THE EFFECT OF SOCIO- ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL FACTORS ON ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION IN IGEMBE NORTH DISTRICT, MERU COUNTY, KENYA

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DECLARATION

This project is my original work and has not been submitted for the award of any degree or study program.

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E55/CE/11777/2008

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DEDICATION
To my parents Mr. Samuel Wachira and Mrs. Consolata Wachira, your contribution towards my education and guidance in life is highly appreciated.
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The writing of this project has been a contribution of various individuals and institutions.

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My friend Florence Wangechi and my sister Regina Gathoni deserve appreciation for their moral and material support. To all God bless you.

Finally, the author owns any errors that might be in this work.
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# ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEO</td>
<td>District education officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>EFA</td>
<td>Education For All</td>
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<td>ESP</td>
<td>Economic Stimulus Package</td>
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<td>FGM</td>
<td>Female Genital Mutilation</td>
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<td>FPE</td>
<td>Free Primary Education</td>
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<td>FSE</td>
<td>Free Secondary Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>G&amp;C</td>
<td>Guidance and Counseling</td>
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<tr>
<td>KCPE</td>
<td>Kenya Certificate of Primary Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDG</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Education, Science and Cultural Organization</td>
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<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund</td>
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ABSTRACT

Although the government has attached so much importance to education through finance and policies, there is still poor performance, low participation, high levels of wastage and poor transition from primary to secondary school in Igembe North district. The purpose of this study is to establish the extent to which cultural and socio-economic factors affect participation and access of students in secondary education in Igembe North district, Meru County. The main objectives of this study is to identify the main cultural and socio-economic activities affecting secondary school students, to find out the level of participation and wastage in secondary schools, to find out which gender, among the secondary school students, is the most affected by socio-economic and cultural activities and to determine the effect of parents’ cultural activities towards their children’s secondary education in Igembe North district. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The total target population was all secondary school students, Guidance and Counseling teachers, class masters/mistresses and principals from Igembe North District. The district has about 3300 female students, 2400 male students, 20 Guidance and Counseling teachers, 80 class masters/mistresses and 20 principals giving a total population of about 5820. Random sampling was done to select 50 percent of the schools. Stratified sampling was then used in selecting students, principals, guidance and counseling teachers and class masters/mistresses. The actual sample size was 345. The study used two types of instruments: questionnaires and interview schedules. Piloting was done in one school in the district, which was identical but was not used in the study, to establish the validity and reliability of the instruments. Validity was done through expert judgement of the supervisors while reliability was ascertained using test-retest method. Data collection was done through questionnaires and interview schedules. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive analysis procedures and presented using frequency tables and pie charts. Qualitative data were organized into the main themes relevant to the study, summarized and reported according to the main views. The study found that the main cultural activities are chewing miraa, early marriage, circumcision and polygamy. The main socio-economic activities are miraa business, farming and pastoralism. Boys’ education is mainly affected by the socio-economic factors while girls’ education is mainly affected