregnancy, the expectation of the parents and the society among others. From the above data, the study concluded that from traditional society, most people marry for procreation purposes and this position has not changed.

To sum up this section, the study observed that marriage has retained many of its earlier features and significance. It has a divine origin and the main goal of marriage is to have children within a well-established institution. Marriage is important because it establishes a very essential basic unit for human survival; the family. It helps to fulfill the wish of every member of the community to bring up their own family thus perpetuates the growth of the clan. Without the family, there is no clan and without clan, there is no society. The desire for children is therefore the main reason why the Akamba in Kangundo marry.

It was concluded that the Akamba creation myth provides the necessary foundation for us to understand why the community expects every member to marry and to bring forth the fruits of the institution. This necessitated the development of different ways of ensuring that every marriage produces fruits. These fruits were important for the survival of the society for through them, the seed of life was transmitted. This explains the development of different forms of marriage including woman to woman marriage. It is an indication of the significant role played by *Iweto* marriage among the

Akamba. Before the *Iweto* marriage is solemnized, customary marriage procedures are done. This is because all types of marriage are respected hence the need to maintain the rules and regulations that appertain to marriage customs without exceptions. The next section examines some of those procedures.

2.3.4 Marriage Procedure among the Akamba Community

Nzivo, a clan elder (O.I.10.9.2009) observes that in the traditional Akamba community, immediately after the initiation ceremonies every normal person was expected to marry and to give birth. A young man identified a girl and informed a close relative like a father if it was a young man or husband in case it was an *Iweto* marriage. Later inquiries were made of the girl and her family. If satisfied, after inquiry, they informed other relatives like the close uncles, this is because marriage was not an individual affair but a relationship between two families. If all was well, arrangements were made to pay a visit to the girl's parents to inform them of their intention. The parents of the girl would request for more time to establish the girl's position. If the girl had no objection, she informed her mother and further meetings were organized in the homestead of the girl. For all the ceremonies that followed, the suitor ensured that all visitors had enough to eat and drink.

The study established that in Kangundo there are different clans and their position on marriage differ. Example of clans includes *Akitondo*, *Aombe*, *Amotei*, *Atangwa*, *Akitutu*. Some clans allow members to marry within the

clan (endogamous clan), for example *Atangwa* while others like *Akitutu*, one must marry outside their clan and it is a taboo to marry within the clan, (exogamous clan). It was important to confirm the clan, least they come from same clan. They checked on issues like curses, witchcraft in the family and barrenness. One was discouraged to marry a girl whose family had cases of barrenness or diseases like epilepsy or schizophrenia. This was not good for the future of the clan. The study confirmed that all the above is strictly adhered to irrespective of the type of marriage. This is because all types of marriage are respected hence the need to maintain the rules and regulations that appertain to marriage customs without exception.

The first main ceremony involves taking of three goats (*Mbui sya Ntheo*) to the girl's father of which one is slaughtered in the presence of the in-laws as witnesses. According to Mutiso, (O.I, 12.8.2009) the word *Ntheo* means to separate the girl from her agemate. The ceremony marks the transition from girlhood to womanhood. Blood brings a sacred element, which is binding in the agreement. It is a symbol of death and rebirth of the girl. Blood is life and preservation of life is of paramount importance in the society for it determines the growth and survival of the society. It is a seal to the agreement with ancestors being involved. It implies that the woman can now identify with the husband's clan and consequently through the children, anticipates the marriage to extend the family lineage. This concurs with Mbiti (1975:104-105) when he notes that, marriage is the uniting link in the rhythm of life for

all generations are bound in the act of marriage – past, present and the future. Thus marriage involves those to be born, the living and the dead.

The issue of shedding blood has not lost its significance and that is why it cannot be replaced with money. After *Ntheo* ceremony, a date is fixed for another meeting and during this time bridewealth is agreed upon. A date is set for bringing bridewealth to the family of the girl. It is important to note that the first three goats (*Mbui sya Ntheo*) are not part of bridewealth but are very important for they signify the first sacred commitment prior to the marriage. They also pave way for bridewealth which is a divine command as indicated in the Akamba myth of creation. The following is the list of bridewealth that one has to pay today for a girl from *Atangwa* clan irrespective of the type of marriage. (Nzivo, O.I,10.9.2009):

1. Two dairy cattles and a bull.
2. A big bull for slaughtering, during the Pre –wedding party for the girl's sent off, (*Kyai kya Mathaa*).
3. Forty-four goats.
4. A special she-goat (*mukwa*) for the mother.
5. A she-goat for the grandmother.
6. Two-large calabashes of traditional beer for the elders or its money equivalent.
7. A bull, (*Ng'ombe ya Kimandi*).
8. Two heavy blankets for the Parents.
9. Two sheets for the parents.

10. Twelve big bunches of bananas, (*Thumba*).
11. Two big containers of honey for the father and the eldest aunt.
12. One goat for the aunt, (*Mbui ya Mwendwaithe*).
13. Foodstuff mainly maize, beans, cow peas, millet (*Nihungi*).
14. A walking stick for the father.

Nzivo observed that bridewealth is a gift meant to compensate the bride's family for the loss of their daughter and her services. It is a legal document signifying that marriage has taken place. Even if *Iweto* was to separate with her female husband, the children belong to *mwaitu*. Divorce or marriage to another person is not recognized unless another goat is refunded to disengage the girl. In case a woman passes on before the ceremony is conducted, the husband cannot be allowed to bury her before taking first the three goats to her parents. Failure to give the goats may lead to her parents asking for the body to bury her.

An elder (Ndunda, O.I.6.6. 2009) reiterates that, If one is unable to get the goats, the clan is called upon to assist. They willingly come out to provide what is needed. Failure to give the bridewealth is a very disgraceful act and should never be allowed to happen. This is the position of the clan and we have never seen any reason to change. The payment of bride wealth is an indication that marriage has been legally sanctioned and recognized in the community.

The researcher concluded that the bride wealth is not only an outward sign of a sacred activity but also serious life-long commitment or covenant, for people are apprehensive towards the sacred. After the payment of bridewealth, another meeting is scheduled for getting permission to marry. Mwaitu accompanied by relatives visits the girl's home and is given permission but the girl must wait for the wedding day. Traditionally, after payment of bridewealth the girl waited either to be waylaid on her way to fetch water or she could be collected a few days later by two women then she could walk out of the homestead as if she was going to fetch water. The second option is the preferred one in *Iweto* marriage since it is not conducted in Church. In Christian marriage, the couple is encouraged to marry in Church after the customary procedures. This study observed that some of the traditional marriage preparations like giving of bridewealth are still followed though there is a tendency to take shortcuts as a result of Christianity, modernization and the present financial implications of the visits. Changes were noted in types of items. For example, because of scarcity of some items like honey, sugar is given instead while the goats have been assigned monetary value for this is convenient to exchange and to transport especially where the families are far away from each other. However, the three goats involved during the *Ntheo* ceremony and the shedding of blood has been difficult to substitute with money value even in the *Iweto* marriage.

Information from the field also indicates that the said ceremony is the most significant marriage ceremony today among both Christians and non-

Christians. One elder and a pastor (Muisyo, O.I, 12.12.2009) firmly declared that no marriage including Christian marriage is recognized among the Akamba unless a goat has been slaughtered. Consequently no marriage negotiations can be concluded before the *Ntheo* ceremony has been done. He said that, pastors are encouraged to first find out whether the three goats have been given to avoid conflict. He noted that traditional marriage ceremonies promote social relationships and there is need to propagate what is useful for the society.

The study used Shorter's (1972) model of change to explore the reasons for this position. According to Shorter, some aspects of culture like material culture are easily changed. People are ready to accept monetary gifts and new types of food. This is because it is seen as an improvement in their standards of living though the deeper meaning for most of the items remains the same. This explains why some values attached to *Iweto* marriage have remained the same while others like bridewealth have been modified. Likewise, it is important to note that the women have remained the principal persons involved in this marriage. The next section looks at women role in procreation as assigned by the society.

2.4 The Role of Women in Procreation

The desire to have children is deeply rooted in the heart of the Akamba community and failure to procreate is not only a concern for the family but the community as a whole. According to Wamai (O.I,10/8/2009),

immediately after a marriage union, signs of pregnancy are watched keenly especially by the mother in-law. This is because the woman is married for procreation purposes and it is only after she has given birth that she is recognized as a useful member of the family. Procreation therefore, confirms that one is worth of marriage. Kitembo, Magesa and Shorter (1977:20) used a metaphor to illustrate the role of a woman in procreation. He notes that,

The woman is seen as a garden where her husband, the owner of the garden plants seeds. The children are the fruits of the garden and belong to the sower. A garden is valued for its soil fertility and yield.

Oduyoye (1995:132) is in agreement with Kitembo et.al when she asserts that the woman is an indispensable part of the marriage institution; without the woman, no blood can be transmitted and no ancestor can be reborn. Waruhiu (1995:136) notes that a woman is considered an object of pity by the society if she has no children. This is an indication of the expectation of the society. Mutua (O.I,7.9.2009) concurs with the above observations when he compares a woman to a tree. He notes that a tree is valued because of its fruits. A tree that does not produce good fruits is of no use in the homestead and it is hardly noticed. One that produces good fruits is taken care of. Mbiti (1975:82) notes that: 'from the moment a married woman is pregnant, her marriage becomes secure and her relatives treat her with greater respect'. This is an indication of the important role in procreation assigned to a woman by the society and that is why failure to give birth is considered a misfortune and is very humiliating for the woman contrary to how the society perceives the man in a childless marriage. The man is absolved of blame, Wamai (O.I 10.8.2009) notes. This

is in agreement with Njoroge (1996:25) and Nasimiyu (1992:102). Njoroge says that those with daughters only or without children are despised while Nasimiyu notes that the fact that man is the cause for childlessness is kept a secret to avoid being stigmatized.

In an interview held with Ndanu (O.I.10.9.2009), one of the childless women, it was noted that the desire for a child frustrates a woman. This is because the name *Ngungu* which is used to refer to a childless woman is unpleasant. It means the dry one or the good for nothing person. The childless woman is compared to a stream that ends abruptly because failure to give birth stops the stream of life. Mbiti (1989:107) states that;

Children are a bud of the society and every birth is the arrival of spring when life shoots out and the community thrives. Unhappy is the woman who fails to get children, for whatever other qualities she might possess.

The study revealed that the society appreciates a woman based on her ability to give birth; consequently, the beauty of a woman is in her ability to give birth and not any other quality she may have. The society expects the woman to keep the fire of life burning and that is why a childless woman is branded the name *Ngungu*. The use of the name *Ngungu* brings a state of unworthiness to the childless woman. The study notes that this name is still used today to refer to the childless women. Such women are embarrassed and stigmatized. Kimotho, (I.O.4.11.2009) observes that failure to give birth, especially to a male child, is of great concern to all and the use of grimy language to

humiliate the childless woman is extended to her family of origin. Her mother and sisters are scandalized and this puts future marriages from such a home at stake. The study took this as an indication of the magnitude of the phenomenon and a clear indication of the important role of procreation assigned to women in Kangundo.

It was noted that irrespective of the humiliation, the society tried to assist any family unable to have a male child. This concurs with Ndeti (1972:94) when he observes that in the Akamba philosophy of a total being, a true Mukamba will not let a childless woman to go without an off spring. This is because as noted earlier, the survival of the community is of paramount importance and all members of the community are involved. Evidence gathered from the field indicates that there were different actions taken to ensure that, no woman is left out of child bearing hence the family chain is not broken.

According to Kimotho, a medicine person may be consulted in an attempt to rectify the situation. One of the medicine persons who requested anonymity (O.I.7.9.2009) reported that he had handled such cases, some with success. He noted that first he has to establish the cause of childlessness. This is because in some cases, it can be family rooted; it could be a family curse or consequences of a broken taboo which are passed from one generation to another. This is evident when two sisters are unable to have children. Treatment depends on the cause. When the childless women visit him, he makes some incisions (*Nthoo*) on the abdomen and then applies some herbs.

He gave several reasons for the use of the abdomen. First, it is the point where life begins and is nurtured. Second, all manner of people visit him and to many the visits are a secret. They include the elite and professing Christians. That is why some prefer to visit him at night in fear of being noticed least they are stigmatized or excommunicated from the Church. The abdomen is hidden from the eyes of the public hence the treatment is kept a secret. He further noted that most of the patients who seek treatment are women. The study took this as an indication of the long ruthless and painful path taken by the childless woman in the hope of getting a child. This laid the necessary foundation for us to understand why a woman takes the initiative to marry another woman.

The FGD made up of female husbands (4.8.2009) noted that if the visits to the medicine person do not bear fruits, several options are available. The woman may be taken back to her parents and *Mbui ya maleo* (He goat that symbolizes rejection) is given back though this is not encouraged. Second, a woman without a son is allowed to marry another woman to get offspring. One of the female husband argued that, she married another woman after her husband decided to marry a second wife in an attempt to get an heir. The researcher observed that, there are different forms of marriage developed to meet the society's demand and expectations of an heir. All the members of the group had opted for this second alternative and gave the main reason for their move as the desire to have their own descendants. The study deduced that, the development of different forms of marriage is a reflection of the

values attached to marriage and children in the traditional Akamba community. Mbiti (1975:106) is in agreement when he notes that different forms of marriage ensured that no one was left out of marriage and procreation. Magesa (1997) and Kirwen (1979) are of a similar opinion when they argue that different forms of marriage are there for life fostering purposes and are practised as a logical consequence when conditions demand. Forms of marriage identified include: monogamy, ghost marriage, child marriage, polygny, and woman to woman marriage which is the focus of this study.

2.5 Forms of Marriage Among the Akamba

2.5.1 Monogamy

Monogamy comes from two Greek words, *monus* meaning single or alone and *Gamous* which stands for marriage, (KIE, 1987: 10). It is the union of one man and one woman during the life of the spouses. The study observed that this is one of the most common forms of marriage in Kangundo and the main reason given include the Christian teaching on marriage, the influence from the west, the desire for smaller families due to hard economic times, and women liberalization ideologies.

2.5.2 Ghost Marriage

This took place when a couple failed to have a son or if the only son died before getting married. The aim was to ensure that his lineage was not extinguished (Mami, O.I. 20.11.2009). It was the wish of the parents not to

die before seeing their grandsons so they identified a girl and after the necessary procedures were completed, they took the girl home. A relative was identified to bear children with her. The children born belonged to the dead man hence the genealogy continued. As a result of Christianity and Western Civilization, this form of marriage has gradually disappeared.

2.5.3 Child Marriage

This was organized when a couple got a son in old age, (Syokau, O.I. 2.11.2009). Their wish to have someone to take care of the homestead and to see their grand children before they exit to the next world led them to identify a girl for their young son. A male relative was identified to bear children on behalf of the young son. However, the children born belonged to the young son hence metempsychosized him. When the son was of age, he took over and continued with procreation. During the study, some of the informants noted that such a marriage is prohibited by law and secondly, men do not agree to child marriage today because such a marriage would invite ridicule from the age mate.

2.5.4 Polygny

In this type of marriage, one man marries several wives. Traditionally, among the Akamba, marriage of a second wife had to have the consent of the first wife. A man was allowed to marry many wives as long as he could pay bridewealth (Kimocho O.I.4.11.2009). This means that only the wealthy men were able to marry several wives. Numerous needs contribute to this form of

marriage. These include first, the desire for many children to provide labour-force and also to raise his status because a person with many children was highly respected given that it was a sign of good leadership skills. Second, this marriage also ensured that in times of sickness or death, one of the wives would provide the needed emotional security. Finally, it fulfilled the desire for an heir in case the first wife was childless or had given birth to girls only. This shows the significance attached to male children in any traditional form of marriage.

When Christianity came to Kangundo, the missionaries vigorously condemned polygny more than any other none monogamous marriages. This is because the marriage was more openly and extensively practised than other forms of marriage. Several reasons were given for this. First, a man with many wives was seen as a hero hence given higher status in public. Second, many wives also implied a large family to provide labour. Third, it ensured that nobody is left out of marriage. According to Mutuku (O.I.5.12.2009), the assumption was that there were more women than men. The study noted that this marriage worked in its own way within the traditional setting of the Akamba life but modern changes are making it harder for those who cherish the marriage to come out openly. According to Mutie (O.I.18.8.2009), this marriage is on the decline because having several wives is not something to raise a person's status today. It is not prestigious in our modern society and the cost of living has discouraged large families. People are encouraged to have smaller families to be able to meet their basic needs. He further noted

that due to Western education system, children spent most of their time in school hence they have no time to work in the farm. The increase in population has also led to reduction of land available for food production.

The researcher concluded that the respondents were in agreement with Maslow (1970) when he notes that the desire to fulfill our needs influences our behaviour. The need to be able to provide the basic necessities has contributed to the desire for smaller families and consequently contributed to the decline in this type of marriage. However, the desire for an heir has persisted and the different forms of marriage reflect this need. This is in agreement with Shorter's theory of change (1973) which states that, resistance to change increases towards the inner layers. The study noted that issues related to marriage and procreation are in the inner most level and this explains why the different forms of marriage, including woman to woman marriage have not altogether been abandoned, in spite of Christianity and modernization.

2.5.5 Woman to Woman Marriage

The marriage takes place when a childless woman marries another woman to bear children on her behalf. In Kangundo, the marriage is referred to as *Iweto* (plural- *Maweto*). The term *Iweto* has two meanings; it refers to the form of marriage as well as to the woman who is married.

This study has established that this marriage is still practised in Kangundo though in a 'silent' manner. The term silent is used to emphasize that people do not talk about it openly, but for one who lives in Kangundo, it is a marriage practised by those without sons. The marriage has been institutionalized and consequently taken as normal. The term *Kuuungamia musyi* is used to summarize the reason for such a marriage. It implies continuation of the genealogy. The following is a detailed account of the marriage.

In Kangundo District, when it is obvious that a childless woman cannot give birth, she is allowed to identify a girl by her husband. The identified girl is referred to as *Iweto*. The name denotes that the woman has mentioned her intentions to marry another woman to her husband. This is an indication of the authority of the man over the woman in the Akamba traditional society. Though she is the one to marry the *Iweto*, *she* must first get permission from her husband. If the husband is satisfied with her choice, he goes on to inform his kinsmen. This is because the desire for the perpetuation of life is a great concern to all in the family; consequently the kinsmen start the dowry negotiation on behalf of the sonless woman. This is because like any other marriage bridewealth must be paid before the marriage. The study noted that a woman with daughters alone is supposed to wait first for her daughters to get married before she can identify a woman to marry. The husband allows her to use part of her daughter's bridewealth to get the *Iweto*. This is because the daughters are married, the services they used to render remain unattended

hence there is nothing wrong with the bride wealth being used to get somebody to offer the services and many more. This acts as a form of compensation. The study established that *Iweto* marriage can also be organized by married daughters whose mother may have died without a son. The aim is to ensure that their mother's flame is not extinct. The daughters identify a woman, then they propose to her and if she concedes, they inform their father or uncles who then organize on how to pay the bridewealth.

To maintain respect and harmony at home, *Iweto* is regarded as a wife of a son who was never born thus a daughter in-law. This means that the female woman is a mother in-law (*mwaitu*) while her husband is a father in-law (*Nau*) to *Iweto*. The children of the *Iweto* refer to them as *Susu* (Grandmother) or *U mau* (Grandfather). This ensures that there is no sexual relationship between *Nau* and *Iweto*. This way, the female husband is given the due respect hence she is able to co-exist peacefully with the *Iweto*. A relative is identified to beget children with her but he has no legal rights over the children or the *Iweto*. They belong to *Mwaitu* because she is seen indirectly as the husband in the sense that she provides land to grow food crops, shelter and identity to the *Iweto*. These benefits are passed on to her children. She therefore, has an upper-hand in the identification of a male relative like a nephew from her husband lineage to beget children with *Iweto*. Since the children belong to *Mwaitu*, they can use her name as a surname. This ensures that her genealogy is not broken. The use of *Mwaitu's* name explains the existence of local names that are unisex among the Akamba. For

example, Mumo (plenty), Mutinda (to stay), Mutio (postpone), Mathei (nothing) and Muthike (buried).

Information collected from the field indicates that some female husbands have several *Maweto*. According to Kieti (O.I.12.9.2000), marriage of several *Maweto* is an indication that the female husband has a lot of wealth and can afford to pay the required bridewealth. When one of the polygamous female husbands was contacted (Loisa.O.I.1.9.2009), she had this to say;

The best thing to have happened to me is not to have a lot of wealth but to be able to see my off spring. I am a respected mother-in-law and grandmother to many.

The researcher noted that the ability to pay the bridewealth is not the main reason for such marriages. Loisa's joy is in the fact that she had children and not because she is wealthy. She talked about large pieces of land located in different parts of Machakos County which she had acquired through the sale of herbal medicine. The researcher noted that the long distance between the different places was an indicator of her inability to manage the farms in old age hence the need to have children of her own to take care of what she had worked hard to attain. She has more confidence in them than other relatives. Second, the marriage saved her from social stigma and extinction. She was happy with her status and this had given her peace and courage to approach old age with her offspring around her to bring her food and water. It was obvious she was not lonely and she felt secure. These findings are in

agreement with our research theory, Maslow's theory of needs, (1970). According to Maslow, people have different needs which if not met are seen as a problem and this influences their behaviour in an attempt to seek for solutions. Needs identified include the need for food, water, sense of belonging, security and status. The study noted that these are physical, social and psychological. *Iweto* marriage has enabled her to attain the needs. This implies that without children, she may not have attained self-actualization. The study concluded that the *Iweto* marriage is practised as a logical consequence when conditions demand. This points towards the significance the marriage.

2.6 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter looked at the importance of marriage and procreation among the Akamba of Kangundo. It is evident from the study that right from the traditional society, marriage and procreation continue to receive attention. A lot of time and resources is also spent on preparation. In the first section, we discussed the relationship between marriage and procreation. It was observed that the two are interrelated and have a divine origin. Marriage and procreation are, therefore, not optional. The society expects children to be born within the marriage institution for them to acquire a socially acceptable identity and for the lineage to be extended. Pregnancy outside marriage is not encouraged and in traditional society whoever was responsible for the pregnancy was pressured to marry the girl. It was established that children are the measure or the definition of a good marriage. Among the Akamba of

Kangundo women are defined by their status and ability to give birth. Marriage is seen as a covenant yet without a male child to extend the lineage; many questions remain in the minds of the relatives. The study established that children are a fundamental part of marriage but this does not imply that divorce should always follow in case of childlessness. There are several ways used to salvage the situation and the *Iweto* marriage was identified as one of the ways. This study concluded that *Iweto* marriage is important because it prevents what could be viewed from the African perspective as a family tragedy. It enables the childless woman to meet her most important needs. This is in harmony with our research theory which states that the desire to fulfill our basic needs influences our behaviour. The finding sheds light towards the importance of *Iweto* marriage and helped us to achieve the first objective of this study-‘To examine the significance of *Iweto* marriage among the Akamba of Kangundo’.

The study deduced that the *Iweto* marriage plays a significant role among the Akamba community and this confirms our first research premises-The *Iweto* marriage has a significant role among the Akamba of Kangundo. However though the marriage is still significant, some changes have occurred. The next chapter seeks to examine the changes in *Iweto* marriage.

CHAPTER THREE

CHANGES IN THE *IWETO* MARRIAGE

3. Introduction

In the previous chapter, *Iweto* marriage was discussed as a form of marriage that was developed as the people sought to overcome a religio cultural and social problem. This study recognizes the fact that change is inevitable in a society where there is contact and exchange of ideas. People intermingle; choices are made as they pick some aspects of the other. In the process, some elements of the old culture are retained; some are modified, while others are rejected. This brings about culture change. This implies that culture is a series of accumulated choices made at different times depending on the surrounding religio- social economic environment. The end product is a new culture that portrays the *status quo*. This observation is in agreement with earlier studies done by Mugambi (1975), Stott and Coote (1980). In their studies they observe that cultural practices keep on changing as people formulate solutions to the problems they encounter in society. They portray culture as a social construction that is dynamic in nature. From the study, it was evident that some changes have occurred in traditional marriage practices among the Akamba of Kangundo.

In concurrence with the observations above, this study noted that with the introduction of Christianity, the *Iweto* marriage like many African cultural practices has survived but with a lot of changes. To a large extent, there has been a modification in various areas. This chapter is more specific and

focuses on the changes in *Iweto* marriage. The factors that have contributed to these changes have been highlighted and extent of the transformation illustrated. This helps us to understand the changes and the extent of the transformation in the wake of Christianity.

3.1 Change from Young Girls to Single Mothers.

Initially *Iweto* marriage involved young girls. A married woman without a son identified a young girl and if the husband was satisfied with her choice, he went ahead to inform his kinsmen. After fulfilling all the expectations pertaining to marriage negotiations, the young girl (below 20 years) was brought home. She was a daughter-in-law. The female husband took care of her as a young girl and identified her nephew to have sexual relationship with her. The female husband was supposed to continue taking care of her. This study has established that those who get married today are not young girls but single mothers who have either got children out of wedlock or are divorced. The above scenario implies that the female husband does not have to take care of *Iweto* as before, for those who get married are elderly, independent and they know how to run a home.

It was noted that with the modern educational system, girls spend most of their time in school and by the time they are through with their education, they have been influenced by Western ways of thought and Christianity. For most of them, their thoughts are directed towards a monogamous marriage. However, it was reported that situations do arise when it becomes difficult to

have such a marriage. This is when one has children before marriage or is divorced. Some of those interviewed like Kamene (O.I.3.8.2009), Mutave and Yula (O.I.6.9.2009), noted that they would have wanted to get married to men but now that they have many children, it has not been possible for men prefer women without children. Such women lack serious life partners and end up in *Iweto* marriage. They further observed that their families and society expected them to get married. Some of those who had been married before noted that their past experiences with male husbands have deterred them from getting married again to men for fear of being victims of violence yet marriage makes one to fill complete when interacting with other women. Marriage to another woman gives single mothers the much desired sense of belonging and better reputation. From the foregoing discussion, it is noted that previously *Iweto* marriage took care of the interest of the family without a son and young girls were available but today it has acquired a new function of rescuing the single or divorced mothers, searching for somebody to marry them.

3.2 Paternity of the *Iweto* Children

In the traditional society, a man from within the family was identified to beget children with the *Iweto*. The aim of getting a close relative was to ensure that foreign blood or foreign traits were not introduced in the clan. Bad traits and family curses were kept away. Children born belonged to the clan and were initiated in that clan. That way, the clan norms were passed on to all the members. The children were well-behaved and in case of indiscipline, they could easily be punished for they belonged to the clan.

According to Kimotho and Ndunda (O.I, 6.6. 2009), things have changed, now that those who join the institution have their own children. These children are usually accepted regardless of their clan or tribe of origin. This is because children are very important especially for continuity of the lineage. The study noted that these children are recognized and appreciated. What the childless couples require is an heir recognized by the community.

The study established that a ceremony involving slaughtering of a He goat is conducted to assimilate those who come with their mothers to the clan. The blood is shed to involve the ancestors and to act as a seal to the agreement that they will abide by the rules of the clan. The meat is shared among the family or clan members including *Iweto* and her children. The sharing brings them together as one big family. The new members take an oath to remain faithful to their new family. This however, is not a guarantee that they will live by what they promise for by the time they come, they have acquired their own way of doing things and cannot easily be changed. A good example is seen in the following case study:

Case study 1

In the course of collecting data for the study, the researcher came across a meeting organized by a clan on 6.6.2009 where one of the *Iweto* was the subject of discussion. She had been married with two teenage boys and a girl ten years ago. After marriage, she got three more children. It was alleged that together with her children, they had refused to attend clan meetings and

ceremonies and this was seen as a disregard for the clan. The negative attitude of her older children was associated with the fact that they knew their initial clan. By the time their mother divorced, they were old enough to understand what happened. It was unanimously agreed that the clan had contributed towards her bridewealth and had traditionally, through a ceremony, recognized the family as members of the clan hence their concerns were valid. There was need for the family to follow the laid down norms of their new clan. It was agreed that failure to change may force the clan to take the *Iweto* back to her parents as per the laid down norms. This was an indication that though there are some changes in the practice, some of the rules that guided the marriage can still be followed.

When the subject of fatherhood of the *Iweto* children came up, a clan member observed that a change had been noted. The *Iweto* had decided to pick a man from a different clan to beget children contrary to clan expectations. The issue of who should be assigned to give children to *Iweto* was raised but none of the men was willing to commit himself. They shied off hence the issue was left unresolved and this implied that she had an option to continue to chose who to have sexual relation with unlike before.

Based on the above case study, the researcher identified the change in the paternity of children and after the meeting, the researcher sought to establish the reason for their response. Several reasons were given. One informant Kimotho (O.I. 6.6.2009) observed that most of the men in the clan meetings

are professing Christians. According to Christian teaching, a sexual relationship outside holy matrimony is regarded as adultery for Christian marriage is exclusively monogamous (Gen 2:21, Matt 19:4). Christian husbands are expected to be faithful to one wife. He noted that with the coming of Christianity, it has not been easy to identify a relative to beget children with *Iweto*. He noted that adherence to Christian teaching has played a significant role in changing the initial arrangement that ensured foreign blood was not brought in to the clan. The study therefore, concluded that failure to get a man within the clan has forced the *Iweto* to move outside the clan and this has contributed to the change highlighted in the organization of the marriage.

Sila (O.I.6.6.2009) identified modernization as the reason for the change seen in the organization of the marriage. He noted that many women have been influenced by individualism and liberalization hence have become selfish and will not allow their husband to get involved in such arrangements. He further observed that acceptance of such a responsibility will be received negatively by the women and this will cause trouble at home which may lead to separation or divorce. The study noted that apart from Christians, the fear and respect of their wives made the men to be reticent toward such arrangement. Second, the men are not willing to lose their wives for an *Iweto* because the children from the marriage legally belong to the female husband. This explains why most men would not endanger their marriage for the sake of the *Iweto*.

The Christian women interviewed confirmed that they were not willing to allow their spouses to be involved in such arrangements for this goes against the Christian teaching. The same argument was also common with all the women who had with post-primary education certificates; some argued that they would rather separate with their husband and live as single mothers than be involved in such arrangements. They observed that the financial implication that may follow such arrangement due to the present educational system and modern ways of living will interfere with the family financial stability. Second, they said that such arrangement implies multiple sex partners and this is associated with sexually transmitted diseases including HIV and AIDS. The *Iweto* enters into a sexual relationship with the married men when her HIV status and that of the man is unknown and this endangers the families. The researcher noted that this is a deterring factor for many married women who would have allowed their husbands to be involved sexually with the *Iweto* and this accounts for the change noted.

Based on the foregoing discussion, the study deduced that the issue of a man being assigned to an *Iweto* has become complicated hence not easy for the female husband to get a relative for *Iweto* leading to the change highlighted. The chair person of the clan when contacted expressed his concern on the upcoming trends in *Maweto* marriages. He noted that the new trends were a threat to the unity of the clan and expressed the need to revert to the original arrangements of identifying a relative instead of leaving the *Iweto* to choose a

man, for herself, from outside the clan. He felt that though Christianity made it difficult to identify a relative to beget children with the *Iweto*, it was still possible to engage one for a short time so as to keep the arrangement confidential. This will ensure that the children born are from the clan. Second it will ensure that strong ties do not develop between the two to the disadvantage of his immediate family which is the fear of some of the married women. However, no matter what arrangement is made, a sexual partner for the *Iweto* contravene the seventh commandment which states that “Thou shall not commit adultery”. (Exodus: 20:14).The implication here is that the change noted in the paternity of the children is bound to remain.

3.3 Changes in the Integration of *Iweto* Children into the Clan.

It is important to note that the entire fifteen young adult interviewed from *Iweto* marriage appreciated the fact that this form of marriage has given them a home and an identity. Three brothers noted that in case their mother is divorced, she will have to go alone for they are now married and they know no other home. The study took this as an indicator of their gratitude.

Five of the young adults interviewed noted that though they are grateful, all is not well for some of the relatives look at them as intruders because they would like to inherit the land of the childless woman. Kioko (O.I 7.6.2009) said that in their family, there are incidences that have made them realize they have not fully been accepted and this is one reason why they feel they do not fully belong to the clan. This also implies that they do not feel indebted to

follow all the laid down norms. Traditionally, the children from such marriage were warmly welcomed to the family. This encouraged them to follow the laid down norms for they did not want to interfere with the good family relationship. The study noted that the society's treatment of *Iweto* and her children has changed and this is responsible for the conflict experienced between the children and the clan members.

3.4 Roles Played by the Female Husband and the *Iweto*

The influx of Western culture has not spared the *Iweto* marriage. Traditionally, the female husband was perceived to be the breadwinner because she provided the land where food crops were grown. *Iweto* use to depend on the female husband for food and shelter. With rapid increase in population, the land available has reduced in size and consequently, land is not the only means of survival in the society. The basic needs have also been modified hence the marriage has become accommodative to the socio-economic changes seen in the society.

The study interviewed twelve female husbands and noted that they had married when they were over forty five. This was after they had attempted to get a son and failed. Only three had a reliable source of income, mainly from small-scale trade and sale of farm produce like milk and maize. They noted that initially, coffee provided a reliable source of income and this enabled them to financially support their families. However, things have changed in the coffee sector, prices are very low and this has discouraged them from

taking good care of the coffee hence they are not able to support their families like before. It was noted that two of the three female husbands with some income are medicine persons and this supplements their income. However, one of them Loisa (O.I.1.9.2009) noted that as a result of old age, she is not able to reach the patients or to collect her herbs like before and the income from the practice is going down. Some female husbands said that, they had sold part of the land to buy food or to meet their medical needs and the study took this as a reason for the small portions of land owned by some female husbands. The study noted that in the process of adopting a more western way of life, land ownership has changed. Land is individually owned and can be sold at will. The small portions of land left behind cannot provide enough food crops to sustain their families.

This study, therefore, concluded that most of the female husbands have little or no reliable source of income because by the time they marry, they are past child-bearing age and very frail. The above scenario has left the some *Maweto* to support the family financially. They assume the feminine and the masculine roles unlike before where they had only a feminine role and stayed at home to take care of the family.

Ten of the *Maweto* interviewed said that by the time they got married, their female husbands were old. They mentioned rising cost of acquiring education, clothing and food as some of the needs which could not be met. Observation done on the types of houses and the kind of life they live

indicated high levels of poverty and this confirmed the low economic position of the female husbands and their families. The study established that many of the *Maweto* are involved in economic activities like small-scale trade or work as farmhands unlike before. Some have also made friendship with men willing to support them financially. The hard economic times have left them distressed for financial support leading to multiple partners. It was noted that the desire to fulfill their needs has dictated their cause of action and brought about the changes noted. This study concluded that the marriage has undergone transformation and has acquired new dimensions reflecting the influence of the present materialistic world. Procreation is no longer the reason for sexual relationship but the search for financial support in order to meet their needs.

3.5 Changes in the *Iweto* offspring Surnames

The children in the *Iweto* marriage belong to *Mwaitu* and were initially supposed to use her name. According to Ndunda (O.I.6.6.2009), this is the reason why some names are shared by both sexes in Kangundo, for example Mumo, Mutinda and Muthike.

This study established that though the *Maweto* are comfortable using their female husband's name, currently most of the children from *Iweto* marriage are not willing to use the name of the female social father whom they refer to as a grandmother. Traditionally, one who did not want to use the name of the grandmother could use the name of the grandfather. When contacted, some of

these young adults expressed their wish to be identified with a male figure as the main reason why they prefer to use their grandfather's names. They noted that the dominant patriarchal nature of the Akamba society has made the use of a female name to appear improper. They argued that the present generation does not seem to understand the ideology behind the marriage, though it is still practised. This includes the children in our schools who have been brought up believing that children belong to fathers. This leaves children from *Iweto* marriage vulnerable or exposed to ridicule by their fellow age-mates in case they use a female name. The study noted that children from these marriages are therefore comfortable with male figure identification though deep in their hearts they know they belong to *Mwaitu* and their grandfather has very little to do with them. Out of the fifteen young adults interviewed, ten confirmed that they use their grandfather's names. The study concluded that the use of the grandfather's name for identification is a common phenomenon among the *Iweto* children.

Though most of the children have decided to use the names of their grandfathers, another recent change noted during the study is an attempt to identify with their biological father. Some have decided to use their biological father's name as their surname instead of their grandfather's name. This is not difficult today since the relationship is no longer a secret hence they have identified their biological father. The following case study 2 is used to illustrate this change.

Case study 2

In this case study, a female husband by the name Mutio had three daughters and married an *Iweto* by the name Esther Ndulu. A nephew Musyoka (not his real name) was identified to beget children with Ndulu. Nine children were born out of the relationship and in total Mutio had eleven children. This study established that, all the children from the *Iweto* have decided to use their biological father's name as their surname instead of Mutio's name or her husband's name, Wambua.

When contacted, Musyoka, (O.I.6.9.2009) did not mind about the arrangement. He argued that everyone in the clan knows he is the biological father. In this case, the arrangement was not a secret as such. The children have all through known him; he was a regular visitor as they were growing up and he encouraged them to work hard in school. He further supported them financially and ensured that their school fee was paid in good time. As a result, many of the children excelled in school. He helped some to get employment for he was a respectful and influential person in the community.

Musyoka was fast to note that the children though they use his name still belong to Mutio and he has not given them any land. They cannot attend Musyoka's family meetings nor can they inherit any property from him. There are there to ensure that Mutio's household is not extinct. This confirmed that though they are not using Mutio's name, they still know they belong to her. When she passed away, they ensured that she got a decent

burial and they were recognized as her next of kin. They are the only ones who have the legal right to inherit Mutio's land according to the Akamba customary law (Penwill, 1951:20).

All the children respect Musyoka and appreciate his effort that enabled them to go through their education. They refer to him as father and in case of a problem, they consult him, a significant change identified from the earlier arrangement.

3.6 Changes in the Moral Standards Surrounding the Practice

In the Akamba indigenous community, sexual relations were never promiscuous but regulated by well laid down customs and the sexual affair of the *Iweto* was kept as a secret. The children of *Iweto* were not supposed to know their biological father hence her relationship with a man was strictly confidential. The man was supposed to come in the evening when all the children had retired to bed and he left in the wee hours of the morning. Once the children grew big, he was supposed to stop the visits and by that time, the *Iweto* had enough children. The purpose of the visits was procreation so he could not continue once the *Iweto* had enough children hence the sanctity of the institution was upheld. The study noted that the *Iweto* was forced to emotional detachment but had to abide by the arrangement for it was the expected norm of behaviour at that time. Today, the situation is different, the men continue the visits even when the children are mature and the purpose of the visit at this point is to have sexual relationship.

Second, some of the affairs are not hidden from children who see different men come and go. This contradicts the moral standards set by the society and it is sending wrong signals to the youth, that there is nothing wrong with having multiple sex partners. According to the elders, such open promiscuous behaviour encourage the youth to engage in pre-marital sex.

Recent incidents of men fighting when they meet in the *Iweto* house in front of the *Mwaitu* and the children were numerous. According to one *Iweto* by the name Mutave (O.I.6.9.2009), most of the *Maweto* are not in gainful employment and with *Mwaitu* unable to provide the family basic needs; the *Iweto* has been forced by circumstances to identify different men to assist her financially. She further noted that the *Iweto* changes the men at her will depending on their ability to support her financially. Traditionally, *Mwaitu* could withdraw support and take the *Iweto* back to her home on the basis of unfaithfulness. The fear of divorce kept the *Iweto* faithful to the laid down regulations, however, with the *Iweto* providing her own financial support, the study concluded that she has an upper hand and cannot be easily corrected.

Other than the money element, the influence of liberalization cannot be ignored. The study established that the institution has acquired freedom of choice because the women want to exercise control of their life. An *Iweto* in a focus discussion group (10.8.2009) had the following to say on the choice of partners;

Now that *Mwaitu* and the clan cannot provide financial support, there is no reason why they should have control on who they associate with.

The *Maweto* like many other women expressed their wish to be set free to choose their partners. They noted that many people chose their partners without consulting their parents. They argued that *Iweto* marriage is not different and the society should be prepared to embrace the change. They noted that they have physical and psychological needs hence the need for freedom of choice so as to be able to meet their basic needs.

This study deduced that the above scenario has led to the marriage acquiring new characteristics. The *Iweto* can change the men at her will without fear. The study noted that those who join this marriage have failed to adhere to regulations that go with it in order to keep the sanctity of the institution. Cultural settings and norms that helped to protect the institution from abuse have been ignored. In the processes of looking for a way to respond to the situation they find themselves in, new structures have been put in practice. People have therefore modified important social institutions to suit their needs. The study noted that the new dimensions contradict the earlier arrangement and is a violation of the expected mode of behaviour in the society. This endangers the life of the *Maweto*, their partners and their families. An opinion question to establish whether the community was aware of one negative aspect of the *Iweto* marriage was asked to all the 102 respondents and the following were the findings.

Table 3.1: Demerits of *Iweto* marriage.

Negative aspects identified	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total respondents	%
Sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS.	13	14	12	4	8	15	66	64.7
Immorality	1	15	2	1	0	0	19	18.6
Breaking families.	1	4	3	1	0	0	9	8.8
Not aware of the negative Aspects.	0	0	1	0	4	3	8	7.8
Total	15	33	18	6	12	18	102	100 %

KEY

- 1 – Young adults from the *Iweto* marriage 5- Female husbands
2- Church leaders /Church members 6- *Maweto*
3- Family elders
4- Administrators

From the table above, 64.71% noted that *Iweto* marriage today entails multiple partners and this exposed the persons involved to risk of getting infected with HIV and AIDS. This was the most common answer among the respondents. It was the opinion of most people that the marriage is a sure way of spreading HIV and AIDS even to the matrimonial bed. This is because the partners of the *Maweto* are supposed to be married with their own children for they have no legal rights on the *Iweto* children.

A case was highlighted by an assistant chief who declined to be named (O.I.7.6.2009). He noted that two couples have lost their lives due the husband's relationship with an *Iweto* who was infected with HIV and AIDS. The study noted that the fear of the *Iweto* marriage spreading infections was a reality in Kangundo. Eighteen point six percent observed that the institution has become an avenue for immorality. The marriage has acquired some characteristics similar to those of prostitution because from sexual relationship, they get financial support. The study noted that the community is aware that the marriage reinforces immorality and goes against the very values the society is advocating for. Eight point eight percent noted that the *Iweto* marriage is a threat to family stability. Families have broken up due to involvement of a married man with an *Iweto* and this has brought untold suffering to the children. It was noted that the changes in the *Iweto* marriage have a negative effect on the *Iweto* marriage.

Out of the twelve female husbands interviewed, eight identified a negative aspect but noted that they had no other way of fulfilling the desire for an heir. Of the eighteen *Maweto* interviewed, fifteen seemed to know the dangers associated with multiple partners sighting diseases like HIV and AIDS while four were not oblivious of the danger. An *Iweto* wondered how they were expected to handle the situation when she is expected by the female husband to have children. Second, she noted that the children need food, clothing and education. At the end of the interview, she remarked that; “There is no way I can watch my children remain at home while other children go to school and nor see them go without food.” This concurs with Waruhiu (1998:139), when she notes that; few women have time to explore their own needs. They are pre-occupied with the needs of others. They relate their achievement in terms of what they have been able to do for their children for example paying school fees or providing food for the family.

The study deduced that the desire to meet the needs of their children is fundamental to the *Maweto*. Like many other women, they are tender hearted and moved by the needs of other people. This has influenced their cause of action; they keep multiple partners to support them financially. The *Maweto* have responded to the situation they find themselves in and this accounts for the changes in the practice. Based on the finding, the study deduced that very few respondents (7.8%) were unaware of the negative aspects of the marriage. It is important to note that the HIV and AIDS indicator survey in Kenya shows that 3 out of every 5 new infections are seen in women, (KAIS-

2007:12). The report notes that the infection rate for women is higher (8.7 %) compared to the rate in men (5.6%). UNICEF report on life skills, girls, HIV /AIDS and education, concurs with this observation. (<http://www.Unicef.Org/Lifeskills/index8657.html>).The report states that; “World-wide, 50% of adults living with HIV and AIDS are women and the rate of HIV and AIDS infection among women is higher than men. This is on an upward trend due to socio-economic factors compounded with biological factors which increase their vulnerability. USAID report on Gender, Education, HIV and AIDS further states that; in addition to the biological factors that place females at increased risk of HIV and AIDS, Poverty, economic dependence, lack of information, and harmful traditional practices make women vulnerable to unprotected and coercive sex. (<http://www.docstoc.com/docs/32164889/HIVAIDS> and gender-briefing)

The study deduced that as long as the *Maweto* have multiple partners they are more vulnerable to HIV and AIDS. The transformation in the marriage makes them more exposed to infections thus endangers their lives and that of their partners leading to the spread of the pandemic in the community. According to a local administrator (Kalekye, O.I.6.8.2009), cultural practices should not be allowed to overshadow health issues. She further observed that many cultural practices have been transformed and have become irrelevant in the new social religious environment. Her remarks are concurring with Gehman (2005:3) when he observes that “it appears that African traditional worldview is disintegrating and increasingly irrelevant in the modern Africa which is

unfolding before us”. It was noted that as much as the *Iweto* marriage is appreciated by some members of the community, the changes have raised concerns for they are not in harmony with the Christian teaching on sex and marriage nor the society’s moral values and health guiding principles. The study concluded that many people are aware that there are changes that have occurred in this form of marriage and these are a threat to the family institution and the society at large.

3.7 Summary and Conclusions

From the foregoing discussion, it has been noted that the *Iweto* marriage is a reality in Kangundo though it has undergone several changes. An attempt has been made to bring out the changes that have occurred in the marriage. This is in accord with our research objective “To identify the changes that have taken place in the *Iweto* Marriage and establish the reason for the changes.” It was noted that the coming of Christianity and Westernization has created a challenge to the people of Kangundo. It brought a new religio-social economic environment which had a great impact on the African worldview and way of life. Assigning a man to an *Iweto* has become difficult for those involved in organizing for the marriage. The basic needs have changed, children have to go to school and this calls for financial support. The *Iweto* would like to see her children get educated hence she is forced by circumstances to look for means to meet the cost of modern education. This shows that the *Iweto* has become less dependent on her female husband and the clan. This has also left her free to make some decisions especially on

whom to beget children with. The study deduced that the changes seen have been necessitated by the changes in the religio-social economic scenario which has affected her needs. The *Iweto* actions are geared towards attainment of the new types of family needs.

Accordingly, the study noted that the *Iweto* marriage no longer keeps the actual family lineage as traditionally expected though the children in this marriage are welcomed irrespective of their paternity. It was deduced that the change reflects the community creativity. Consequently, changes occurred in the *Iweto* marriage in an attempt to overcome the challenges of adapting to the new environment. The findings confirmed our research premises that the *Iweto* marriage has undergone changes as a result of Christianity. But other than Christianity, introduction of money economy and modern education had also contributed to the change.

It was also noted that the new social-economic scenario has overturned the cultural rules and regulations that protected the marriage from abuse. This has promoted immorality yet people still hold on. This chapter has shown that though people change their way of life as a response to changes in the society, they embrace the changes not because they are good but because they are socially meaningful and bring satisfaction. The study concluded that not all aspects of the *Iweto* marriage have been changed. The changes seen in *Iweto* marriage have not penetrated the core level where the significance of the marriage is found. That is why the initial function has been maintained

despite the changes and the marriage is still recognized and prevalent in Kangundo in spite of over hundred years of Christianity. The next chapter seeks to examine the persistence of the *Iweto* marriage among the Akamba Christians of Kangundo.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE PERSISTENCE OF THE *IWETO* MARRIAGE AMONG THE AKAMBA CHRISTIANS OF KANGUNDO

4. Introduction

In the previous chapter, it was noted that with Christianity and Westernization, African traditional views have been modified and others changed but the people's perception on certain issues related to marriage and procreation has not been easy to change. According to Bahemuka (1982:5), the coming of Christianity started the wheel of change and brought many changes to the individual especially those who embraced Christianity. The structures that supported the individual were also affected by the change. This study notes that, though religion is capable of transforming culture, it was established that *Iweto* is still valued and prevalent in Kangundo district. This chapter critically analyses the factors that continue to sustain the *Iweto* marriage in Kangundo in spite of many years of evangelization. To get a good image of the outcome of Christianity in the region, we will first look at the history of the Church in Kangundo.

4.1 The History of the Church in Kangundo

According to Bahemuka (1982: 21), introduction of Christianity in Ukambani was not easy. Early missionaries like Dr Ludwig Krapf a Lutheran missionary who had been sent out by the Church Missionary Society tried to establish mission stations in parts of Ukambani in 1849 but failed because the Akamba people looked upon him as an intruder. Later in 1851, he returned and though

he managed to translate the Gospel of Matthew and Mark into Kikamba language, he did not manage to win the Akamba to his way of thinking and was forced by circumstances to return to Rabai on the East African Coast. Bahemuka further notes that in 1891, the Imperial East Africa Company tried to penetrate Ukambani but without success. Later the African Inland Mission managed to establish a mission station at Muisuni, Kangundo in 1896 (Ibid, P.26). A Church was constructed and thereafter, they built a school where children from all parts of the district were enrolled since it was the only school at the time.

According to Munro (1975:10), the African Inland Mission at Kangundo attracted many children because they gave material form of motivation which included money. Later, another station was opened in Mumbuni in 1902, Mbooni 1902, and Mukaa 1908, Bahemuka, (op cit., p.26). It was noted that there after the Catholic Church and the Salvation Army Church followed and by 1925, the teaching of the church had spread to many parts of Kangundo. According to Muindi, a Church elder (O.I.5.6.2010), the missionaries not only taught the Gospel of Jesus Christ but also the Western way of life including modern educational and medical systems. Schools were set up by the AIC at Muisuni (currently Kangundo High School), by the catholic at Kanzalu (currently Misyani Girls) and by the SA at Kinyui and Kawethei (both secondary schools currently). These observations concur with Munro (1975:107) when he notes that; in evangelization of Ukambani, different, missionaries used different approaches. Among these approaches were the

agricultural, medical and educational. The latter made slow progress but in due time, became the most effective in bringing the Akamba into contact with Christian message.

Mutiso (1975:10) is in agreement when he notes that due to constant contact with the missionaries; nearly all those who attended mission schools became Christians. They were used by missionaries as catechists and eventually, new ideas, practices and values were introduced to the people. Mulwa (O.I, 7.9.2009) gave an example of the late Benjamin Watuma who was ordained as the first AIC minister in 1945 and relocated to Kakuyuni where he put up a church and started modern farming. Many people came to learn how to grow coffee and bananas. In the process, he preached to them and were converted. This study deduced that Christianity and Western ideologies spread to different areas through those who attended the school trained as pastors or teachers and were posted to different parts of that district.

From the foregoing discussion, it is evident that Kangundo District had the privilege of early exposure to Christianity and modernisation than many other districts in Ukambani yet cultural practices like the *Iweto* marriage have persisted despite over 100 years of Christianity in the district. This observation concurs with Gehman (2005:68) when he notes that the Christian Church is well-planted in Ukambani yet the deep seated values of the traditional worldview still persist. Shorter (1994) and Magesa (1997) are of a similar opinion that in spite of a strong Christian influence, the basic African

attitude has remained. It was noted that this perhaps explains the persistence of the *Iweto* marriage.

The study noted that change is inevitable as human beings adjust to fit in the new religio- social economic environment; however, some things are easier to change than others. The Akamba of Kangundo had their values some of which seem to be in harmony with the values taught by the missionaries. For example, issues related to dressing were easily adopted because; the need to cover certain parts of the body was universal. The study notes that, what was meaningful and beneficial from the new teaching was easily accepted and adopted. What seemed to interfere with the survival of the community encountered pockets of resistance. This is in agreement with our research theory by Shorter (1973) when he observes that some levels of culture are faster changed than others.

According to Kithusi (O.I, 6.9.2009), it was a challenge for both the missionaries and the Akamba Christians because what was desirable and cherished by the Akamba was undesirable to the missionaries. For example, the different forms of marriage which were there to ensure life is transmitted in a socially acceptable manner were not acknowledged by the missionaries. These observations are in agreement with Mbiti (1969:130) and Shorter (1994:46). Mbiti notes that in African context, marriage is the focus of existence and every marriage is expected to bring forth children while Shorter observes that African cultural practices are so central in Africa that they keep

on resurfacing even in modern scientific age. The study notes that the primary place of procreation in the society and some of the different ways used to ensure that every person has contributed to the growth of the society have persisted though they contravene the Christian teachings on marriage. In the Christian context, marriage is a union of one man and one woman, primarily for companionship and children are seen as a gift from God. In Genesis 2:18; “Then the lord God said, it is not good for man live alone. I will make a suitable companion to help him” In Matthew 19:4; “God made them male and female... For this reason a man shall leave his mother and father and be united to his wife and they will become one flesh”. Having a suitable companion and becoming one flesh implies a monogamous marriage. Christian marriage is, therefore, purely monogamous.

It was noted that, Mark 10:7 and Ephesians 5:31, like Genesis 2:18-24 and Matthew: 19:4 lay emphasis on the monogamous nature of marriage and this is an indication of the importance of this form of marriage for Christians. The spouse is united permanently in one body and spirit during the life time of the spouse and this excludes all other forms of marriage. Consequently, sex outside this union is not acceptable. It is seen as adultery, and this is a sin. The Bible states that man shall cling to his wife not wives. This means that there is no room for a third party like the *Iweto*.

To the Christian, marriage has a spiritual dimension. It is a symbol of love between Christ and his Church thus an outstanding sign of something

spiritual, a holy union. It is respected by all, for what man has put together, no man should put asunder. Just like Christ and the Church, the love between the spouses is unconditional. Paul emphasizes on commitment love and loyalty which do not change with circumstances (Ephesians: 22-6:4) and this is the basis for Christian teaching on marriage in relation to procreation. Children are, therefore, not a fundamental feature of Christian marriage. When Adam was given Eve, he exclaimed with joy because he saw a suitable companion, (Gen 2:23). At that time, they did not have children. This is an indication that according to the Christian teaching, the union is not based on the ability to procreate. The study deduced that *Iweto* marriage is not in line with the Bible teachings on marriage and that is why the early missionaries forbid the *Iweto* marriage. Kilonzo (O.I.6.6.2009) notes that those in such marriages were kept outside the Church by the missionaries because they wanted to pass a message of total transformation but this did not stop people from getting in to this form of marriage. The study took this as a clear indication that there are several factors that have continued to sustain *Iweto* marriage among the Akamba Christians of Kangundo.

4.2 Factors that Continue to Sustain the *Iweto* Marriage

A questionnaire given to the 102 respondents to establish the reason why women marry other women in Kangundo gave different reasons as indicated in table 4.1.

Table 4.1**Reasons for *Iweto* marriage today and corresponding percentages.**

Reason for marriage.	Number of respondent	%
Patriarchal traditional beliefs and practices in marriage, procreation, identity and inheritance	50	49.0
Low education levels and poverty among the women.	20	19.6
The need for care in old age	10	9.8
Negative attitude towards adoption	9	8.8
Difficult adoption procedures in Kenya	6	5.8
Coming of Christianity	2	1.9
Caring nature of women	5	4.9
Total	102	100%

With the help of Maslow (1970) and Shorter (1973) theories the factors were examined. This enabled the researcher to understand the persistence of the *Iweto* marriage in the wake of modernization and Christianity. The following section will look at each of the factors in turn.

4.2.1. Patriarchal Traditional Beliefs and Practices

From the data collected, it was noted that 49 % of the respondents gave patriarchal practices as the reason behind the occurrence of the *Iweto*

marriage in Kangundo. This had the highest number of responses or tallies. Features of patriarchal practices were cited in marriage and procreation, inheritance and in acquisition of identity.

A large proportion of the respondents interviewed observed that the Akamba community of Kangundo is basically a male-dominated society. This opinion was common irrespective of the respondent's age, sex, education or religious affiliation. They noted that most of the traditional structures are made to favour men. This is in agreement with Penwill (1951:12, 28) when he notes that a father is responsible for her daughter before she is married but when she goes to her husband, he assumes responsibility. He further notes that the sons are heirs to the father's property. These are an indication that the Akamba community is a patriarchal society.

In a patriarchal society, male superiority and female subordination is stressed, (Iglitzin, 1976). Information obtained from a focus group discussion (4.8.2009) made up of female husbands affirms the patriarchal nature of the Akamba community in Kangundo. They noted that a man is held in high esteem. He is in most cases the decision maker and is always seen to be on the right side contrary to the woman who stays on the receiving end and when things don't work as expected, she takes the blame. The study observed that the woman is subjected to an inferior position. She is not seen as an equal partner in marriage. The study observed that the patriarchal nature of community has shaped the people's view towards women. A woman is

judged by her ability to get married and to keep the marriage in a good state. A good woman is one married at the right age. According to a focus group discussion made up of *Maweto* (10.8.2009), it was agreed that generally the right age is between twenty to twenty nine years. Those who fail to get married at this age are stigmatized by the society. Parents get concerned when their daughters delay to get married and the mother is blamed for not bringing them up well, more so if one has several unmarried daughters. Fathers when drunk blame their wives for not bringing up their daughters as expected by the society.

The study observed that when all is not well in a family, the blame goes to the woman. Yula (O.I.10.8.2009) concurs with the above observation when she said that the daughters, especially when they are single mothers are not spared the wrath of the drunkard father either. He would like to know why they are still there hence the availability of a female husband willing to marry her provides an escape route for the unmarried elderly women. Using Maslow's theory (1970), it was deduced that women have joined the institution in an effort to remove social stigma or family disgrace. This is a need they feel has to be met and it determines their actions.

This study established that many of the women currently involved in this marriage are either divorced mothers or single mothers who have never got married. A divorced woman or one with children outside wedlock carries a social stigma. The divorced woman is referred to as *mwisyoka* which means,

'one who keeps on returning home'. She is seen as a failure and an embarrassment to her family. Her prospects of marriage to a descent man are jeopardized by the fact that she has several children. Men are discouraged from marrying from a home where more than one girl has divorced. They believe that girls from such a home cannot make good wives. This implies that future marriages from the home are put at risk. The home is referred to as a home of *misyoka* (plural).

The researcher came across a village with the same name. According to Kiio (4.8.2009), it is alleged that this village was given that name because there was a time many girls from the area had separated from their husbands; however most of them later, were married as *Maweto*. The study noted that the community expects all women to be married unless one has severe physical/mental disability. Failure to get a man to marry leaves some women with no other option but to have a female husband. Many single mothers therefore get consolation in *Iweto* marriage. Once married, she is recognized and respected as any other married woman in the community.

It was noted that after marriage, procreation is expected to follow. Traditionally, this was the final seal of marriage according to Mbiti (1989:107). Failure to give birth led to a woman being seen as incomplete. Based on this discussion, this study notes that procreation determined the status of women among other things and continue to do so. This observation concurs with Mutuku (2003) when he notes that 'the status of a woman

changed immediately she gave birth'. Mukonyo (O.I, 4.8.2009), who was one of the female husbands interviewed said that after she married an *Iweto*, she acquired the title of *Mwaitu*. This has brought a lot of warmth and joy. It has made her to feel accepted in the family and she believes that this experience has enabled her to live longer. The following are sentiments expressed during the interview which illustrates the significance still attached to this marriage.

The female husband said that;

This marriage has given me a new lease of life; It has made me to be *Mundu* again and I'm happy about the turn of events. I do not want to imagine how life would have been without the *Iweto*.

Mundu refers to a complete human being and this is an indication of her state of mind before the marriage. She was in a state of hopelessness and did not feel worth to have been born or to be living. Having children of her own is what she was missing in her life hence she did not feel, a true woman. After she married an *Iweto*, she received a new lease of life, she felt complete. It was confirmed that the status of a childless woman changes immediately she marries an *Iweto* because the society expects her to get children through her. She is henceforth referred to as *Mwaitu*, an indication that she had received new status. This is not only a title of respect but it also raises her self- esteem for she is positively regarded and feels accepted by the family. It was noted that this reaction was a manifestation of the traditional worldview of the people of Kangundo which has been maintained by the community. Worldview here refers to the way people look at issues. This pattern of

thinking is reflected in their beliefs and practices of which *Iweto* marriage is one of those beliefs.

A respondent, an *Iweto* (O.I, 6.9.2009) said that the older generation has continued to maintain their old ways of thinking and doing things especially in relation to procreation. This is because old habits and beliefs are difficult to give up especially when children are exposed to the laid down structures or roles as they grow up. With time, they get used to those structures and view them as natural or normal. Consequently when they grow up, their views remain the same. Some of the young people interviewed concurred with the above observation when they said that though they are Christians, the strong desire for descendants was deeply impressed upon them by the older generation as they grew up and they knew at one time they were expected to marry and to have children. After they married, this continued because the older generations are out to see their off spring probably before they die. Through their persistent remarks, they encourage others to see and to embrace the traditional viewpoint.

Mutave (O.I.6.9.2009) recalled how her mother in-law from an earlier marriage put it; “*Muacha mila ni mtumwa, Musyi nandu*, when will my husband be born, I’m too lonely!’ (Meaning that, Mutave holds on to the traditional belief that, a family is one with many people). To her mother in-law, one cannot say she has a family unless there are children. Mutave further noted that traditionally, a grandson is referred to as a husband for he is very

close to his grandmother while a daughter is referred to as a wife by the grandfather. The mother in-law is a women leader in the Church yet she was anxious to see her grandchildren, an indication of resistance to change in people's way of thought.

It was noted that a woman who has given birth is highly respected and given the title "*Musyai*". The term *Musyai* simply means one who has given birth, a parent. According to one clan elder (Kyalo, O.I.3.8 2009), from the late nineties, the term *Musyai* has been incorporated in to the Akamba day-to-day greeting between elderly persons and school going pupils. Many of the respondents confirmed that this was a recent addition to the greetings. The greeting goes like this, "*Wakya*" "*Aaa Musyai*" (How are you?..... I'm fine mother /father). This is an indication of the new status that is achieved after procreation and acknowledged by the community in Kangundo. It denotes some form of dignity that comes with motherhood. This study deduced that the traditional viewpoint regarding certain issues has not changed much with the introduction of Christianity. A woman is still judged by her ability to give birth. She is assigned the role of nurturing the new life and blamed for failure to give birth especially to a son. Marriage and motherhood has been used to define a woman in Kangundo and this has contributed to the persistence of *Iweto* marriage in the district.

The position held by the community towards the role of the woman in procreation has been carried on ignoring the facts of modern medical science.

One of the church leaders interviewed, (O.I.6.8.2009) noted that during Church counseling sessions of childless couples, it is very common for the man to blame the woman. This occurs irrespective of the educational levels of the couple. The study notes that many studies have been done and shown that biologically men determine the sex of a child and can also be infertile. According to Mervyn, Hardinge and Shyrock, (1991:373) men are determinant of the sex of the child. A respondent who is a medical doctor in Kangundo and requested anonymity (O.I.6.6.2009) had similar observation. He said that:

There are many reasons behind childlessness but most can be treated and the situation reversed. However the treatment requires money, patience and co-operation from the couple but my experience as a doctor has taught me that men do not cooperate when requested to undergo medical examination. Many refuse to accompany their wives to hospital. This is because they believe that the woman is the cause of childlessness and is the one to be treated for conception to take place.

The researcher deduced that the community presumes procreation to be a woman's role and her value is based on her ability to have not only Children but male children. The fact that science has confirmed that man plays a significant role in determining the sex of a child has not been acknowledged by the community. This concurs with Maillu (1988:8) when he notes that,

The fact that, sex of a child is determined by the sperm of the father is a secret that has remained hidden to man until recently when medical science came up with the proof.

The reaction of most of the men interviewed confirmed the doctor's observation and Maillu's remarks. A good number of the men interviewed did not seem to grasp the fact that men could be at fault and are also responsible for the sex of the child. Their point of view was supported by their strong argument that they have witnessed men fail to get a child especially a son, with a particular woman but after they marry again, they get many sons. This to them, is more practical hence more convincing than the scientific point of view.

The study notes that inability to have a child is not an issue of women alone hence failure of men to seek medical intervention with their wives has contributed to some cases which could have been treated medically to go unattended. The study further noted that in spite of research having shown the role of man in procreation, the community in Kangundo continues to protect them to avoid stigmatization. The woman is assumed to be the one at fault and this shows a patriarchal practice. This concurs with Nasimiyu (1992:103) when she notes that in African traditional society, a childless man does not experience much humiliation since his close relative can father children on his behalf. Men ignore the fact that they are part of the solution hence they take another woman to provide the solution. So, the childless women are frustrated and are forced by circumstances to continue to look for a solution from their bearing. This is by marrying another woman to give birth on her behalf.

Female husbands, in FGD (4.8.009) concurred with the above observation when they noted that men are difficult to deal with when it comes to procreation issues. They snub the idea that it could be a medical issue which need to be addressed hence decline to visit health facilities. Some become violent and insult their wives. This brings more frustration to the childless woman. It was reported that out of desperation a lot of money is spent consulting medicine persons. With modern medicine some have attended hospitals but failed to succeed. The female husbands reported that failure to get a child is a painful experience and one may not understand unless she has gone through it. This is because it leads to rejection and marriage of another wife. The study deduced that in a society where procreation is seen as the climax of marriage and women are blamed for infertility, it is difficult to tell a sonless woman not to marry an *Iweto* to raise an heir on her behalf. As a sonless woman is considered a disappointment by the community, she develops a need to be accepted, appreciated and recognized. According to Maslow (1970), what a man can be, he must be. It was noted that the need for appreciation and recognition has contributed to the persistence of the *Iweto* marriage.

The study revealed that the *Iweto* marriage tends to exonerate men from the root cause of failing to have a son. This is an indication of a patriarchal belief and practice. The opinion held by the society has, therefore, played a significant role in encouraging *Iweto* marriage. Christianity has tried to discourage all none monogamous marriages, *Iweto* marriage included but this

study established that there are some areas of resistance in Kangundo. The community in Kangundo still attaches a lot of value to children and though the number of children one gives birth to is no longer an issue in judging the worthiness of a woman, the fact that one has not given birth to a son or has no child still raises many questions.

Mutua, a Church elder (O.I, 5.8.2009) had this to say; the state of childless is a practical issue but Christianity does not seem to have a practical answer. Marriage of *Iweto* therefore appears to be the only known practical means of survival for a childless woman in Kangundo. This shed some light on the third research question which seeks to establish the factors that continue to sustain *Iweto* marriage among the Akamba Kangundo. Nditi (2002:8) observes that “as long as there are childless marriages, *Iweto* marriages will remain a reality in Ukambani”. This study observes that the marriage is practised as a logical consequence when conditions demands. It is a practical solution to a natural occurrence beyond the people’s control. Other than the opinion held by the community on the role of women in procreation, the issue of inheritance was mentioned by the respondents as another factor sustaining the *Iweto* marriage.

4.2.2 Property Inheritance and its influence on the *Iweto* Marriage

The Akamba are a patriarchal society hence property traditionally belongs to the men and is passed on to the sons. (Penwill, 1951:28). Women are expected to inherit land through a male relative, first through the father, then

the husband and later through a son. The father shares the land equally among the sons and the daughters are not considered for they are expected to get married without exception. The boy therefore not only takes care of his parents, but also takes care of the family property. Consequently, a woman without a son is at a disadvantaged position. Information obtained from a FGD made up of female husbands on 4.8.2009 indicates that when it is evident that a woman cannot give birth or has girls only and has passed the age of procreation, most men marry another wife to beget sons with and later shares the land between the sons hence a woman with more male children is allocated a large portion of land compared to one with less. Evidence of patriarchy is, therefore, still seen in the way male children are applauded and given the opportunity to inherit land as shown in the following table which shows opinion on the inheritance of land by girls. See table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2: Opinion poll on the inheritance of land by women

Respondents	Girls to inherit land	Percentages
65	No	63.7%
35	Yes	34.3%
02	undecided	1.9%
102		100%

Results from the questionnaires indicate that 63.7% did not support the idea of girls inheriting land from their parents. However, although the question to elicit the opinions was given to all the one hundred and two respondents, not all of them were willing to disclose their position. One point nine percent

were apprehensive and undecided on whether daughters should inherit their parents' property or not. It was observed that the two who were undecided were elderly, over eighty years old. They argued that this is not an issue subject to discussion. The recent dead are buried there and must be respected. The study noted that, this issue makes land matters to remain sensitive hence some people are not comfortable discussing the transfer of land outside the family cycle. To give land to girls is something unheard of, he affirmed. (Kimotho O.I.6.6.2009) wondered what one would be thinking of when allocating property to a daughter. This is because once girls get married; they relocate to their new homes. Then what becomes of the inherited land? It is important for ancestral land to be maintained within the clan, he noted. The study observed that the contentious issue was centred on maintaining the land within the lineage. Inheritance of land by sons is seen as the natural practice and this has been passed from one generation to another. The sons have grown knowing this is the order to be followed and are ready to challenge any move to deviate from what they view as normal. This is in agreement with Mutiso, (11.9.2010) when he observed that;

Most family disputes are centred on inheritance of land. The community in Kagundo believes that, male relatives should inherit the land. The sonless mother therefore marries to ensure that she has a son to inherit the land as expected by the community.

Most of the male respondents concurred with Mutiso when they noted that they were not willing to share what they saw as their rightful ownership of the

family land with their sisters. This goes against the laid down procedures and will lead to double allocation because the girl will still own land through her husband. This study observed that the values attached to land are sacred and deeply rooted in the culture hence difficult to change. This is in agreement with Shorter (1973) when he observes that values found in the inner levels of culture are most resistant to change. The elderly respondents further noted that though it is possible to sell land today, the immediate family is consulted and they can refuse the land transactions especially if the land initially was inherited or has some graves.

Muoki (O.I, 4.9.2009) argues that giving land to girls is a sure way of ensuring they don't get married and those who get married divorce their husbands. Girls should be encouraged to move out and establish their own families. If they know they have land from their parents, they will not work hard in their new home nor will they settle with their husbands. They will use flimsy excuses or to leave their husbands. According to him, they should grow knowing that the fathers land belongs to the brothers and once married, they will work hard to ensure their marriage is safe. This study deduced that Muokis's argument points towards patriarchy and it is a way of denying the girls the right to inherit land from their parents.

This study established that in the traditional society, girls who do not get married are allowed to till the land but cannot own it. Where there are no brothers, the uncle inherits the land. Those who take time to marry or fail to

get married are looked upon as intruders. The brothers or uncles become hostile with time. Many of the respondents interviewed noted that the above position has not changed much. Due to the increase in the population, the demand for land is higher than before. This has increased the hostile attitude towards unmarried women. It was noted that with many single mothers in the society and inadequate land, the availability of a childless woman willing to give land to another woman through marriage comes as a welcome relief for many of the single mothers. The children of the single mother can now have land through the *Iweto* marriage. They are able to inherit land in a traditionally acceptable and recognized manner. The study established that just like before no relative can challenge their ownership. This is an indication that patriarchal practices and belief have persisted in the community leading to the demand for male children. This has played a significant role in influencing the persistence of the marriage.

The researcher noted that the patriarchal practices and beliefs in Kangundo contravene the succession Act of Kenya. According to the Bill of Rights in the new constitution of Kenya, (6th May 2010) which was promulgated on 27.8.2010, individual land ownership is a right and the owner can transfer the property to anybody irrespective of gender. Articles 27 and 60 (f) provide for the elimination of gender discrimination in respect of land. This implies that parents have a duty to equally distribute their property or wealth equally among the children irrespective of sex. Marital status of a daughter is not a basis for denying her the right to inherit her father's estate.

Two focus group discussions made up of *Maweto* (10.8.2009) and Female husbands (4.8.2009) revealed that most of the women in Kangundo are not aware of the current succession laws of Kenya. They do not know that women have equal right with their brothers to inherit property from their parents and have equal rights with their husbands over property acquired together. Questionnaires given to various categories of respondents to establish whether or not they knew about the succession law of Kenya confirmed that it's not only the women, but majority of the people in Kangundo are not aware of the contents of the succession laws of Kenya. Table 4.3 illustrates the level of awareness of the current succession law based on Yes and No responses drawn from 102 respondents.

Table 4.3: Awareness of the succession laws of Kenya

Types of Responses	Number of respondents	Percentage
Those who are aware	49	48.04
Those who are not aware	53	51.96
Total number of respondents	102	100%

Based on the findings, the study established that 51.96% of the respondents were not aware of the law while 48.04% of the respondents admitted they had heard of the laws. It was noted that those who had knowledge of the law had secondary and post secondary and below the age of 60. The study noted that majority of the Akamba of Kangundo are still strongly rooted in their

traditions hence laid down patriarchal structures have continued directly or indirectly to propel women towards the *Iweto* marriage. Though the succession law is very clear, the people have continued to cling to traditional practices that side line women due to lack of knowledge. There is a lot of informal discrimination; boys continue to be valued more than girls while the girls are denied their basic rights. The women who are involved in this *Iweto* institution, both the female husband and the *Iweto* have been compelled by the society to join the institution. They are virtually at the mercy of the society for acquisition of land since the society has not come in to terms with the new succession laws. Therefore, at a certain age, some feel constrained to have a husband whether female or male, alive or envisioned to enable them to own property. Those without a son turn to *Iweto* marriage so as to get an heir to ensure the property remains in their lineage, an indication of patriarchal practice. The study examined the acceptance of change in land succession policy. A question was given to the 102 respondents to establish their willingness to implement the law of succession. They were first briefed on the law and the results are as indicated in the table 4.4 below.

Table 4.4: Willingness to use the law of succession

Types of Responses	Number of respondents	Percentage
Those willing to follow it	41	40.19
Those who are not willing to follow it.	61	59.80
Total number of respondents	102	100 %

The study noted that 59.8% were not ready to follow the law. Kilonzo (O.I.24.8.2009) observed that the law is easier discussed than can be practised because it contravenes the norms of the people. The law is most likely to bring conflict among the members of the family leading to land disputes and sibling rivalry. Mbuli (O.I 2.8.2009) referred to it as a foreign ideology which is not suitable for the people of Kangundo. Based on the findings, the study noted that most people are apprehensive about new ideas in spite of the ideas being useful. As a result of western influence including modern education, liberal movements, modern succession laws and Christianity which emphasizes on equality, the above position is expected to change but according to an administrator (Kalekye,O.I.6.8.2009) the situation on the ground is different because most land issues concerning inheritance are still handled at grassroots level by the clan elders. It was noted that the clan land succession policy, based on Akamba customary laws (Penwill, 1951: 28) is still in force, making it difficult for current succession laws of Kenya to be implemented without the intervention of court.

This study concluded that enactment of the succession law had not changed the worldview of majority of the respondents. The traditional guidelines on succession have been handed over from one generation to another and to the majority it seems as the normal or natural practice. It is simply the way things are, property is passed on to the male child. The study observed that some of those who were not in support of the law were women. They said that though

they had not been treated fairly in land matter they did not equate this to social injustice. The researcher deduced that their desperate situations had been concealed by ignorance or unawareness of the succession laws of Kenya. This had contributed to the development of the *Iweto* marriage and continues to uphold it today. The findings confirmed our third premise that; “patriarchal beliefs and practices have contributed to the prevalence of the *Iweto* marriage in Kangundo”

4.2.3 Need for a Socially Recognized Identity

This study examined the role of patriarchal beliefs and practices in getting of an identity and how this has contributed to the persistence of the *Iweto* marriage. It was noted that among the Akamba community, children identify with the father, on condition that the mother is married. Consequently, children born outside marriage find it difficult to have a socially acceptable identity. With the coming of Western civilization and the present educational system the issue of identity is more distressing than before because the present social setup expects people to identify themselves and this starts immediately one is born. In the birth certificate application forms, the parent is expected to fill the name of the father and the mother. The father’s name is usually used as the surname. The assumption is that every child has a father and a mother.

Monica (O.I.6.8.2009) reported that the same case is seen when children are taken for dedication in church or admission in school, when they register in

national examinations and when applying for the national identity card or passport. It is a constant reminder that a father figure is needed. Mukui (O.I 3.8.2009) observed that during marriage negotiation the different families inquire about the other family lest they are related for this is not allowed in most of the Akamba clans. This makes the boys from single mothers very uncomfortable for they are expected to give their father's clan. This illustrates the effects of the patriarchal beliefs practised in Kangundo. It was reported that it is humiliating when children do not know their father and are forced by circumstances to use their mother's surnames. According to Kyengo, (O.I.6.11.2009), children are very inquisitive and would like to know why a child has a female name as a surname contrary to what they are used to. To avoid being ridiculed by other children, he noted that children have a tendency to use the grandfather's name as the surname instead of their mother's names. This conceals the truth of the matter.

Kyengo further observed that the mothers are not spared the embarrassment either, in contemporary society, as the children grow up they seek to know their father. They candidly question their mothers about their biological fathers. According to Mumbua (O.I, 8.9.2009), children today want to know their clans of origin unlike before when one would feel embarrassed to ask his mother such a question. Many mothers have no ready answer for their children when a question about their father arises. It is a question that brings nightmares and many mothers detest it for it makes them uncomfortable. At times it is a painful past best forgotten. To avoid the questions, the single

mothers find relief in the *Iweto* marriage. It was noted that some of the single mothers who were previously not interested in marriage have opted to join this institution to avoid embarrassment. The study deduced that the community in Kangundo expects all to have a male figure, inform of a father for identification and the issue of giving a person's identity not only causes embarrassment to the children but also the mothers. A FGD made up of some *Maweto* confirmed this and said that the issue of a surname had brought untold humiliation but *Iweto* marriage saved the situation. They further observed that they had seen a lot of positive changes in their children's behaviour after the marriage. With a surname recognized by society and an affiliation to a clan that appreciates them, this had raised their self-esteem.

The study deduced that the availability of a person willing to provide an identity and affiliation to a certain clan is a welcome relief to many single mothers. Their children can trace their roots in a socially acceptable manner. It was found that the children from *Iweto* marriage can apply for the National Identification Card (henceforth referred to as ID) using the identification from the female husband's clan which she acquired through her marriage, to a male husband. This is because when a single mother is married, the children are incorporated into the clan and allowed to use the family name. Kioko, (O.I.5.8.2009) a son in the *Iweto* marriage whose mother was previously a single parent had this to say concerning the acquisition of identification;

I had no problem when applying
for the ID for my mother's marriage
is recognized by the local

community and the government of Kenya. I used the name Kyeti as my surname, which is the surname of the female husband to my mother.

He noted that getting the National ID could have been complicated if the mother had not been married. Kioko further observed that he did not have a problem of identification when he visited his in-laws because he was accompanied by a paternal uncle. Things could have been complicated if his mother was not married. Kioko agreed with the *Maweto's* view point that the *Iweto* marriage had provided an identity and a sense of belonging to the children from this marriage, consequently, raising their self-esteem. He further observed that it is possible for a person to identify himself as a Christian and the church to provide a sense of belonging but identification through the family is more realistic and practical. All Christians require an ID to show they are citizens hence they still have to go back to their roots for identification. This is the identity recognized by the Church and they have not disputed it. The observations made the researcher to understand what an identity means to the young men and how pertinent the *Iweto* marriage is in their present scenario.

It is evident from this discussion that, as long as a woman is expected to marry so that her children can have a socially accepted identity, the woman will do whatever it takes to secure a husband, irrespective of what kind of a husband, man or woman. The study deduced that the *Iweto* marriage has been persistent because it fulfills a need by providing an identity acknowledged by

most people in the community. This viewpoint agrees with Maslow's (1970) theory, which affirms that people's behaviour is geared towards the attainment of basic needs and this influences the cause of action taken. Further, Maslow pinpoints that basic needs have to be met before higher needs can be attained. He highlights affiliation and sense of belonging as some of the needs that determine the actualization of higher needs like esteem needs. One of the respondents (Kiio ,O.I 3.8. 2009) observed that the recent trends show that prominent persons like the USA president, Barrack Obama have come all the way to Kenya to search for their roots illustrates the force of the drive to fulfill the need. Kiio further noted that, after Barrack Obama, others have followed his example. The study noted that money and time is spent as persons trace their roots hence such people are not after material gain. They get psychological satisfaction and this boosts their esteem. This is in agreement with Maslow's observations and the findings from our study. The researcher therefore concluded that the desire to fulfill the above needs is one of the most important reasons for the existence of the *Iweto* marriage from the olden days to date in Kangundo.

4.3 Persistence of the *Iweto* Marriage due to Low level of Education

Low level of education and poverty among women was highlighted by 19.6% of the respondents as a factor that has contributed to persistence of the marriage. The reasons given for the low level of education by all the *Maweto* involved in the discussion were the same. They said that it was because their parents took their brothers to secondary school since they did not have enough money to educate all their children. Musyoka (O.I.16.10.2009)

observed that coffee, the main cash crop in Kangundo is not profitable anymore and the little money obtained from the coffee is used to purchase food and to educate the male child who is considered a great investment hence an asset to the family. Mutave (O.I.5.8.2009) notes that some parents discontinue the education of their daughters in favour of boys. This is because the girls relocate to their husband's family hence the economic benefits from her education are transferred elsewhere. The study observed that male inclination is reflected in the way girls are treated by their parents in our present educational systems. People without formal education lack the skills needed to either earn them formal employment or to manage their business. Consequently, they are unable to acquire the resources necessary to be able to meet most of their basic needs. The girls are forced in to a position of dependency with some becoming single mothers as they look for ways of survival. This shows a connection between low levels of education, poverty and economic dependence. The researcher went on to bring out the relationship and how it has influenced the persistence of the *Iweto* marriage in Kangundo. According to Wambua (O.I, 7.6.2009) there are a few female husbands with a lot of wealth hence some single mothers enter this marriage in Kangundo for no other reason but for the sake of the wealth. The single mothers, in need of financial support take advantage of the childless woman's desperation for an heir. The availability of a wealthy woman promising comfort in return of sons provides an avenue to meet the single mother's needs. Syokau (O.I.2.11.2009), a female husband had this to say about her marriage of an *Iweto*;

I did not take long to get an *Iweto* because I was financially able. The lady I approached first gave in for the simple reason that she wasn't financially able enough to support her children and she knew that by marrying me, most of her family's basic needs would be met.

Wambua and Syokau's observations are in harmony with Maslow's theory (1970) when he observes that the drive to fulfill our basic needs influences people's behaviour. This study concluded that lack of economic power among some women has a role to play in the persistence of the *Iweto* marriage in Kangundo. Circumstances therefore continue to push the women to *Iweto* marriage. Most of the women married as *Maweto* found themselves in a disadvantaged position and this contributed to poverty which later led them to the *Iweto* marriage in an attempt to escape from the poverty. It was noted that though this is not always the case, it is a general assumption that most *Maweto* marry for economic reason. According to Ngina (O.I.12.12.2009), there are very few educated or working women who can accept to be married as *Maweto*. As long as education is not accessible to all, the progression of poverty continues. The finding provides a firm foundation for us to understand the position women find themselves in and how this compels them to the *Iweto* type of marriage in the process of looking for a way to survive. This study concluded that *Iweto* marriage has been the

available option not only for the *Iweto* but also for many female husbands and this accounts for the prevalence of the marriage.

4.4 The Need for Care in Old Age.

During the interviews, all the twelve female husbands gave the fear of the future as the main reason why they married an *Iweto*. This study observed that children depend on their parents but as time goes by, the parents become feeble and they are unable to work hence the children nurse the old. According to Ndeti (1972:78) and Maillu (1988:4), life for a *Mukamba* is like a circle. The two generations complement each other and that is why it is important to have children to take care of the aged parents. Kioko (O.I.3.8.2009) notes that, traditionally, the last born son is expected to remain in the homestead to take care of the parents though the other sons have to ensure their parents are comfortable. It is a sacred duty and an obligation to take care of one's parents.

It was observed that a son may not be able to do everything but when need arises, he provides the necessary assistance. Ndanu Wamai (O.I.20.11.2009) observes that one with a male child faces old age with courage. This is because though she is old and feeble she has people to take care of her. She notes that the issue of one ageing without a helper also worries the clan. Ndanu observes that the clan helped her to marry her *Iweto*. This is because the elders are concerned when a sonless woman is forced by circumstances to travel for long distances in search of water and other basic items. Many of the

elders interviewed confirmed this. They expressed their fears when a woman without a son is allowed to age without people of her own around. Maillu (1988:6) compares this fear to the fear of going to war without a weapon. This may bring anxiety. A case was studied in the field on 20.6.2009 and has been used in this chapter to demonstrate how the need to have children has contributed to the persistence of the *Iweto* marriage among the Akamba Christians of Kangundo.

Case study 3

Martha Thyaka, 69 years old, lives alone in an isolated homestead. When the researcher visited her on 20.6.2009, she had gone to fetch firewood. She later came carrying a few pieces for that is all she could manage to carry. Looking at her, one wishes she had someone to fetch the firewood and to cook for her. She requested for a time to rest and later was able to give her miserable life story. She was married in 1970 but was unable to conceive a baby. After visiting different medicine persons for treatment without success, the husband decided to marry another wife. He blamed her for not giving him a son to keep his lineage. Martha felt lonely and decided to marry an *Iweto* so that she could also get her offspring to continue her lineage. Out of poverty, she could not meet material needs of the *Iweto* so the *Iweto* left.

According to Martha, the husband discouraged her from marrying another *Iweto* because by that time he had some misunderstanding with the other wife. He promised to be there for her. He was very supportive and was most

of the time in her house. She therefore accepted not to marry another *Iweto*. When the husband passed away in 1990, she became a very lonely person and after a short while started falling sick, on and off. Incidents of fainting became many hence she visited the doctor and was given some drugs. Nevertheless, her condition did not improve. She had no body to take care of her emotionally and financially. In March 2009, she decided to go and stay with her sister who has children. They took good care of her but after sometime, she was told to go back to her home. She further said that, for many days, she had not eaten because she was feeling unwell hence could not cook. It was observed that this has contributed to her poor health and needs assistance. She is not willing to be accommodated by relatives because she feels like a stranger in their home and second, she does not want to bother her sisters or inconvenience them lest this interferes with their marriages. She recalls that, at one time, a sister gave her two children to keep her company and to assist her to fetch water and firewood. She took good care of the children and ensured they attended school like other children. In the evening, they talked and shared different stories. After some time, the parents took them back and this affected her emotionally and physically. She had this to say; Life was normal when I had these Children but now I am a very lonely woman, with nobody to talk to especially in the evening. The nights are long and quiet. Many are the times I wish for children and a daughter in Law not only to keep me company, but also to help me in future when my strength is gone. What am I supposed to do?

She observed that though she is a Christian and understands the bible teaching, she had requested the elders to assist her to marry an *Iweto*. However, they had taken too long and she might die soon since she had nobody to assist her in case she needed medical assistance. Abruptly she kept quiet, deeply in thought. It seemed like she was contemplating something. She could not hide her sadness and nervousness. Her tone changed as she concluded the interview with tears in her eyes and wondered what the researcher was up to. With a lot of anger, she demanded to be left alone noting that many people previously have shown sympathy but not provided a solution to her problems.

From the case study, the researcher noted that Martha Thyaka was not comfortable with the interview and something was distressing her. She appeared confused and scared of strangers. Her reaction and fury helped the researcher to assess and understand the pain and anxiety experienced by those without a male child. The state of affairs had caused serious questioning of life's purpose. She had many questions without answers. She was afraid of the unknown and this had overwhelmed her to an extent that she was not in a position to trust anybody. People are out to take away the little that she is left with. The husband passed away, the sister took her children and what is left is her piece of land which she is unable to till. This is an indication of a state of hopelessness. Self-pity and anxiety were wearing Martha down.

It was noted that interaction is typically human and provides comfort or a sense of security. The children given by her sister had provided emotional support and this had made her to feel accepted and secure as she ages. She wishes for a daughter in law, an indication for the presence of a son. It was noted that the presence of a son gives parent an assurance and though the need to prolong her lineage is there the immediate issue is be taken care. This explains why Martha though she professes to be a Christian intends to marry an *Iweto*. An *Iweto* provides the much desired care for old woman without children. Kyengo (O.I.6.11.2009) referred to two incidences in the Bible, Ruth (Ruth 4:14-22) gave Naomi a grandson, Obed in an almost similar arrangement and Obed later became the father of Jesse who was the father of David (Ruth 4:14-22). In John 19:27 Jesus while on the cross instructed John to take care of Mary, his mother It was noted that this happenings are an indication that old women need committed people to take care of them and this brings many blessings.

The need for old people to be taken care continues to prevail and has influenced the cause of action taken. *Iweto* marriage continues to be one of the options available to those without children. This is in agreement with Maslow's Theory (1970) when he notes that "the desire to fulfill a need influences the action to be taken". Shorter (1973) observes that, the value attached to the practice and its level in the culture determines the ability to be changed. The study deduced that *Iweto* marriage is a coping strategy to a

demanding situation and this has contributed to the prevalence of the marriage among the Akamba Christians of Kangundo.

Musyoka (O.I, 6.9.2009) notes that the desire to marry an *Iweto* may be more pressing in the present days than in earlier days. This is because in contemporary society, money culture lays more emphasis on individualism hence each individual with his nuclear family exist as a unique end, with the society serving only as a means to accomplish the end. He further observed that individualist tendencies have resulted in the desire to accumulate a lot of wealth and to use the wealth to meet the needs of the individual. According to Musyoka, the welfare of the individual is of paramount importance hence financial responsibilities outside the immediate family are limited. This leaves the childless couple without the necessary assistance. This is seen as a problem and a solution is sought in the *Iweto* marriage.

This study notes that the spread of democratic ideals of equality, freedom and individual rights has not spared the institution of marriage either. As a result of Western influence, the modern child is most likely to question any attempt to relocate him/her and not his siblings to a relative's homestead permanently. The young people do not understand why a child is given to another family. Ndolo (O.I, 9.12.2009) explained how he grew up in one of his auntie's home who did not have a child but ran away after a year because life was unbearable. Every time he disagreed with children while playing, he was always reminded that this was not his home. The society expects children to be brought up in their own home unless the parents are not alive. Based on

the foregoing discussion, the study noted that the social-economic environment has made the *Iweto* marriage to remain pertinent in spite of Christianity in the district. Anything contrary to what the society is used to, raises question. This has encouraged the childless couple to get grandchildren of their own, who are recognized and appreciated by the society through the *Iweto* marriage, hence the increase in the demand for *Iweto* marriage in spite of there being other options available for childless marriages. One of the options identified is adoption. The following section looks at adoption among the Akamba of Kangundo.

4.5 The Responses on Adoption among the Akamba of Kangundo

Adoption is a procedure by which a person assumes through legal means, the role of a parent for a person who is not his/her biological child. The adopted child acquires legal status similar to that of a biological child hence the child is given all the rights and privileges of a biological child including the right of inheritance. This is mainly done by people who find that they cannot give birth or need additional children. Some adopt because they have a desire to assist the needy children in a family setup while others seek adoption to fulfill their desire for children. Ngina (O.I.12.12.2009) observed that traditionally it was possible to keep a child from a close relative like a sister. However, the legal responsibility for the child remained with the biological parents or had to be shared with the fostering parent. This interfered with the development of a strong bond between the child and the social father. Psychologically, the couples who manage to get a relative's child are not settled for many a times

the arrangement does not last for long, it is neither legal nor recognized by the extended family.

Makau (O.I. 26.8.2009) notes the extended family will not allow such a child to inherit the land nor does the law allow him to change his surnames. The law recognizes their biological parents as the legitimate parents. This study deduced that right from the traditional society, the childless family found it necessary to get a child in a legitimate manner. This led to development of the *Iweto* marriage and still accounts for the prevalence of the marriage today.

This study noted that although adoption in modern society is legalized, *Iweto* marriage has persisted. Eighty four respondents were interviewed and the following table 4.5 illustrates people's attitude towards modern adoption.

Table 4.5 Adoption awareness and respondents views on adoption.

Respondents	Those who knew about adoption	Those not aware of adoption	Those in support of adoption	Those not in support of adoption	Total respondents
Female husbands	5	7	2	10	12
Church elders/members	27	6	20	13	33
Family elders	10	8	3	15	18
Local administrator	6	0	5	1	06
Young adults	14	1	11	4	15
Total	62	22	41	43	84
Percentage	73.8%	26.1%	48.8%	51.1%	100%

When asked about modern adoption, some respondents appeared to be unfamiliar with the method (26.1%) while those who were aware seemed to

be uneasy with this alternative method and expressed their fear towards the adoption. An analysis of the female husband category indicated that, five of them were aware of the modern adoption method but had decided to marry *Iweto*. They noted that they were comfortable with the *Iweto* marriage for it had provided the much desired heir. They gave different reasons for not opting for adoption. One of the respondents by the name Mukui, (O.I, 7.7.2009) wondered what the community will think of her if she adopted a child whose parents are unknown. She had this to say about the issue;

Adoption is not part of our culture hence is not applicable in my community. Such children are seen as strangers in the society but in the *Iweto* marriage the fact that the real mother is absorbed in the clan and the whole family is involved in the payments of bride wealth makes the children from this marriage less of strangers in the family.

It was noted that the fear of the adopted child being seen as illegitimate hence rejected had made the community uphold the *Iweto* marriage. Monica, a single parent who has adopted a daughter concurs with Mukui when she notes that children from *Iweto* marriage are more accepted by the local community than from adoption. This is because they are issued with birth certificates, a confirmation that they have the same legal status like the biological children. In adoption, the children are issued with different birth certificates and this has contributed to the society's attitude towards adopted children. When this adoption certificate is presented in school, it is first scrutinized thoroughly

and this makes her uneasy. She further noted that the different certificates make the adopted children uncomfortable and that with time the children realize that they don't really belong like other children. They sense their uniqueness and this affects their emotions.

The study deduced that the certificates provide a good ground for hesitation. In a society where wealth and hereditary title is passed from one generation to the next, the production of a legitimate heir, recognized in the community is of prime concern in marriage. Based on the observations, adopted children are not seen as genuine members of the family from the traditional perspective. The issues raised by the female husbands are an indication that the people of Kangundo are yet to embrace the culture of adoption and this explains the persistence of the *Iweto* marriage.

Of the eighteen family elders contacted, ten confirmed that they had heard of the modern methods of adoption but majority from the group said that they were still hesitant to support it. After a brief explanation of what adoption is, fifteen of the elders out of the total of eighteen family elders (83.3%) were not in support of the marriage. They seemed uncomfortable with the issue of adoption and argued that the issue of the paternity of the child had made them to be more cautious. This is because of the belief that some diseases and curses run in families. The risks are more in adoption and that is why they have continued to support this marriage instead of resorting to adoption. They

said that they are more comfortable when they know one of the parents and this is what *Iweto* marriage offers.

Their argument concurs with Maillu's (1988) perception of African method of adoption. Maillu looks at the marriage of single mothers and refers to it as a superior method of adoption where the helpless mother and a helpless child are both taken in through marriage to form a new family. The child continues to receive motherly love from his own mother which is more natural than from a foster parent. Maillu (1988:9) states that; "It's better to have the biological mother for this gives emotional support to the child. Second, the two are given a home and family and bonding continues". This is double achievement and according to the elders interviewed, *Iweto* marriage should be given more consideration than the modern form of adoption. It was observed that a child from *Iweto* marriage is easily accepted because one can easily trace his parents and second, it takes care of single mothers and their children. It was noted that, after attempts to conceive fails, some childless women who would not like to be left out of child bearing decide that though they know about adoption; the socially acceptable option is to marry *Iweto*. This is because they have seen the *Iweto* marriage solve the problem of other married women without sons and unlike adoption which makes many people apprehensive and hesitant.

The researcher noted that familiar ways are difficult to replace especially if they are still satisfying. Nditi (2002) argues that as long as there are childless

women among the Akamba, *Iweto* marriage will remain a reality. This is because it was developed as a solution to a problem and still continues to serve the same purpose. This concurs with Stolt and Coot (1980:388) when they note that every culture has a function from the traditional view of that community and cannot be replaced without getting a suitable alternative. It was noted that, adoption is not an acceptable alternative because it does not meet the expectation of the people and this explains the persistence of the *Iweto* marriage among the Akamba community of Kangundo.

A few male informants from the category of family elders looked at adoption as a problem of women who are unable to conceive hence did not see it as an alternative for couples who have problem with conception. Information gathered from female husband (FGD, 4.8.2009) shows that men have another alternative of getting children, through polygny hence men argue that there is no logic or sense in bringing foreign blood in to the family. The study noted that childlessness is still viewed as a woman's problem in Kangundo and are not interested with adoption. According to Monica (O.I.6.8.2009), this is a hindrance to child adoption and a childless woman is left with no other alternative but to find a solution on her own after the husband marries another wife. To many women, the available solution is seen in *Iweto* marriage and this accounts for the prevalence of the marriage in modern society.

Mutiso, an administrator (O.I 11.9.2010) said that the *Iweto* marriage is still viewed as the only probable alternative for those in search of an heir. The community is yet to embrace modern methods of handling childlessness. This

study deduces that adoption as a solution or an alternative to childlessness had not been embraced in the community though majority of the respondents (73.3%) were aware of the method. It was noted that the *Iweto* marriage was developed to overcome the problem of married women without children and continue to serve the same function in the present society. The marriage is still rewarding and this accounts for its prevalence. Coser (1983:466) is in agreement when he notes that change is faster if this change satisfies a need that was not previously met. On the other hand, resistance is encountered if the change is competing with an old pattern that is still satisfying. The study noted that *Iweto* marriage is a reflection of the people's worldview. The desire for continuity continues to be pervasive and powerful among the majority of the people hence a relapse to familiar and suitable old ways of solving problems. This is in agreement with Idowu (1973:205) who notes that there is a tendency to relapse to old ways of doing things in time of problems. This is because the Africans are in most aspects entrenched in their culture.

The study concluded that though the Akamba community in Kangundo is aware of adoption, to them the dangers associated with adoption whether real or imagined are more than the benefit they see. This is because they have been socialized to believe that adopting a child from outside of the biologically related community is wrong. To many, adoption is neither practical nor acceptable even in the modern society. That is why they are more comfortable with the *Iweto* marriage and this account for the prevalence of this type of marriage even among the Christians.

4.6 The Effect of the Difficult Adoption Procedures on the Prevalence of *Iweto* marriage.

Majority of the respondents from the categories of Church leader and Christians (81.8%) were aware of adoption yet only 60.6% were in support of adoption as a method of getting children in the family. The complications encountered in adoption procedures were identified as some of the challenges faced by those who would have wanted to adopt. According to Mwende, a trained social worker (O.I, 4.6.2009), the process of modern adoption starts when childless parents contact an adoption agency or the children homes involved in the adoption process to make their intention known. After this, formal application is done, followed by interviews and counselling.

A social worker is sent to do a home study or a detailed investigation into the background of the applicants. The primary purpose is to ensure that the prospective adopters will provide a home that is suitable for the child, both physically and emotionally. A suitable environment for the child's upbringing is mandatory before legal procedures can begin for the welfare of the child is of paramount importance. A committee vets the application to confirm whether the requirements have been met. The legal process follows and an adoption order is thereafter issued. (See Appendix: 5)

It was noted that the legal procedures and the conditions which have to be met before a child is given for adoption have not been easy for many people

in need of children. This has forced some Christians not to adopt a child and instead to go back to the traditional method of getting children when it is obvious that it is impossible to conceive. This is in agreement with Mbiti (1969:X1) when he notes that Christianity for many African is superficial. They keep their Christian faith as long as all is well but in times of problems they revert to their culture as they look for solution. This is because they are deeply rooted in their culture. Kithusi (O.I.6/9/2009) concurs with the above observations when he said that the complex procedures have encouraged the Christian childless women to seek the familiar alternative though it's against the Christian teaching on marriage. They get discouraged and are tempted to go back to their familiar ways of solving the problem.

Mwende, who is a church member and a social worker (O.I.4.6.2009), had this to say about modern adoption. First the legal fee required is one of the hindering factors. Couples with low income cannot afford the legal fee which is a prerequisite for an adoptive parent to be considered. She observes that to some people adoption is like buying a child because of the payments involved yet many cannot afford. Second, a healthy environment and stable income is an obvious necessity. Many adoptive parents are elderly and not in gainful employment hence cannot qualify. Third, the court procedures go on for many months and many get discouraged. She mentioned some of the laws that guide adoption in Kenya. They include the Children Act 2001 and the Children Adoption Regulations and the Hague Convention on Protection of Children. Lastly, she observed that most single parents are not allowed to

adopt a male child yet they are the ones most likely to be interested in adoption since men can solve the problem by marriage of another wife. It was noted that most of the people in Kangundo look at adoption as a procedure that favours the rich hence still holds on to *Iweto* marriage for it is within their means.

Monica (O.I.6.8.2009), an adoptive parent, agrees with Mwende's observation on factors that hinder adoption. She noted that it took her more than 7 years to finally get her daughter although she wanted a son. But she is glad she got a child at long last. She noted that in Kenya, a child is identified and given to the prospective adoptive parent without an option to choose the sex or the age. She noted that female applicants mostly get daughters and yet many prefer male heirs to uphold the family tree. She further noted that when a husband marries another wife, adoption by his first wife becomes difficult since the home environment becomes shaky. Consequently, this leaves the childless woman with no other alternative but to marry an *Iweto* to give her many descendants. She noted that her opinion was based on experience. She adopted her daughter and was promised another child if she took good care of her daughter. After they were given the daughter, the husband married another wife. This disqualified her as a suitable applicant and since then it has not been possible to get another child. She noted that though she is a professing Christian, she has no other option in future but to marry an *Iweto*.

It is evident that that as long as men are reluctant to co-operate on issues related to infertility, for the childless woman alternatives are limited. This has contributed to the persistence of the *Iweto* marriage. Syokau (O.I.4.8.2009) observed that after she realized she could not conceive, she made an attempt to adopt a child just before the death of her husband. Unfortunately, she was informed by a social worker that age is an important factor in the adoption of children. Syokau was past child bearing age and though she had a reliable source of income, she could not qualify. It was noted that elderly people over 65 years may have more difficulties bringing up a child than the younger people due to their reduced strength. The risk of their death due to old age before the child grows to adulthood is a solid ground for disqualification.

Another respondent noted that adoption provides one child at a time and the duration between the first and the second can be long. He observed that sometimes getting a second child is very hard yet it is the wish of most people to have more than one child. The study noted that the limitations in the sex and the number of children together with the stringent conditions which have to be met before one can be allowed to adopt, the long and tedious waiting period, and the laws to be followed, together with the high cost involved have made adoption difficult and consequently, many Christians have been discouraged from adopting children and instead opted for the *Iweto* marriage. Second, the fact that money is involved makes the community to sulk and frown upon modern adoption. To many, it's like buying a child. It was

observed that *Iweto* marriage has no such limitations and through the marriage, the female husbands wish for many descendants is fulfilled.

Kithusi (O.I.6/9/2009) notes that many Christians have become victims of circumstances. If they could qualify to adopt a child, then they would not have married an *Iweto*. It was also noted that people have needs and they look for possible means of fulfilling their needs. Maslow's theory (1970) explains that the needs precede the action taken. *Iweto* marriage was developed to provide a solution to a problem. It fulfilled the need and continues to do so. It was noted that some of the needs are rooted in the traditional worldview hence cannot easily be changed. They keep on lingering around when other aspects of culture have undergone transformation. Shorter (1973) concurs with this observation when he argues that superficial customs change easily with the passage of time but deeply rooted customs normally resist change. This study noted that *Iweto* marriage is a deep rooted culture that has assisted in solving the problem of childlessness in Kangundo. It has fewer impediments than adoption method hence adoption, to many people is not a functional alternative. This explains why the *Iweto* marriage is still prevalent and relevant in a community where other alternatives are known and majority of the people are professing Christians.

4.7 The Effect of Christianity on *Iweto* Marriage

Christianity was highlighted by some of the respondent's as a reason behind the presence of *Maweto* marriages in Kangundo. This received the least

responses (1.9%). It was reported that when Christianity was introduced in Kangundo, polygny was condemned by the missionaries with more vigor than any other type of marriage which was not monogamous and this accounts for the rapid decline unlike the *Iweto* marriage. The missionaries were more exposed to this type of marriage because one with many wives was seen as a hero hence given higher status in public meetings. The men openly talked about my first wife or my second wife with pride. More effort was therefore put on dismantling this type of marriage and many of the marriages were dissolved, leaving the first wife. In the *Iweto* marriage, the scenario was different. According to Mutinda (O.I, 1.8.2009), the *Iweto* marriage continued to exist silently without the missionaries' awareness because they were informed that the *Iweto* was a daughter in-law to *Mwaitu*. It was noted that the missionaries in Kangundo did not take time to learn the deeper relationship between the two and so, they took the idea of daughter in -law from the literal point of view and did not pursue the issue further. The study observed that this trend has persisted today.

It was noted that the dissolving of polygamous marriage contributed indirectly to the increase of the *Maweto* marriage and evidence of this effect is still noticed. The divorced women went back to their parents together with their many children. They could not be married afresh because of their age and the number of children they had. Life at their parent's home turned to be unbearable. The availability of a married woman without a son, willing to give them a place where they could call home was a welcome relief to many

divorced women. Many women and their children found salvage in the *Iweto* marriage. During the study, the researcher came across two very elderly *Maweto* who sited this as the reason why they ended up in the marriage. It was noted that life was not easy when they went back to their parents and the *Iweto* marriage was the best option at that time. The study however noted that this is not a common cause today but the same scenario is evident when mothers with children are divorced for whatever reason.

4.8 The Caring Nature of Women and its effects on the *Iweto* Marriage.

Findings from a FGD made up of *Maweto* (10.8.2009) indicate that some joined the *Iweto* institution after they were approached by daughters of the female husband and requested to take care of their old mother. They noted that though there were some social economic gains from the marriage, to take care of the aged requires a caring heart. Others noted that they were single mothers and unemployed, hence for the sake of their children; they decided to join the marriage. Through the marriage, their children were assured of getting an identity and a land to settle. When asked about their awareness of the dangers associated with the marriage, for example, the issue of multiple partners; majority mentioned HIV and AIDS but noted that they had not seen a better option for their children. One of the respondents noted that she was aware of the fact that chances of contracting sexually transmitted diseases are higher with multiple partners but even if she died, she would leave her

children with legally acquired land and a home where they are appreciated. She argued that all are predestined to die at one time but it is painful to know that after death, the children will lack a place to stay.

The researcher deduced that the *Maweto* are aware of the dangers in the marriage and their action is driven by the need to help others for this gives them psychological satisfaction. The women are committed to the welfare of their children. Consequently, the safety and comfort of the children surpass their safety needs. This is in agreement with Montagus, (1992:40) when she observes that women have a moral superiority. They are tender hearted, caring, loving, sympathetic and easily moved by other people's needs. They view their achievement in terms of what they have been able to do for their children. Achievement raises a person's self-esteem and this is one of the needs according to Maslow (1970). It was noted that women are able to demonstrate their affection for it is their nature. The institution was created to meet a survival challenge and without a suitable alternative this marriage is bound to continue.

4.9 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the factors that continue to sustain the *Iweto* marriage in Kangundo. The study observed that a number of factors that have continued to sustain the practice. It was evident that these factors are interrelated, for example, an educated person is exposed to Western way of life and she knows her constitutional rights. She can earn income through

self-employment or employment hence acquire property and raise her living standards thus qualify to adopt a child if she meets all the other conditions necessary for an adoption order to be issued. Though many factors were identified by the respondents, most of these factors, point towards a network of traditional beliefs and practices; it was noted that patriarchy has created desperate situations for women. The women are caught in a web of limited job opportunities, unemployment poverty and dependency. It was noted that though some members of the community are aware of the succession law, customary law still triumphs and many women had accepted their lot in the family without visible question.

From the ongoing discussion, it was evident that though there are combinations of factors that are responsible for the continuation of the *Iweto* marriage in Kangundo; patriarchal practices have played a significant role in sustenance of the marriage. It was noted that while issues like extended families have been modified, the issue of an heir is still very strongly valued. Failure to have an heir threatens peoples' survival hence the upholding of the *Iweto* Marriage. It was observed that a boy child is a must and has to be got by all means. A sonless woman in Kangundo therefore feels insecure about her future and finds rest by getting an *Iweto* to give her a son who will raise her status, enable her to own properly, take care of her in old age, and perpetuate her family name long after she is gone. Second, the marriage has provided a social father and husband to many single parents and their children. The children can no longer be referred to as illegitimate.

It is, therefore, evident that women's life in Kangundo is still controlled by laid down patriarchal structures and roles which are created, maintained and perpetuated by the society. The community is still largely organized and functioning under a patriarchal laid down structures. Because they are rooted in their traditions, laid down social cultural structures have continued directly or indirectly to propel women towards the *Iweto* marriage. This confirmed the third premises that; "Adherence to some cultural values and practices has continued to sustain this form of marriage in Kangundo".

Resistance to change was explicit. This study noted that *Iweto* marriage mirrors the inner feelings of the Akamba community and Christianity has not changed the way of thought of some Christians. The desire to leave behind an heir has not changed with the coming of Christianity. It may have been modified but the basic concept still prevails. It was noted that it has not been easy to change the people's worldview for they have not collectively accepted total change in their traditional worldview in regard to marriage and procreation, hence their involvement of others in to the marriage. It was deduced that the strong desire for an heir overshadows the biblical teachings on marriage and procreation. The *Iweto* concept reflects the fertility and immortality values of the people of Kangundo and these are in the core of their culture. Resistant to change is, therefore, inevitable. The study concluded that people accept new ways and keep some aspects of their old behaviour because they are still significant to them. This had contributed to the continuance of the marriage.

CHRISTIAN RESPONSE TO THE *IWETO* MARRIAGE

5. Introduction

In the previous chapters, it was noted that *Iweto* Marriage provides a solution to those seeking to have children of their own among the Akamba of Kangundo. Evidence seems to indicate that different circumstances attract different responses in an attempt to meet a need whether physical or psychological. The behaviour of a person is aimed at fulfilling a certain basic need thus the anticipated outcome influences the cause of action. It was realized that, the desire for socially acknowledged descendants is so strong that unless there is a suitable alternative, there is bound to raise pockets of resistance to the Christian teaching on marriage and procreation.

This study notes that the values behind the *Iweto* marriage have made some Christians to appear to be lenient to those in the *Iweto* Marriage. The values therefore, have become the arresting factor for some Christians. Given the above scenario, it appeared that the desire to accomplish those values supersedes Christian teaching in some cases. This is a challenge and matter of controversy among the Christians. This leads us to the fourth objective “To assess the response of the Christians towards the *Iweto* Marriage”. In the light of these observations, the following section will specifically examine the Christian response to the *Iweto* marriage given that it goes against the Christian teaching on marriage.

5.1 Christianity and Childless Marriages

The desire for children among the Christians is so intense and lack of them places a marriage in jeopardy. To the relatives and the society at large, it is viewed as a misfortune. The state of childlessness is one of those difficult circumstances that can easily tempt a Christian to some unorthodox methods. This is in agreement with Nthamburi (2000:44) when he says that childlessness is a cause for backsliding in Church today. Like Job in the Bible, childless parents have many questions but no answers. To some, it is a misfortune, a curse from God for what they do not know. Praying and fellowship become difficult and with time patience runs out.

Musembi (O.I.6.8.2009) argues that many Christians do not know how they are expected to act though they have the Bible to provide the guideline. Kitembo et al., (1977:73) notes that, many Christians find in the teaching of the Church a support for procreative emphasis in marriage which harmonizes completely with their traditional outlook on child bearing. God said increase and multiply. Ngina (O.I.12.12.2009) observes that the guidelines are at times confusing and Christians are in a dilemma when trying to interpret the Bible to suit their painful circumstances of childlessness and they do not know how to behave when confronted by the situation of childlessness. Though they acknowledge Christian teaching on marriage, they give material and emotional support to those in *Iweto* marriage both at home and in Church. This is because Christians have a duty to show compassion and empathy to those in difficult situations, like those without children. Christian love is

practical and involving, there are no bounds or limitation to this love. The study deduced that in such situations, the Christians are guided by the kinder option as illustrated in the following case study.

Case study 4

In a clan meeting organized to discuss the unacceptable behaviour of one *Iweto* by name Florence Wausi (O.I,15.12.2008), it was noted that the person chairing the meeting was a professing Christian and in attendance were family members who are also professing Christians. It was alleged that the *Iweto* had become uncooperative and disrespectful especially towards the elders. She had shown unwelcoming behaviours and had brought shame to the family. The elders noted that the clan had for a long time ignored the fact that the *Iweto* had not been following the traditional laid down order of doing things. There was, therefore, need to reconsider the place of the *Iweto* in the family. This implied that she can be returned to her parents together with her children and divorce procedures follow thereafter.

After the discussion, family members were divided. Majority opposed the idea and insisted that she was there for a purpose and cannot be divorced, for what will become of family lineage? The majority won and the researcher took the opportunity to interview some of those professing Christians in attendance on their attitude towards the *Iweto* marriage. They observed that though the marriage was incompatible with biblical teaching, sending her back to the parents would do more harm than good to her and the children,

most of who were over 20 years and married with young families. They looked at the lesser evil, referring to Luke (6:9), to save life or to destroy it, One of the elders (name with held) a practising pastor noted that by taking her back, they would be going against the very faith they preach. The Gospel of Christ is a Gospel of love, tolerance and reconciliation. He cited the need for Christians to live by what they preach. This he gave as the main reason for taking his position against the divorce of the *Iweto*. He concluded the interview by quoting the Bible. (Roman 3:23) "All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God". He used this verse to show that Christians should not condemn for all are saved by God's grace.

The researcher also interviewed some of the women elders who had opposed the move to divorce Wausi. They supported their position by referring to Jesus attitude towards sinners, some of whom were women. Jesus mixed with women who were sinners and this way he managed to change them. Their argument was that there was need to correct their wrong behaviour and introduce them to Christian way of living through guidance and counselling. They observed that if correction is to be done, it should be done with love without causing unnecessary pain. This study noted that Christians are saved by grace hence the need to abstain from condemning other people.

Some Christian women however, were of a different opinion. They observed that they had supported the *Iweto* because some of the family members had some evil motives. They wanted the *Iweto* and her children to leave so that

they could possess her land. To many, these accusations were not genuine. The clan elders' allegations were meant to tarnish her name and to punish her for refusing to give in to their demands. From the above interviews, it was obvious that the *Iweto* had the support of some of the family members who are also professing Christians. The researcher concluded that though the Christians of Kangundo have a positive attitude towards the *Iweto*, this is based more on Christian love and sympathy than on procreation and eternal life. An attempt is made to separate the actions and the person. Christian love therefore, outshines the indecent behaviour associated with the marriage.

When contacted after this episode, Wausi noted that she had been converted to Christianity and currently she was involved in church affairs at Redeemed Gospel Church where she was a member of the church choir and women group. Before joining the Redeemed Gospel Church, she was an active member of the Salvation Army, where her late female husband was a member. It is here where she gave her life to Christ. She was grateful to the Salvation Army visitation ministry. She recalled with a lot of appreciation that when she got married, some church members visited her and invited her to the church. She had this to say about her life after conversion to Christianity:

After accepting Jesus Christ as my personal savior, I decided not to have affairs with any of the men from the clan as traditionally expected and had shared this with some of the Christian friends in the clan. They encouraged me to

remain strong, to fear God and not man.

Wausi later moved from Salvation Army to join her son at the Redeemed Gospel Church. In the new Church, she was involved in many Church activities. This has made it difficult for her to be involved in clan activities a situation that put her in conflict again with some of the clan members. Wausi decision had made some of the clan members to be unhappy. However, she enjoys the support of the Christians. The study deduced that the Christians` response towards the *Iweto* is guided by the biblical teaching on love for others. The Christians had contributed positively to the welfare of the *Iweto* by opting for the caring option and in the process; they had strengthened her Christian faith and maintained family cohesion.

Unfortunately, Wausi passed away on 30.11.2009. At first the clan was reluctant to bury her. This is because those who fail to take part in clan activities are regarded as outcasts and in times of need like funerals and sickness, one is ignored irrespective of his wealth or position in the society. Failure to contribute towards the clan activities is seen as a debt. A fine is charged before one is accepted back or assisted by the clan. One is therefore, made to suffer socially, psychologically and financially. To reinforce the seriousness of the matter, this is extended to those who have died. The immediate family has to clear one`s debts before he can be buried by the clan. Failure to make the payment may lead to part of the land owned by the deceased being sold to offset the debts. If he does not own land, the money

contributed by friends may be used to clear one's earlier debts before he/she can be buried. A decent burial is not given.

After Wausi passed on, the clan elders met and decided that a portion of her land was to be sold so as to pay for her debts in the clan and to meet the funeral expenses. The Church decided to intervene and noted that the family land was small and if a portion is sold, this will be uncaring act to the children. This was a time to show love to the bereaved so the Church met all funeral expenses. Because of her relationship with Christians, she was buried like an outstanding person irrespective of her poor relationship with the clan. The Church members carried the coffin instead of the family members.

The funeral was attended by many church leaders from different denominations. Throughout the funeral service, speaker after speaker talked of the good deeds of Wausi and how the Church would miss her. A Salvation Army officer said that during the time she was a member of the Salvation Army, her records in the Church were very good. From Redeemed Gospel Church, good testimonies were given by the church members. The Choir danced around her house to celebrate a life well lived. Other Christians from other denominations joined in the dance. They had lost one of their own, a heroine. The pastor of the Church mentioned how she regularly attended the morning glory service, before 6.00 a.m. He further appreciated her commitment to the choir. The chairperson of the women ministry noted that Wausi was one of the women leaders in the Church. She was a treasurer of

women projects, a job she faithfully did. She had time to cook for visitors of the Church and was available; to accompany the youth to the annual youth camp in December and this takes a whole week. The study observed that Wausi was involved in the Church activities because, unlike other women, she did not have a male companion to necessitate her attention. She had therefore more time to serve the Lord in different ministries unlike other married women. The Church members never saw her as an *Iweto* but a sister in Christ. She was a real blessing to the Church.

Though she was seen as a role model in the Church, the fact that she had not cooperated with family members could not be overshadowed. During the funeral, speakers talked of the need to co-operate with family member noting that the growth of the Church starts from the family. This was a clear indication that Christians would not like to be associated or blamed for disunity among family members. It was noted that the fact that the Church took over the burial arrangement was a disgrace to the family and should not be repeated. All the respondents observed that though the Church stepped, in this was done after consulting the family members who gave the go ahead. They said that, in times of need, the clan provides a closer human co-operation than the Church. It was noted that in Kangundo District, a person belongs first to the clan and only second to the church.

After the funeral, the researcher took time to interview some of the mourners. Kilonzo (O.I. 6.6.2009) observes that being involved in Church activities is a

good way of keeping closer to God. Just because *Iweto* is married according to the culture does not make her a worse sinner. A person's status should not be a hindrance when it comes to association or to Salvation. It is worse for people to discourage others from serving and praising God by looking at them as sinners. However, the Church teaching on marriage should be encouraged. It was noted that it is against Christian teaching to reject other people and to associate only with those you feel are good. In the process of interacting with *Maweto*, Christians get a chance to teach them the word of God.

This study noted that certain churches in Kangundo have strict rules that guide participation in Church of those married outside the Church teachings. Though they may interact freely with other Christians, they are under some form of discipline for they are not allowed to take part in Holy Communion nor hold key position in Church leadership. The Catholic Church and the African Inland Church were highlighted as examples. However, it was observed that the Salvation Army Church and Redeemed Gospel Church are lenient when dealing with those not married according to the Christian teaching. Wambua (O.I.7.6.2009) notes that the Salvation Army was founded to take care of certain groups of people in the community. They include the poor, the single mothers, those still in the streets drinking and practising prostitution. He referred the researcher to the history of the Salvation Army.

5.2 The Founding of The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army is an evangelical part of the universal Christian Church and an integral part of the mainstream Church in Kenya. Coutts (1998:22) notes that the SA Church was founded in 1865 by English Methodist Minister He wanted to ensure that those who could not get in to the Church due to their low social status and stigma could be saved as they interacted with Christians in worship. Booth broke away from the established Methodist Church in 1865 with the aim of changing the way Christians interact with those regarded to be living contrary to the Christian teaching. Booth went on to put an end to water baptism and Holy Communion which contributed significantly to divisions in church. He stressed out that people are saved by grace irrespective of their present state or past life. Together with his wife Catherine Munford, he started missions to take care of the beggars, alcoholics, former sex workers and single mothers. To them, these were the underprivileged, rejected and marginalized in the society.

Later, one of the women leaders in the Army, Mrs.Cottri opened a home for single young mothers in White Chapel in London; (The Salvation Army: 1985). On the same line with the founder, some of these girls had come to London looking for employment only to be tricked into prostitution in order to meet their basic needs. Based on the theme 'God loves, cares and sets you free' the Salvation Army Church spread to other areas including East Africa arriving in Kenya in the year 1896 through three Salvationists who had come to Kenya to work on the building of a new railway, (Ndeta: 2007: 8).

This study notes that the SA is founded on the strong belief that what people need is not condemnation but love and care. (Micah 6:10). The spirit of determination to make a difference in the name of Christ regardless of the circumstances characterizes the Salvation Army. It started in this spirit and has continued in the same spirit. It was observed that the SA mission is about endeavoring to meet the needs of a whole person; spiritual, social and physical needs. It falls in to the words of Matthew 25: 35 that states “for I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me”. This study deduced that the SA unlike other churches mentioned in this study was started in a peculiar scenario and this continues to influence their beliefs and practices even as they interact with the *Maweto* in Kangundo.

5.3 The Importance of the Cordial Relationship Noted Between the Christians and the *Maweto*.

Wambua (O.I.5.7.2009) notes that there is nothing wrong with having *Maweto* in the Church as long as they are being helped to turn away from their ungodly living. This does not imply that the SA supports the marriage. The *Iweto* is welcomed to the Church and after a period of instruction, they are given a chance to repent and confess their new faith in public. Though Christians interact with the *Maweto* and welcome them to Church, this does not overshadow efforts to get the devil out of those enslaved by sin. They are

interested in getting the sinner to salvation. This is in concurrence with Mark 1:17. Jesus called the first disciples and sent them to be fishers of men and later in Mark 16:15, He said “Go in to world and preach the Good News to all creation”. This shows that there is no room for discrimination when dealing with people including the *Maweto*.

Wambua (O.I 5.7.2009) observes that many churches are involved in organizing activities in the Church, aimed at empowering the women to overcome daily challenge and the Church encourages all women, including *Maweto* to join the Church women groups. The women are given knowledge on how to earn their living and also how to take care of their families. They are involved in money generating activities like making of detergents and baskets for sale. This deters them from looking for financial support in a manner that is against the Christians teachings. They are given lessons on HIV and AIDS modes of transmission. Presence of *Maweto* in the Church is one way of assisting them to live meaningful lives and also to avoid activities that may led to being infected with HIV and AIDS. The *Maweto* are taught, the meaning of the Gospel in their present state; how to live in a righteous manner in their present state.

The Bible in Hosea (4:6) says “my people are perishing because of lack of knowledge” while Apostle Paul said “How can they know the truth unless they are told” (Romans 10:14-15). The study notes that by interacting with the *Maweto*, the Christians get an opportunity of telling them about the saving

grace of Jesus. Without the knowledge of the Gospel, people continue to sin and consequently to lose their lives. Keveke (O. I. 26.11.2009) notes that the appalling circumstances of certain group of people make their Salvation most unlikely unless unconditional love is given and regards are paid also to their material needs. Christians follow Jesus example as they interact with *Maweto*. Jesus took care of the spiritual as well as the physical needs. Through feeding and healing, they recognized him as Christ. It was noted that true Christianity is based on love. This explains why Christians welcome the *Maweto* and provide not only emotional support but also material. These observations are in line with Mugambi (1975: 95) and Stolt and Coot (1980:285).

Mugambi talks of the need to take care of the physical and spiritual needs of persons if meaningful transformation is to occur while Stott and Coot notes that “the centre of a hungry man is his stomach not his heart”. Their observations are in line with the teachings in James 2:15-16 “If you know someone who need clothes and don’t have enough to eat food, what good is there in your saying; God bless you and keep you warm and eat well, if you don’t give them the necessities of life?” It was noted that people will not listen to the Christian message if they are hungry or uncomfortable. This is because the physical needs encompass the spiritual needs hence the need to take care of the physical needs as we look at the spiritual needs. These observations are in agreement with one of our research theory (Maslow: 1970:77) which emphasizes the fulfillment of basic need as the driving force behind one’s behaviour. It was noted that once a person’s needs are met, it is

very easy to deal with the spiritual needs. Jesus had special concern for the women, who were oppressed by the cultural norms of the time, (John: 8:1-11). He welcomed them and had a good relationship with them. This study deduced that true Christianity is best expressed practically for dejection can make people remain spiritually poor. One cannot change a stranger or an enemy, a healthy interaction filled with love is important. This explains the cordial relationship identified between most of the Christians and the *Maweto* both in Church and outside the Church.

Second, this study deduced that the disparities seen in the way different Christians respond to the *Maweto* is basically seen in the approach used to assist them to live godly life. These findings shed lights on the fourth premises; “Some Christians in Kangundo have continued to support the *Iweto* Marriage”. It was observed that as they interact with the *Maweto*, they do not support their deeds but are guided by the Christian teaching on love which has no boundaries. However, it was reported that not all members of the family are gentle towards the *Iweto*. A few remain unfriendly hence aloof. The following section will look at the negative attitudes of some Christians towards the *Iweto*.

5.4 Negative Attitude of Some Christians towards the *Maweto*

Information drawn from a FGD made up of *Maweto* (10.8.2009) reflects a different scenario experienced by some of the *Maweto*. The discussion helped women to come together to share personal experiences, problems and

feelings. It came out strongly that a few of the *Maweto* (about 30%) had suffered humiliation in the hands of some of the Christians. They disclosed that they had been despised both in Church and at home. It was noted that some married women are not comfortable socializing with them. Some of the female informants from a FGD (17.8.2009) made up of Christians from different denominations in Kangundo were in agreement with the above sentiments but noted that this was out of fear of the *Maweto* having sexual relationship with their male husband.

The study observed that most *Maweto* are more likely to have relationship with married men than with unmarried men and this explains why the married women are not able to associate freely with *Maweto*. The Christian women in the FGD further observed that the presence of HIV and AIDS has made the issue to be taken more seriously by married women than before. According to Kenya AIDS indicator survey (KAIS:2007:17), marital status can be an important risk factor when exploring patterns of HIV transmission in a given population. According to the report, Kenyans in polygynous unions are more likely to be infected than those in monogamous unions. HIV infections are on the increase on the marital bed with about two thirds of HIV infected Kenyans being in a union and this is brought about by extra marital affairs. This is locally referred to as *Mpango wa kando* which simply means having another sexual partner. It was noted that this is high risk sex. Some of the members indicated that they were aware of this state of affairs where there is an *Iweto* and expressed their deep concern about this marriage and its role in

the spread of HIV among married couples. This explains why the women would do anything within their limits to avoid a close relationship with an *Iweto*.

In addition, the issue of financial support being secretly extended to the *Iweto* came up and was highlighted as a contributing factor to the unenthusiastic or indifferent behaviour towards the *Maweto* by some of the married women. The need to feel secure in a family setup or in a relationship is one of the needs that may influence how an individual reacts to another. The study concluded that a few Christians have a negative demeanor towards the *Maweto* so as to protect their personal interest.

This study notes that, though the *Maweto* have been accepted in the Church and at home by majority of the Christians, the Christians are faced with several challenges as they attempt to tackle the issue of *Iweto* marriage. The following section will look at the challenges the Christians face in regard to *Iweto* marriage and how this has influenced their response to the marriage.

5.5 Challenges Facing Christians in Regard to the *Iweto* Marriage

It was noted though Christians read the Bible, inference is not always easy. There are certain circumstances that challenge the Christians as they attempt to remain committed to Christian teachings and at the same time be involved in the community practices. It was observed that the clan is supreme in decision-making and all are expected to obey the clan regulations. To achieve

this, the clan has rules which are well- stipulated. Obedience is part of the clan moral values and expectations. Those who fail to keep the standards are noted and stigmatized. It was observed that this unfavorable state of affairs is avoided by all in the community and this is a challenge for the Christians when activities like the *Iweto* marriage ceremonies are conducted.

A respondent (Musau 0.I.7.9.2009) observes that it is very difficult to separate the Christians from the clan activities for the clan is made up of members most of whom are Christians. Without the Christians then, there would be no clan. Loyalty to the clan has brought harmony and stability in the society. He further notes that in Christianity, there are different denominations and formation of new ones is a common phenomenon. The clan has not only united people in a different line but also given them an identity though they are Christian. He notes that Kenya is a secular state and one's identity is traced from the family of birth. In a family set up, what puts people together is not the faith but the fact that they belong to a common ancestor hence they feel secure in the clan. The study noted that this has encouraged Christians to continue being loyal to the clan and when called upon to contribute bridewealth for an *Iweto*, they feel compelled though they know it goes against Christian teaching. It was observed that the corporate nature of the Akamba marriage had made it difficult for the Christians to evade the involvement in the *Iweto* marriage.

Nzivo (O.I, 6.9.2009) said that Christians take part in the *Iweto* marriage ceremony and later welcomed her home. Consequently, after *Iweto* is married, she becomes part of the large family; for all contributed directly or indirectly to her marriage. A FGD (4.8.2009) made up of female husbands confirmed that the clan helped them in the marriage and that the *Iweto* is warmly welcomed in the society even by the Christian friends and relatives. It is a corporate responsibility of every member of the family to ensure that the old are taken care of and life is passed on. When time comes to get an *Iweto*, all are expected to join and play an active role.

According to Musau (O.I.7.9.2009), an individual is seen as part of the community through participation in community affairs. Failure to take part in the family functions signifies that one does not care about the other. It may also signify that one does not wish the others well. The study noted that this state of affairs has left the Christians in a dilemma. Musau further observed that; one finger cannot kill a fly while Kyengo, (O.I. 6.11.2009) said that money cannot bury a person. The study noted that, these are common sayings in Kangundo and they imply that people have to unite and assist each other always. Even with a lot of wealth, one still needs to associate with others. Family members depend on each other, and what affects one member affects all of them. They share the good times and the bad times hence there is a collective ownership of problems in the family. According to Mbiti (1969:133), the underlying philosophy is “I am because we are and since we are therefore I am”. This implies that it is not easy to separate the individual

from the rest of the family. The family exists because the individual exists and the individual exists because the family exists. It was noted that the opinion of the family as a group over-rides the individual wishes and the wish to remain and be seen to be part of the family outweigh the desire to follow Christian teaching on marriage. This explains the involvement of the Christians in *Maweto* Marriage.

Kaveke (O.I.6.9.2009) observes that the clan is headed by clan elders most of whom are professing Christians and educated. They are chosen to lead all the members, both Christians and non-Christians. A good leader is one who does not discriminate and respects people's decisions or wishes. The Christian clan elders are not only highly respected, but also more trusted with the financial matters of the clan than the non-Christians. Many enjoy privileges as clan elders and would like to keep their social status. The above implies that their positions have made them to support and be involved directly in the *Iweto* marriages. Though they are Christians, as clan elders, they have a duty to welcome the *Maweto* into the clan. The elders have a responsibility to ensure that the clan continues to grow in size and at the same time is united. It was noted that they would hate to be blamed for sowing seeds of disunity by discouraging Christians from taking part in clan ceremonies.

The study observed that the clan is a supreme organ in the society and has not lost its powers even with the coming of Christianity. It can still make legitimate demands upon the individual and has to be obeyed hence many

Christians have remained loyal to the clan. Through socialization in the family space, Christians have grown to respect and to be loyal to the clan values. The researcher deduced that evading the corporate responsibility is a real challenge for most of the Christians in Kangundo. It is a difficult decision to make and friction is encountered as Christians attempt to conform to the expectation in the community while at the same time, they would like to stand out as Christians. Though the Christian teachings on marriage are clear, they are startled when one fails to get children and the traditional viewpoint triumphs over the Christian view point because they would like to be part of the large community. This gives the people a sense of belonging which is one of the needs mentioned by Maslow.

Based on the foregoing discussion, this study notes that though *Iweto* marriage is not compatible with Christianity, it is treasured by the community which is mainly made up of Christians. Mugambi (1995:11) notes that there are some customs that we cannot completely do away with though they contravene Christian teaching. This is because they play a significant role in the community. Nthamburi (2002:35) advances the same position when he notes that there are some practices that African Christianity has to come to terms with, for example the repudiation of childless marriages.

This study noted that the values surrounding the *Iweto* marriage are at the core level of culture, an indication that the marriage is more resistant to change hence the need for the Church to reconsider its place in the

community without compromising Christianity. Christians should pick the life giving elements in the culture and as much as they are expected to respect culture, they should surpass the established standards. Mugambi (1995:12) uses the term 'reconstruction' to explain the cause of action which can be taken by Christians. He says that reconstruction is done when something becomes dysfunctional and the user still requires to use it. New specifications are made in the new design while retaining some aspects of the old structure. Martey (1994:4) uses the term 'inculturation' to describe the process through which certain fundamental elements in culture can be purified or substituted with life-giving substitutes. In the process, the old and the new are blended without destroying important elements from either.

Based on the observation stated above, this study deduced that Christians can reconstruct *Iweto* marriage to make it more responsive to changed religio-social economic environment instead of completely condemning it. This is in agreement with Hastings (1973:3) and Hillman (1979:206). Hastings observes that marriages should not be condemned just because they are not monogamous. Each marriage type has its own advantage and disadvantage. Hillman urges Christians not to be narrow-minded but more tolerant as they seek to understand the values behind the type of marriage. This study took this as a challenge for Christians to live within their culture and to isolate what is beneficial to the community. The study however, identified two theological and pastoral issues which need to be considered in this form of marriage and which pose yet another challenge to the Christians.

5.6 Theological and Pastoral Issues Concerning the *Iweto* Marriage

The first issue concerns those who married before they accepted Jesus Christ as their saviour. This study referred to this scenario as pre-conversion *Iweto* marriage. The second scenario involves those who are Christians and have no sons or are single mothers and are enticed by the *Iweto* marriage. This study referred to this scenario as post-conversion *Iweto* marriage.

5.6.1 Pre-conversion *Iweto* Marriage

Several questions arise in this scenario. What does the Gospel mean to a woman in *Iweto* marriage? What is the significance of Christian teaching on marriage for their present circumstances? Now that they are in this marriage and have fitted in their family well, is it possible to remain in the marriage and at the same time remain a Christian? Is it possible to remain truly Christian and at the same time truly African? How would Jesus have handled the situation? Could he have sent them back home to their parents? What should be done to them by the Church?

It was noted that this is more of a theological issue and the Christians in Kangundo are guided by the need to reduce dejection. Removing them from their home will bring suffering not only to the *Iweto* but also to her female husband and the children. It was noted that care has been taken not to repeat the mistakes done by the early missionaries in Kangundo. Munro (1975:106) and Bahemuka (1982:21) note that the attitude of the missionaries was very

negative towards African culture. They did not take time to understand them. They insisted on monogamous marriage and any other form of marriage was sinful hence those in non-monogamous marriage were forced to return home, bringing a lot of suffering to their families. It was noted that this contributed to increase in single mothers who later found shelter in *Iweto* marriage as noted earlier in chapter four. This study noted that the attitude of the early missionaries did not stop the *Iweto* marriage but in some cases impelled them towards the marriage.

It was established that today after conversion, the *Iweto* remains in the home but is encouraged to display qualities of character that set them apart from other unconverted *Maweto*, (Miriam, O.I .10 .8. 2009). They are advised to live according to the Gospel teaching in their cultural setting. It was noted that these *Maweto* are single parents and though not easy, are able to live a life free from sexual activities. A FGD made up of *Maweto* (10.8.2009) were in agreement that living a life free from sexual activities brings emotional torture to those who are sexually active though they may not be in a position to have children. However, they noted that this is more bearable and manageable compared to torture from a drunkard husband or having children with no father to take care of them which brings both physical and psychological pain.

Christians are encouraged not to judge but to give them an opportunity to live a Godly life free from sin. They are assisted to be financially independent and

this deters temptations for male partners. Once they accept Christ, they become new persons but in their cultural environment. This study noted that the *Iweto* marriage be retained but in a new form which is relevant to the new religious environment.

5.6.2 Post- conversion *Iweto* Marriage

Musembi a Church elder, (O.I. 6.8.2009) notes that, Childlessness is more of a pastoral issue for it can easily make a Christian to backslide. Those who desire children are encouraged to handle the issue from a Christian perspective. They need to be more patient and trust in God for providence. This is because children are a gift from God and giving of a gift depends on the giver, however many Christians fail to see this. Ngulu (O.I. 3.8.2009) is of the same opinion when he notes that, medical intervention and other methods of handling childlessness may fail and a time comes when praying becomes difficult. Couples without a child become bitter and with time start to blame God for their situation. Some seek for other alternative methods of solving the problem.

Kyengo (O.I.6.11.2009) observes that the issue of rebirth is not a concern for most Christians for they believe in eternal life through Jesus Christ, but the fear of ageing without very close relative is real. At this point a realistic and practical solution is needed for this becomes a practical problem. Christians should come to terms with the reality for those without children will do whatever is within their means to ensure they have children, especially to take

care of them in old age. He suggests that a practical solution is usually seen in the many single mothers of past child-bearing age looking for a place to settle. The single mothers can be welcomed to stay with the childless couple and the arrangement made permanent through payment of a token of appreciation. All should be made to understand she is there to take care of the childless couple. A lot of counseling can be done to ensure that the arrangement conforms to Christian teachings on sexuality.

5.7 Summary and Conclusions

In this chapter, we have looked at the Christian response towards *Iweto* marriage. The researcher noted that the Akamba Christian of Kangundo have accepted many changes in their way of doing things but their positive attitude towards *Iweto* marriage has persisted. This is not because they approve of the marriage but they are out to help the persons involved in the marriage. The Christians, based on love, separate the marriage defects from the persons involved. This explains the positive attitude held by the Christians towards those in this form of marriage and sheds light on our fourth premise, 'Some Christians in Kangundo have continued to support the *Iweto* marriage.'

This study observes that the Christians are faced with many challenges as they attempt to conform to Christian teaching and at the same time not to defy the clan rules. They do not have the courage to stand up against some of the laid down structures and are in a dilemma whenever they are faced with the situations of childlessness. This study notes that what unites the people is the

individual positive contribution to a common purpose and every effort is also needed to correct the negative aspects in the common purpose. The study concluded that the social functions of the marriage are still valued among the Akamba of Kangundo irrespective of whether they contravene Christian teachings or not. This explains the involvement of the Christian in the marriage. However, this marriage appeared to present many complicated theological and pastoral issues. Most of those interviewed including the Church leaders noted that the Christians have a duty to live according to Bible teaching. They have to show love to the unfortunate in society and ensure that the clan remains united.

The study observed that reconstruction of the marriage to be in harmony with Christian principles is possible if adultery is eliminated as a precondition for those in the marriage. This removes the negative aspect associated with the practice, maintains the positive elements thus protects the institution from abuse. The Church can share openly with culture their concern and promotion of life in all its aspects. This is done through counselling to ensure that there is no confusion with the earlier organisation which contravenes Christian values. However, there is need for a more integrated solution towards childlessness

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6. Introduction

This study sought to investigate the factors that have contributed to the persistence of the *Iweto* marriage in Kangundo District. The area of research was chosen because of the early exposure to Christianity and westernization. The study notes that few areas in Ukambani had the opportunity of receiving Christianity and related development as early Kangundo, yet cultural practices like the *Iweto* marriage have persisted in the district.

Second, the proximity of Kangundo District to Nairobi which is a cosmopolitan city has promoted interaction of people from different backgrounds. Interaction brings changes in the way people deal with issues affecting them. These observations are in agreement with Shorter (1988: 45) when observes that all cultures throughout history have undergone a form of change as a result of interaction with other cultures. Culture is therefore, not static but flexible. However, this study notes that the people of Kangundo have continued to hold on to a cultural practice that goes against the Gospel teaching. In spite of the Christian influence and contemporary methods of handling childlessness, their basic attitude or worldview has remained. Consequently, it was found necessary to empirically establish the reasons behind the persistence of the *Iweto* marriage in Kangundo irrespective of the geographical location and over a hundred years of Christianity.

The conceptual framework was based on Maslow's Theory (1970) and Shorter's Theory of culture change (1973). Maslow looks at behaviour as a product of needs. It was found that women enter this marriage in anticipation of meeting their needs and as long as it meets some of their needs, resistance to an attempt to control the *Iweto* marriage is inevitable. Shorter looked at degree of resistance and notes that some things in society are easily changed than others, depending on the level of culture. Material culture, for example items used in bridewealth forms the outer layers and is easier to change compared to non-material culture.

The study notes that *Iweto* marriage is one of those cultural practices that have resisted change and went on to establish the reasons behind the prevalence of the marriage. The study used questionnaire, observation, Case study and interview methods to collect data. Focus group discussions were formed and this brought out an elaborate, fruitful discussion on the *Iweto* marriage. It also enabled the researcher to identify other women in this type of marriage through the snowball technique. For the study, a number of hypotheses were formulated and put to test. Both qualitative and simple quantitative analysis of the data were done and conclusions drawn.

6.1 Summary of the Study and Conclusions

The first objective of the study was to examine the significance of the *Iweto* marriage among the Akamba of Kangundo. Findings indicate that the desire

for the continuation of the life chain was one of the main reasons that contributed to development of different forms of marriage, for example, the *Iweto* marriage. Traditionally, marriage and procreation were inseparable and all people were expected to marry and procreate. The study observes that failure to marry and to give birth causes a lot of anxiety. Second, cultural practices are developed as a solution to a natural occurrence beyond the control of people. The *Iweto* marriage was developed as a solution to a problem. It was a coping strategy to the painful scenario of not being able to give birth to a son. This scenario is seen from the Akamba traditional perspective as a disaster.

Using Shorter's theory, it was established that the *Iweto* marriage had several values which are deeply rooted in the inner level of the culture. This provided an answer to the first research question which sought to establish the significance of the *Iweto* marriage. Children have a religio-social economic significance. Our study revealed that the quest for basic needs has influenced women to be in this marriage. Needs identified includes the desire for food, shelter, identity, status and security. The issue of whether *Iweto* marriage serves to provide physical and psychological needs was raised by some respondents. It was noted that for full emotional support, there is need for a permanent partner to hold and behold. It was revealed by the *Maweto* that they do experience episodes of loneliness, with nobody to consult. However, this is concealed by the benefits they get from the marriage. The study concluded that the marriage caters for the physical and psychological needs of

the community. This confirmed our first premises “The *Iweto* marriage has a significant role among the Akamba of Kangundo”. This premise therefore, laid the necessary foundation for us to understand the reason behind the development and sustenance of the different marriages like the *Iweto* marriage in Kangundo.

Our second objective was to identify the changes that have taken place in the *Iweto* marriage and establish the reason for the changes. This study notes that, marriage is a complex affair with economic, social and religious aspects which are interrelated. Due to inter-dependence of institutions in the society, change in one aspect of life tends to bring change in another area and people respond to those changes in different ways. This is because people are creative and adapt culture to the challenges they encounter. When they encounter a problem, solutions are sought and the outcome is a new practice which is a mix of the past and the present, reflecting people’s perception of the new situation. The study deduced that individuals naturally respond to situation, depending on the circumstances they find themselves in.

The respondents were able to note changes in the age of marriage, paternity of the children, the reception of the children, the roles played by the two parties, the moral standards and the use of surnames. This provided answers to our second research question. It was observed that most of those who get married are single parents unlike before when young girls without children were married. The paternity of the children has changed and is no longer a big

deal because among the Akamba, children are highly valued and it's better for the female husband to have the children who come with their mother than to remain with none. Second, children belong to the mother until such a time when she gets married and they start to identify with the person who marries the mother.

This study notes that roles have changed. Traditionally, the childless woman acted as the husband in the sense that she was the breadwinner of her family while the role of the *Iweto* was to procreate and to bring up the children. The study established that the roles have changed and there is no clear-cut or definitive line in relation to the duties. Their basic needs have also changed. There is need to pay for modern education and clothing. The farms are not large enough to provide adequate food. Some foodstuffs have changed while others have to be purchased from the supermarkets. Money is needed in daily running of the home yet it was found that most female husbands when they are old. The *Iweto* today is the breadwinner hence family decision-making has shifted. The roles and behaviour of the two persons involved in the relationship have changed. The use of the term female husband to signify the one who provides is, therefore, misleading.

This study notes that *Iweto* marriage in general goes against the Gospel teachings for adultery is condemned in the Bible. Christian marriage is strictly monogamous and sexual relationships outside marriage are not tolerated. With the introduction of Christianity, it was established that getting

a relative to beget children with *Iweto* has not been easy and together with the changed roles the *Iweto* marriage has encountered a challenge. This has made the *Iweto* to get a partner outside the family not only for procreation but also for financial support. This shed light on our second premise “The *Iweto* marriage has undergone certain changes as a result of Christianity”. However, it was established that the changes seen are a response to the changes in the religio-social economic environment.

Though there are changes, this has not penetrated into the community’s worldview. This is because the religious and social functions are deeply rooted in their world view and this determines their awareness of reality. It helps the people to understand the world around them and their understanding is seen in their behavior. The *Iweto* marriage reflects the pattern of thought hence Christianity has not completely changed the way they look at issues related to marriage and procreation. Marriage and procreation ensures the growth of the society. The study concluded that resistance to cultural change is inevitable if people’s existence is threatened. It was the opinion of most of the respondents that in its present organisation, and in the present era of HIV and AIDS, the *Iweto* marriage is a threat to the survival of the very society it is meant to carry on.

Our third objective was to establish the factors that continue to sustain *Iweto* marriage among the Akamba Christian of Kangundo. The respondents noted that familiar ways are hard to give up if they are providing satisfaction solution.

People accept new ways and keep old habits because they are still important and valuable to them. It was found that the solutions that had been introduced to sort out the issue of childlessness were competing with an old established system which was still satisfying. Resistance to change was identified even among the professing Christians but it was noted that the Christians were not keen on the issue of being remembered after their death. To them, eternal life is not through their children but through Jesus Christ. However, there were other reasons and factors why the marriage is still a reality in Kangundo.

Patriarchal values and practices were the major factors behind the persistence of the marriage. The study observed that most of the informants who were also professing Christians responded positively to an opinion question that required one to state whether boys and girls should be given equal opportunities in education. They noted that "*mwana ni mwana*" meaning a child is a child and irrespective of sex, should be given a chance to be educated. However, when it came to the issues of land, they did not support equality with the earlier vigour and they did not seem to have a good reason to justify their reaction, other than to say that girls traditionally don't own land and are not allowed to inherit. It was noted that with modern land laws, individual land ownership is a right and the owner can transfer the property to anybody irrespective of the gender. The succession laws of Kenya further stipulate that all children (sons and daughters) have a right to inherit land equally from their parents. It was established that though most informants were reluctant when it came to issue of giving a daughter land, the main

obstacle was the influence from patriarchal ideas and ignorance of the succession laws.

The importance of family roots came up and recent events were cited where the children have travelled for many kilometres in search of their roots. Examples given include the USA president Barrack Obama. It was noted that the search for his father is an indication of the importance of identity in our patrilineal African society. The need to define ourselves is a reality and the marriage provides the much desired identity to many children from single mothers. Based on these observations, the researcher deduced that adherence to some traditional values and practices is still rampant and this continues to sustain the *Iweto* marriage among the Akamba of Kangundo. The study therefore, concluded that as long as the society continues to emphasise on patrilineal descent and men continue to control property, the women will remain in a dependant position. This will continue to propel women towards *Iweto* form of marriage.

Analysis of various factors confirmed that other than the patriarchal structures, there are several factors behind the *Iweto* marriage and all these work together to enhance the practice. These factors include the need to be taken care of in old age, lack of a suitable alternative solution to the problem of childlessness, low levels of education, Christianity and caring nature of women, most of whom have their roots in the patriarchal structures that give priority to boys at the expense of the girl. The study deduced that education is

the avenue of escape from the limiting handicaps of a restrictive patriarchal environment. The findings confirmed our third premise “Adherence to some traditional values and practices continue to sustain the *Iweto* marriage among the Akamba Christians of Kangundo”.

Our fourth objective was to assess the response of the Christian towards the *Iweto* marriage. It was noted that some Christians have continued to tolerate the marriage by being involved directly or indirectly in the marriage. The *Maweto* are not only accepted at home but also in the Church. In some churches like the Salvation Army and the Redeemed Gospel Church they are welcomed and are free to take part in various activities. Other churches like the African Inland Church and the Catholic Church have some restrictions, for example, in partaking of the Holy Communion but other than in a few areas, the *Maweto* continue to interact with other Christians in the Church. The marriage has not been condemned with vigour like the polygamous marriage and tends to exist silently. This is because, *Iweto* is seen as a daughter-in-law and people rarely think about the story behind the ‘daughter-in-law relationship’. With time, they are treated like any other daughter-in-law in the family.

Several reasons were identified as having contributed to the Christians response towards those involved in the marriage. It was noted that Childlessness is a painful experience. The state of affairs calls for Christian understanding both at home and in Church. Their involvement is a true

demonstration of Christian love. Christian love is practical and knows no boundaries. Jesus did not discriminate; He took care of both the physical and spiritual needs of the people. There are no limits to showing compassionate and love. Christians interacting well with the *Iweto* is simply people caring for one another in a very practical way as shown by Jesus when he mixed with those who were sinners and provided for their needs. Christian response truly reflects Gods love which shines in the darkest places and times of life.

This study deduced that the Christian response is a form of “transformational care”. The Christians’ intention is to help them to meet their need in an acceptable manner and consequently change their bad behaviours as they interact in a friendly conducive environment. It is easier to correct a friend than a stranger and this explains the positive response seen with the Christian towards the *Maweto*. These findings confirmed our fourth premise; Some Christians in Kangundo have continued to support *Iweto* marriage. It was noted that as Christians condemn the marriage, attempts are made to separate the action from the person. They condemn the action but empathise with the person and in the process rationalise their actions using the Bible.

Christians encounter several challenges as they deal with the issue of *Iweto* Marriage. They are in a dilemma when making decisions that are contrary to the clan regulations. Being part of the clan is the expected norm of behaviour. Out of fear many Christians have continued to support the clan activities regardless of whether they contravene Christian teaching. Many are afraid to

challenge clan resolution for fear of what others will think of them. It was deduced that tribal loyalty had certainly not lost its importance. Though the Christians interviewed agreed that God is supreme, they confessed that the strong desire to be part of the clan was deeply impressed upon them as they grew up to such an extent that they have taken the *status quo* as the normal or natural way of doing things.

It has not been possible to separate the Christians from the clan activities, for the clan is made up of Christians. The clan elders are also professing Christians and support all clan issues because of the need to maintain harmony in society and also to protect their position of leadership. Children no longer play an important role in burial ceremonies. Friends, relatives and the church members come together to bury the dead. The church leaders conduct the ceremonies and the children or relatives watch as the ceremony goes on. The researcher observed that the issue of the clan disowning a member does not bear earlier stigma or alarm. The traditional structures are slowly weakening but are still there and this calls for the Christians to be more vigilant as they make decisions pertaining to the *Iweto* marriage.

Some theological and pastoral issues came up during the study. How should Christians deal with those *Maweto* who get converted? It was noted that this is a theological issue and this is where Christian love is exemplified. The Gospel should be seen as the medium through which God meets the childless woman and the *Iweto* at the point of need. Thus, the Gospel should not bring

more suffering to the women but joy and peace of heart. It is possible to transform the marriage to be in harmony with our religio-social environment by injecting Christian values into marriage and removing what is not compatible with Christian teaching. It was noted that the commandment; “thou shall not commit adultery” (Exodus 20:13), cannot be changed to suit a culture but the way to show compassion can be purified to be in harmony with Christianity.

It was found that failure to get a child has made some Christians to backslide with some opting for other forms of marriage including the *Iweto* marriage. This was regarded as a pastoral issue and other than encouraging the childless couple to continue praying, other Christians should step in to provide material assistance. This study concluded that helping the elderly, both emotionally and physically is a realistic value but there is need for a complete overhaul of the practice to avoid contradiction. When a person is converted, she should be challenged to live according to the Gospel and use the good or positive aspects of the *Iweto* marriage to demonstrate the character of a true Christian. This way, the Gospel is enriched by the marriage while at the same time the marriage is enriched by the Gospel. This will enable the Christian childless couple and the single mothers to remain truly African and truly Christian thus avoid conflict or dual personality.

6.2 Recommendations

In view of the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are made. The findings showed that *Iweto* marriage has persisted because the people of Kangundo have not come to terms with other possible alternatives that are in harmony with Christian teaching. This is because these alternatives compete with *Iweto* marriage, a system that is simple and at the same time is still giving satisfaction. The expenses and the long complicated procedures involved in adoption acts as hindrance to adoption as an alternative method of solving childlessness. It is suggested that the government should fasten adoption procedures and sensitize the community on the need to change its attitude towards adopted children. The community should be enlightened on possible ways of handling childlessness in a modern world.

Second, the findings have shown a direct relationship between patriarchal practices, education, poverty and the prevalence of the *Iweto* marriage. Patriarchy is a factor governing the distribution of economic resources and has made it difficult for the female child to inherit property from the parents. Similar disparities were also noted in education. It was noted that as long as the social systems provide for gender inequalities, this serves to perpetuate poverty among the women hence the dependant scenario displayed by those who get married by other women. The role of education in bringing significant change cannot be over emphasised. Education provides a ladder to get away from financial dependence and a prerequisite for economic

empowerment. Through education, women learn their basic rights and gain confidence to claim them. They acquire new ways of thinking. This has ripple effects within the family and across generation. Majority of those interviewed were professing Christians and variation in responses was seen in relation to education and age. It was deduced that some people accept change faster than others and this is related to their age and level of education and not so much on their Christian faith. This study recommends that equal opportunities be given to all the children irrespective of gender. Mass education is needed at the grassroots level and the Church should be at the forefront since they form a big percentage of the local population. The Church has the advantage of a large congregation and this is an opportunity which the Church can use to educate the community on their basic rights. Through different Church ministries, forums can be created where important information is spread to the members. Through education given by the Church and other key players, the women will possess and enjoy their God given rights.

For meaningful change to be attained, people's attitude towards certain issues should be modified. There is a tendency to look at women as the weaker sex and immediately an *Iweto* is brought in the clan, some clan member attempt to exercise their authority over such women and extend this to her sexual life. This study recommends that the Akamba of Kangundo be encouraged by the Church and government to respect women and to allow them to make important decisions in regard to property and their life.

Findings indicate that the *Iweto* marriage has undergone some changes which are not only against Christian teaching but are socially unacceptable. The sexual activities of the *Iweto* and other married men are not only a sin according to Christian teaching but also a looming disaster. Respondents compared the change to prostitution and noted that the present arrangement encourages the spread of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV and AIDS. They noted that issues of immorality in society affect all the members of the society and the war against HIV and AIDS cannot be won unless all people are involved and all loopholes are exposed, and then sealed. Cultural practice should be in harmony with changing times.

When a person dies due to HIV and AIDS, many a time this is not disclosed. It is important to note that there is no cure for AIDS available yet hence the more the reason why they should ensure life is passed on in a manner that is in conformity with the group's expectation of morality or general conduct. This study recommends that people be educated so that they are aware of the dangers associated with *Iweto* marriage. The Church should seek the co-operation of bodies, government or voluntary which are engaged in AIDS control programmes and preach on the need for behaviour change from the biblical perspective. *Maweto* and the community at large need to be guided and counselled about the dangers involved in the present organization of the marriage. The local administrator, clan elders, social workers, health workers and church leaders have a role in empowering the community. This is done through public forums like public *baraza*, clan and religious meeting. The

government has an obligation to educate the citizens, while the Church has a bigger role not only to educate the members but to liberate the oppressed.

Some informants noted that the marriage impinges on the right of women and had made the women to forget their dignity as women. The *Iweto* is valued for her ability to procreate and to take care of the elderly. This study noted that the woman is worth in her own right and the society should be encouraged to stop looking at women as objects whose value is tied to procreation. The community should be made aware through public baraza and Church meetings that women are not the determinants of the sex of the child. Through preaching, men can be made aware of their responsibilities in the conception of a child. Correct medical advice should be made available to the couples without children and men encouraged accompanying their wives to the doctor.

This study found that, customs and traditions which are adhered to since time immemorial cannot be erased overnight. It has taken time for the *Iweto* marriage to be changed and is not yet about to go. However, the old structures that protected the institution of *Iweto* from abuse are falling apart and more relevant ones must be put in place to provide the same social function. This study recommends that the older generation be made to understand that a childless marriage is not a defective marriage. According to Christian teaching, children are a gift of God from the union between man and woman and they do not constitute a marriage. It was noted that the need to be taken

care of in old age had played a part in the sustenance of the *Iweto* marriage in Kangundo. “Once a strong person twice a child” was a slogan repeated by different informants to show that it is a fact we cannot run away from. Traditionally, among the Akamba, the last born son was expected to take care of the parent. This study noted that the issue of an insurance cover to take care of the future is a new idea to many and not affordable due to poverty. Few people are willing to take care of outsiders due to the hard economic times. The study recommends that though it may take some time, the Church should spearhead the development of homes for the aged in the district since there is not a single facility to take care of the old people.

This study found out that Kangundo District has several children homes that take care of the orphans and other needy children. Kangundo children home run by the AIC is an example of such a home. It was noted that there are many children who still require a place to call home. Getting involved in taking care of these children can bring a lot of joy to a childless woman though this study does not equate this with having children of their own. In Acts 9:36, Tabitha is remembered for her service to the community. She had a rich inheritance as if she had many sons. It is suggested that childless couples should be encouraged to write a will where inheritance of property is an issue so that all their property can be inherited by institutions like Kangundo children’s home.

Certain aspects of marriage of Kenya are regulated by the government, for example, the issue of young girls getting married and widow inheritance. It was evident from the study that the government recognizes the marriage during the issuing of National ID card. This study suggests that time has come for the government to come up with the official position on the *Iweto* marriage. It was noted that *Iweto* marriage has its advantages and disadvantages just like any other type of marriage. The community in Kangundo should be enlightened, liberated and assisted to explore the positive aspects of the marriage. Reconstruction of the *Iweto* marriage for the Christians already in the marriage is recommended in order for the Christian to protect their Christian testimony. Personal conduct should not raise questions or suspicion in the eyes of believers and non-believers. *Iweto* should be counseled on how to live a life pleasant to God in her present situation. This will enable the persons to be aware of what it means and entails to be in the marriage. They should know that the institution in its reconstructed nature is not meant for procreation but to take care of some physical and emotional needs of the family.

Lastly, what the researcher has given are general recommendations but there is need for a unified solution to the issue of the *Iweto* marriage. This study suggests that different churches in Kangundo should come together to chart the way forward on how to tackle the challenges of childlessness. This should be done without losing touch with the realities of daily life, without killing

their traditional values and without compromising Christianity. There is need to integrate Christian element into the existing traditional structures.

6.3 Suggestions, for Further Study

i. The study noted that though science and technology have contributed to diminishing cases of barrenness, HIV and AIDS has contributed to death of young people without children hence the increase in the number of women

looking for children to extend their lineage and to take care of them in old age. The effect of HIV and AID on *Iweto* marriage is a prospective area for further research.

ii. The study also noted that the marriage is still appreciated but there is need to protect the Christian testimony. There is need to popularise adoption and this is another area which calls for further research. How can adoption be popularised?

iii. The study observed that many children from the marriage have a behavior disorder especially when the mother is married with adolescent children. They are not able to cope in school and later in society. They tend to shy away from their new family members. It was noted that the boy child is most affected. The effect of the marriage on the emotional stability of the children from these families and how this influences their personality is an area that needs further research.

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APPENDIX 1

GLOSSARY

Baraza: Public meeting.

Iweto (Plural-*Maweto*): This term has two meanings- It refers to the wife of a childless or sonless woman and is also a form of marriage where one woman marries another woman. The word combines both the woman and the affinal consanguinal relation.

Kuweta: This word means to mention and it's from the word the name *Iweto* is derived.

Mbui ya maleo: The goat that signifies that the clan has rejected the *Iweto* officially.

Mundu mue: Medicine person.

Musyi (*musie*): This is a functional unit within the clan which allows for mutual dependability, it consists of grandparents, parents, siblings, and close relative by marriages

Mwaitu: Mother (mum).

Ngungu: Word used to refer to a barren woman.

Nthoo: An incision made by a medicine man and medicine applied. When it heals it leaves a mark that shows where the incision was made.

Nyumba: Family or household.

Susu (*Usua*): Grandmother.

Syitawa: In -laws

APPENDIX 2

List of Informants.

NAME	CATEGORY	LOCATION	DATE	AGE
Mueni Loise	Christians	Kangundo	29.8.2009	40
Muema Mutyiwa			28.8.2009	45
Muisyo James			7.9.2009	43
Mwau Jane			9.9.2009	53
Kieti Musyoki			12.9.2009	35
Sila Patrick			6.6.2009	55
		Kakuyuni		
Kilonzo Ben			6.6.2009	44
Mwangangi Borniface			6.6.2009	38
Ndambuki Dorminic			7.9.2009	70
Miriam Manthi			10.8.2009	56
Musyoka Kiema			16.10.2009	44
Nzyoki Ndambuki			5.9.2009	54
		Kawethei		
Mwende Kieti			4.6.2009	30
Monica Wambua			6.8.2009	50
Musyoka muoki			6.9.2009	30
Makau Nicholas			30.8.2009	40
Beatrice Mumbua			8.9.2009	68

Ngina Marion			12.12.2009/ 24.12.2009	44
	Church Leaders/ Elders			
		Kangundo		
Musau Mulwa			7.9.2009	49
Matheka Musyoki			3.9.2009	40
Mwangangi Samuel			3.10.2009	41
Kivuva Judith			5.11.2009	38
Mulwa Paul			7.7.2009	32
Muisyo James		Kawethei	12.12.2009	47
Wambua Faith			7.6.2009	42
Kithusi Tom			6.9.2009	53
Mweu Stephen			5.9.2009	32
Muindi Job			12.12.2009/ 5.9.2009	48
Wambua Lukas		Kakuyuni	7.6.2009/ 5.7.2009	35
Maweu Phillip			6.6.2009	28
Kaveke Hannah			6.9.2009/ 26.11.2009	36
Musembi Joseph			6.8.2009	47
Name withheld			15.12.2008.	60
Makau muli	Clan Elders	Kangundo	26.8.2009	62
Kyengo Muindi			6.11. 2009	65

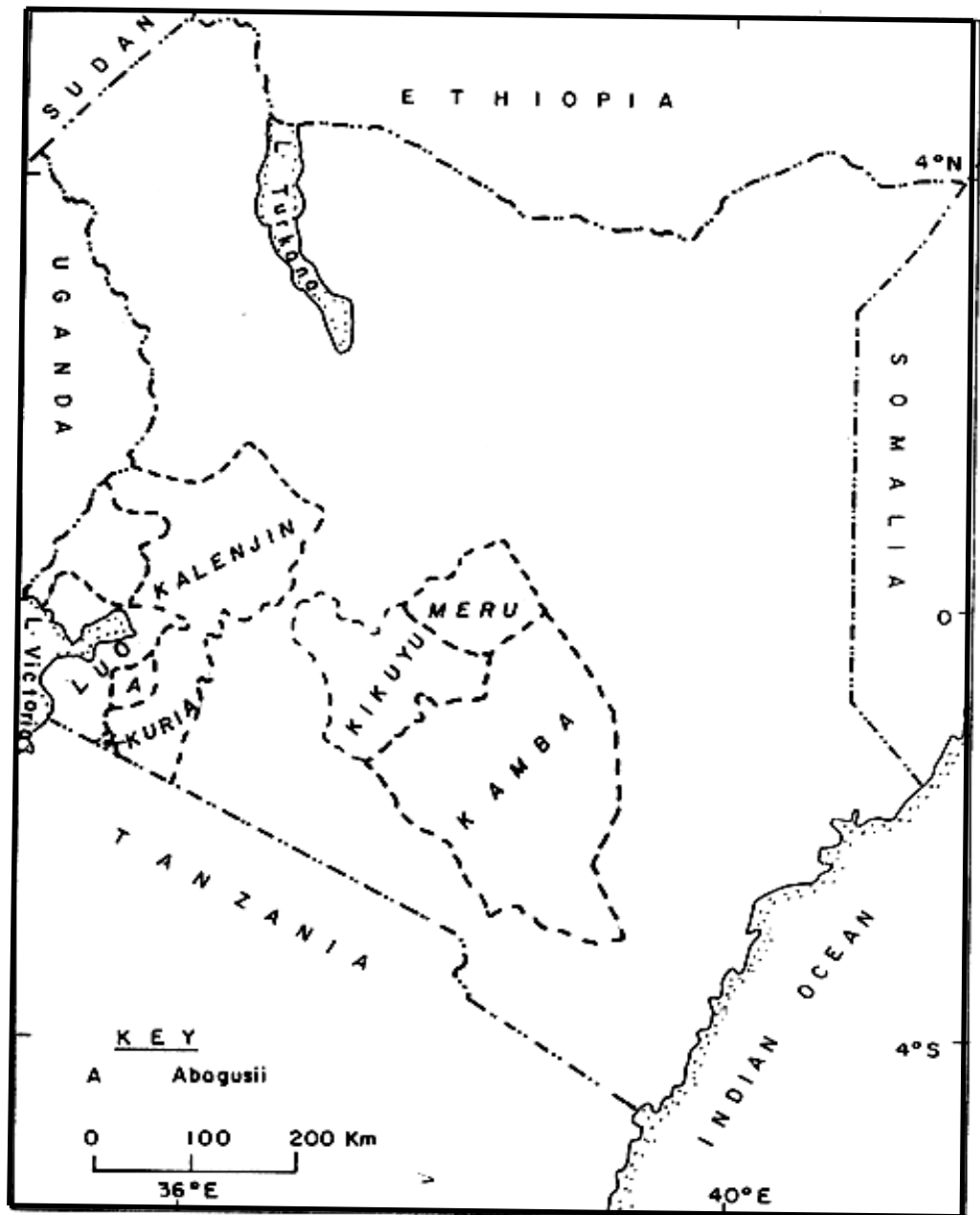
Kimotho John			6.6.2009/4. 11.2009	47
Nzivo Joseph			6.9.2009/10 .9.2009	80
Mutiso Muema			12.8.2009	61
Mwikali Hannah			6.8.2009	60
Mutuku Wambua		Kawethei	3.10.2009	59
Mutua Muli			5.8.2009	49
Muli Joseph			6.8.2009	71
Mbuli Mundindi			2.8.2009	64
Kilonzo James			6.6. 2009	81
Muoki Mbithi			4.9.2009	72
Nzioka Joseph		Kakuyuni	6.8.2009	60
Ndunda Peter			6.6.2009	63
Ngulu Kimotho			3.8.2009	76
Mukui Beth			3.8.2009	59
Kyalo Richard			3.8.2009	61
Name withheld			7.9.2009	49
	Female Husbands			
Kavuu Mutua		Kangundo	4.8.2009	>80
Ndanu Wamai			10.9.2009/ 20.11.2009/ 4.8.2009	>80
Martha Thyaka			20.6.2009/4 .8.2009	69

Mukonyo Mary			4.8.2009	60
Mami Mutheu		Kawethei	20.11.2009	80
Mukui Muendo			7.7.2009	70
Nzangi Jane			4.8.2009	unkow n
Syokau Ndinda			4.8.2009/2. 11.2009	65
Mulekyo Ann		Kakuyuni	4.8.2009	69
Mbuvi Kavuu			4.8.2009	65
Loisa Kaluu			1.9.2009	70
Muthike Kieti			4.8.2009	>80
	<i>Maweto</i>			
Mutave Eliza		Kangundo	6.9.2009.	56
Mumbua Dorcas			25.8.2009	43
Kamene Agnes			3.8.2009	50
Yula Rose			6.8.2009	49
Koki Ruth			10.8.2009	55
Mwikali Paulina		Kawethei	10.8.2009	60
Koki Margaret			10.8.2009	60
Loko Mami			10.8.2009/2 0.11.2009	75
Mwangangi Mueni			10.8.2009	61
Nthenya Munini			10.8.2009	64
Wamai Mwikali Mary			10.8.2009/ 20.11.2009	56

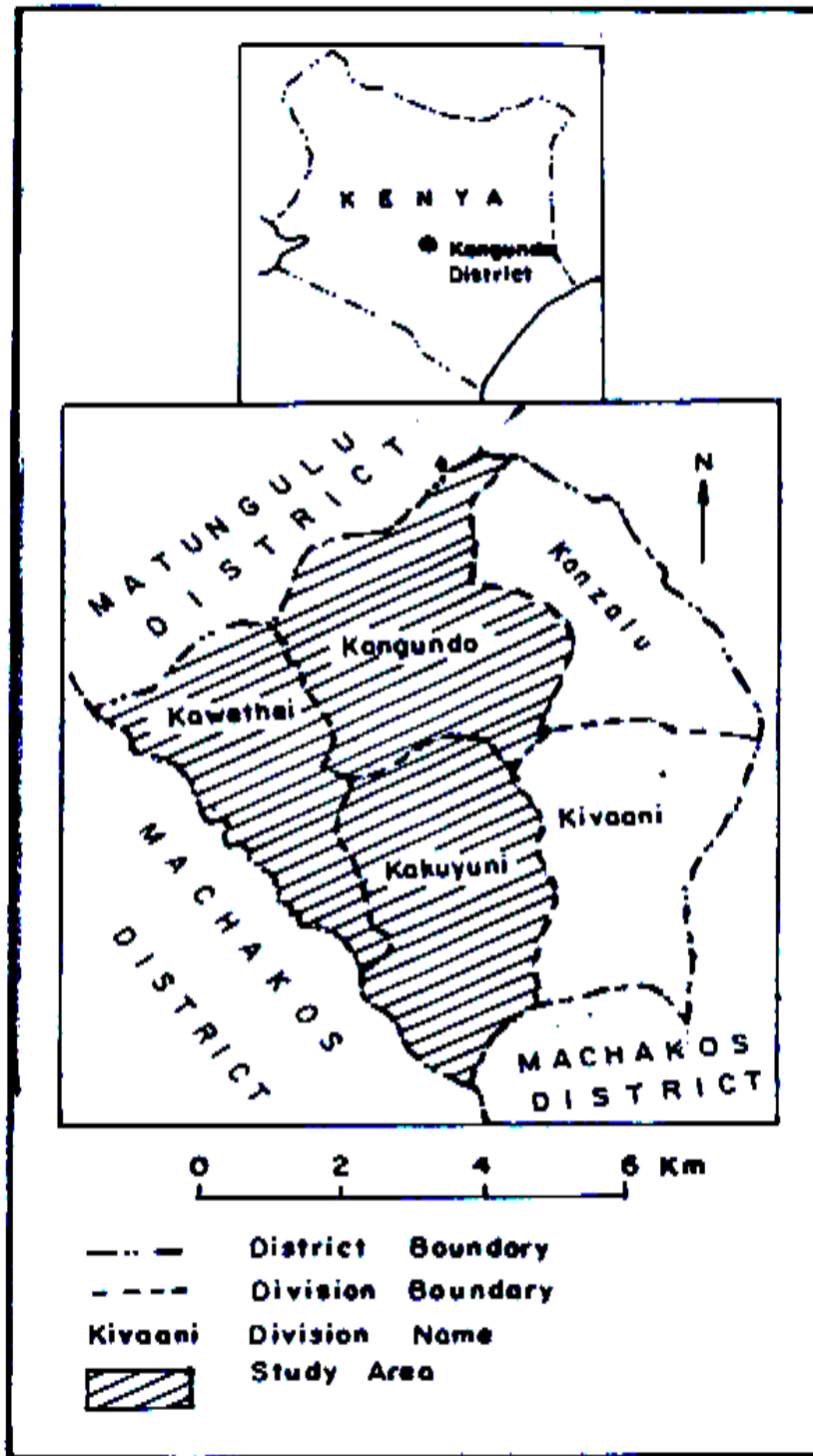
Muia Grace		Kakuyuni	10.8.2009	50
Mbiti Flora			3.8.2009	52
Kalunde Ruth			6.6.2009/ 3.8.2009	49
Masai Betty			19.8.2009	79
Munuve Wayua			12.8.2009	65
Wausi Florence			15.12.2008/ 4.6.2009	61
Kanini Mutua			4.9.2009	80
	Young adults			
Kioko Kyeti		Kakuyuni	3.8.2009/7. 6.2009 /5.8.2009	35
Mutunga Samuel			29.12.2009	35
Musyoki Ben			3.12.2009	28
Mutuku Paul			5.12.2009	39
Ndolo Moses			9.12.2009	32
Mwangangi Jimmy		Kawethei	22.12.2009	35
Kiio Simon			4.8.2009/3. 8.2009	30
Mutua Peter			10.8.2009	25
Mutie Festus			18.8.2009	27
Musyimi Lawrence			12.12.2009	33
Kimeu Paul		Kangundo	30.8.2009	37
Munguti James			30. 8.2009	27
Mutinda			1.8.2009	33

Musyimi				
Ndambuki David			8.8.2009.	38
Namewith held			6.6.2009	30
	Administrators			
ChepKonga Charity		Kangundo	11.9.2010	-
Mutiso Simon		Kangundo	11.9.2010	-
Maingi Mutua		Kawethei	13.10.2009	-
Mutisya John		Kawethei	2.8.2009	-
KaleKye Ann		Kakuyuni	6.8.2009	-
Name withheld		Kakuyuni	7.6.2009	-

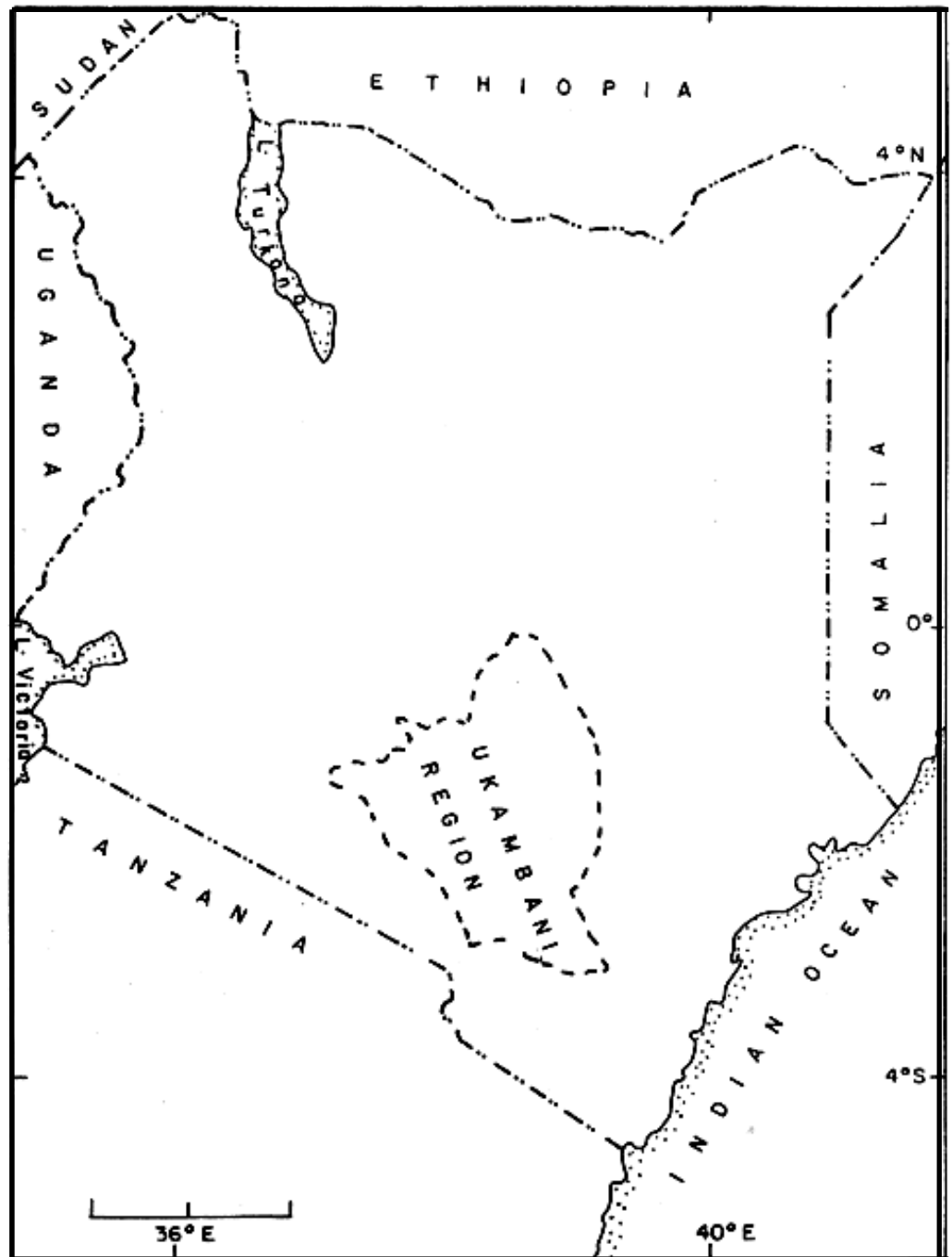
TOTAL RESPONDENTS: 102



Map 1: Ethnic Communities Which Practice Woman To Woman Marriage In Kenya



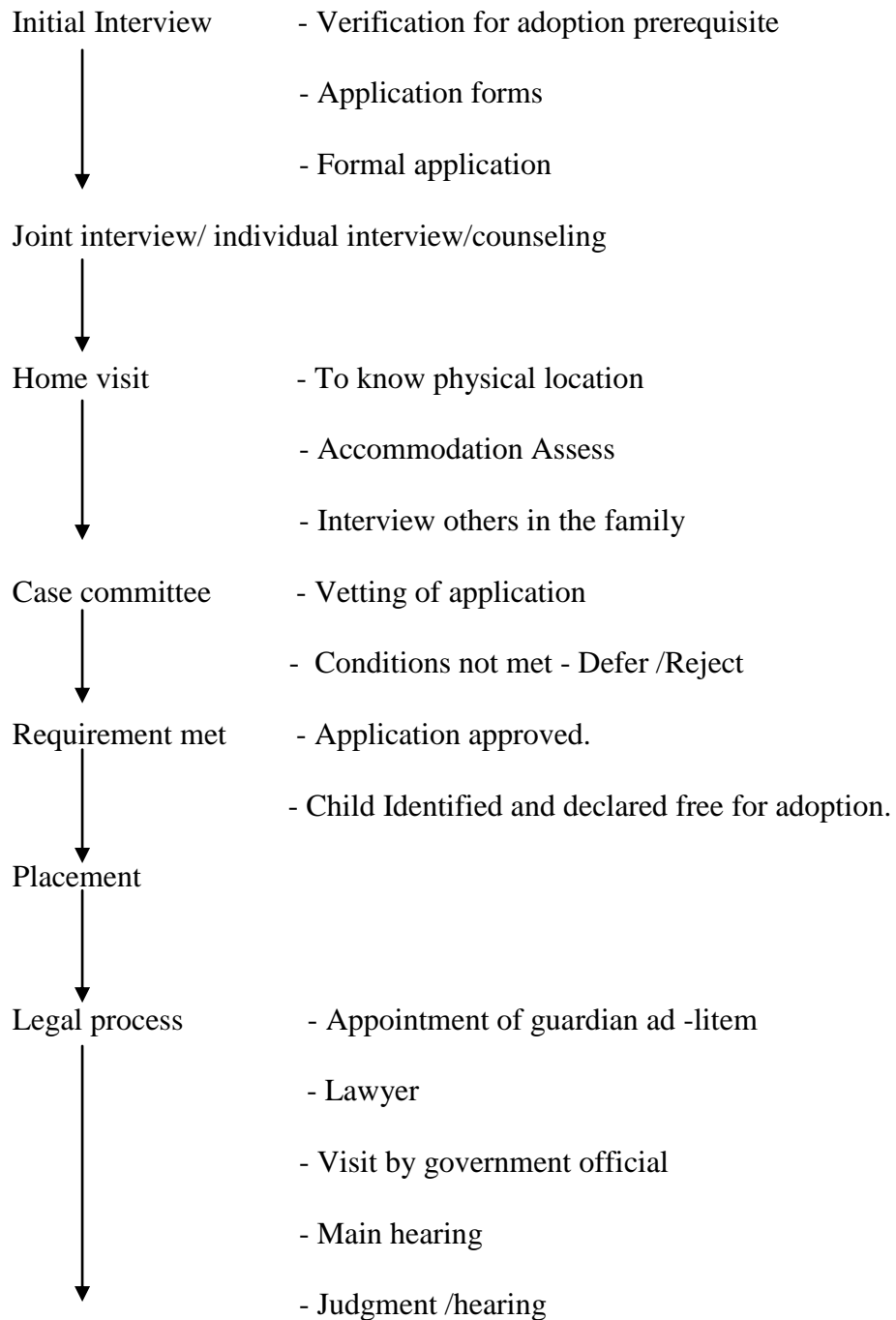
Map 2: Map of Kangundo District Showing Study Area



Map 3: Region Occupied by the Akamba Ethnic Communities.

APPENDIX 4

Child Adoption Procedures



Adoption order is issued.

Source: Little Angel Network.

APPENDIX 5 QUESTIONNAIRES

A. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CHRISTIANS, CHURCH LEADERS AND ELDERS

To The Respondent,

I'm a Master of Arts student from Kenyatta University. I am conducting a research on *Maweto* marriages. Please note that any information given will be treated with utmost confidentiality thus writing your name is optional.

Instruction

Put a tick (✓) where you agree and (x) where you disagree with the statement. The spaces left blank are for additional information where necessary.

SECTION A

1. Name:..... (Optional)
Age.....Date.....
2. Sex: Male () Female ()
3. Marital status: Single () Married ().
4. Location
5. Denomination- i) AIC () (ii) S A () (iii) Others.....
6. Level of education attained - i) Primary () ii) Secondary ()
iii) Post secondary ()

SECTION B

1. Position held in Church: Pastor () Elder () Group Leaders () Member ()
2. a) In your opinion, why do people marry?
- b) Name the forms of marriage you have come across in this community.....
- c) Do you have any church members without children? YES () NO ()
- d) Do you have any church members with girls only? YES () NO ().
- e) i) Do you have any programme or special teachings to assist them?
YES () NO ().
ii) If yes, please specify
3. a) Have you ever come across an *Iweto marriages*? YES () NO ().
- b) Do you know any reason why women get into this type of marriage?
i) Search for land (). ii) Recognition () iii) They were forced ().
iv) Search for identity for her children/belonging ().
v) Any other reason.....
4. Do you have any in your church?
i) YES () ii) NO () iii) I DO NOT KNOW ().
a) Does your church/Christians accept *Maweto* in Church?
- b) If yes, explain under what circumstances.....

- c) Who are involved in the marriage arrangements?
- 5 a) In your opinion, should Christians take part in these ceremonies, e.g. in payment of dowry? YES () NO ()
- b) Please give reason(s) for your answer above.
- c) What is the Christian attitude towards the *Maweto*?
- i) Loving, caring, kind () ii) Welcome them to the family/clan ()
- iii) Ignore them () iv) I do not know ()
6. Are there cases where the church has refused to accept members who are in these marriages? YES () NO ()
7. a) Should this marriage be allowed to continue.....
Please explain.....
- b) Those who get converted and are already in these marriages, what would be your advice to them?.....
8. If they are allowed to remain in such marriages, should they take part in any of the church activities below: Tick the activities:
- i) Church choir () ii) Women groups ()
- iii) Church elders () iv) Fellowship leaders ()
- v) Sunday school teachers () vi) None of the above ()
9. Please give one reason for your answer.....
10. a) What changes have you noticed in the marriage.....
b) In your opinion what has brought the changes.....
11. a) Is the community aware of any negative aspect of the practice today?
YES () NO ()
- b) Please name one
12. a) Do you think the church has a role to play in discouraging this practice? YES () NO ().
- b) Please specify.....
13. a) Are you aware of adoption as a method of getting Children.....
b) Do you support it?.....
14. a) In your opinion are girls treated the same way with boys in Kangundo especially in land inheritance and educational matters?.....
b) Should girls get equal share of land with their brothers? YES () NO ()
Please explain.....
15. a) Are you aware of the current Kenya succession Act? YES () NO ()
b) If the answer is YES, Do you support it ?.....
Please explain.....

B. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE CHILDREN OF IWETO MARRIAGE.

Instructions

Put a tick (√) where you agree and (X) where you disagree with the statement. The spaces left behind are for additional information where necessary.

SECTION A

1. Name (Optional) Date.....
2. Location.....

3. AgeSex
4. Educational level: Primary () Secondary () University ()
5. Are you a Christian? Yes () No ()
6. If yes which is your denomination?
 - Salvation Army () - AIC ()
 - Any other.....
7. Marital status.....

SECTION B

1. In your opinion why do people get married?.....
2. Name the forms of marriage you have seen in Kangundo.....
3. a) Do you think the community is aware of child adoption method.....
 b) If the answer is YES, why is it that so less women still marry other women to give them sons instead of adopting a son?.....
4. a) In your opinion should girls get an equal share of land with their brothers from their parents? YES () NO ()
 b) Please explain your answer.....
5. Are you aware of succession Laws of Kenya YES () NO ()
6. a) You come from a family of *Iweto*, in your opinion what are the benefits of one marrying an *Iweto*?
- b) Are you happy to be identified as a son of *Iweto* YES () NO ()
7. a) Have the members of your extended family accepted you? Yes () No ()
 b). How would you rate their acceptance?
 - Highly accepted/very accepted ()
 - Accepted well ()
 - Not well accepted ()
 - I do not know ()
- c). What is the society's attitude towards the children from this form of marriage? Positive () Negative () I do not know ()
8. In your opinion would you encourage single mothers unable to get male husbands to remain single or to be married as *Iweto*.....
9. Do you know any negative aspect of this form of marriage? YES () No ()
 If answer is YES Please specify.....
10. Do you think women are aware of these negative effects
 Briefly explain your answer.....
11. Should *Iweto* marriage be allowed to continue YES () NO ()
 Please give reasons for your answer

C. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE IWETO

Instruction

Put a tick (✓) where you agree and (x) where you disagree with the statement. The spaces left blank are for additional information where necessary.

- b) Which forms of marriages have you seen in Kangundo.....
- c). Have you come across women who marry other women.....
2. In your opinion, why do women get into this type of marriage today? Pick two reasons from the options provided below.
- i). Fathers are not willing to give land to their daughters.
TRUE () FALSE ().
- ii). Brothers are not willing to share family land with their sisters.
TRUE () FALSE ().
- iii). Lack of income/ Low levels of education.
TRUE () FALSE ().
- iv). Search for identity and belonging for single mothers and their families.
TRUE () FALSE ()
3. a)How was the *Iweto* marriage organized traditionally?.....
- b) Have you noticed any changes in the way the marriage is organized?
- c) Please identify any changes noted.....
YES () NO ().
- d) Have these changes made it better or worse?.....
- e) In your opinion, what has brought these changes?
- Christianity ()
- Education ()
- High cost of living ()
-Others please specify
4. a) Do you think women and society at large are aware of the health dangers that can be brought by the practice? YES ()
NO ().
- b) Is there any way that this type of marriage has contributed to the spread of HIV and AIDS? YES () NO ().
- c) Please explain.....
5. a) Should the community still support this kind of marriage? (Is it relevant today? YES () NO ().
- b) Name one negative aspect of the marriage.
6. In your views, what has made this marriage persist even with Christianity and HIV/AIDS around.....
7. a) As a leader in this region, are you aware of any other way of solving childlessness? (Or birth of daughters only)
YES () NO ().
- b) If YES, please explain.....
- c) Why has the community not embraced adoption as a method of solving the problem of an heir?
- d)In your opinion do you support adoption method?.....Please give reasons for your answer.....
7. a) Are you aware of the succession laws of Kenya
- b) Do parents give equal share of land to both sons and daughters
- If your answer is No, please explain.....

- c) In your own opinion do you support the implementation of the laws in Kangundo?
8. Do you think this marriage should be allowed to continue.....

E. GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR FEMALE HUSBANDS INTERVIEW

Instructions

Put a tick (√) where you agree and (x) where you disagree with the statement. The spaces left blank are for additional information where necessary.

SECTION A

1. Name.....(Optional) Date.....
2. Division.....
3. Age..., < 40 () 41-60 () >60 ()
4. Educational level: Primary () Secondary () College () University ()
5. Source of income: Farming () Business () Employment () others ()
6. Do you go to church? YES () NO ()
7. If so what is your denomination. Catholic () Salvation Army () Redeemed Gospel () others ()

SECTION B

1. a). Have you ever had children of your own? YES () NO ().
 b). If yes, No of boys..... No of girls.....
2. a) Why do people marry.....
 b) At what age did you decide to get married?
3. What prompted you to get married to *Iweto*?
 -Need for company () - Need for continuity of name ()
 - Need for land owner ship () - Lack of respect ()
 -Any other reason.....
4. a) Did you pay the dowry?
- b). who helped you in the above ceremony
- c). Are some of those who helped you professing Christian? YES () NO ()
5. Have you made arrangement for a man to give the *Iweto* children?
 YES () NO ()
6. Are there changes in the manner the marriage is conducted today compared to long ago?
7. a) Are you aware that sexual relationship outside marriage has health implications? YES () NO ()
 b) If your answer is YES, name the health implications.....
 c) Why has the marriage persisted
8. a) Are you aware of other methods of handling the issue of lack of heir, for example adoption ? YES () NO ()
 b).If so why did you use them?.....
9. What is the respond of other Christians towards your marriage of the *Iweto*?.....

- 10. a) Do you think girls should be given equal portion of land with their brothers? YES () NO ()
- b) Do you know the Succession laws of Kenya
- 11. Is the community ready to follow these laws.....
- 12. Do you think the marriage should be allowed to continue? YES () NO ().

F. GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR THE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Date

- 1. Why do people marry.....
- 2. Why do women marry other women.....
- 3. What does Christianity teach on marriage
- 4. How do Christian respond to those in the *Iweto* marriage
- 5. Why do they respond this way.....
- 6. Is the community aware of other ways of handling the problem of childlessness.....
- 7. Why don't they go for adoption?.....
- 8. Are there changes that have occurred in the *Iweto* Marriage?.....
- 9. What has brought these changes.....
- 10. Are they good /positive changes.....
- 11. Name one negative aspect of the marriage.....
- 12. Should this marriage be allowed to continue?
- 13. Can somebody tell us about the Kenyan current laws of succession.....
- 14. Does this community follow the laws.....
- 15. Why is it so?.....
- 16. What can the government do to assist the single mothers and the childless women?.....
- 17. What about the Church
- 18. What about the women themselves
- 19. What about the community in general.....

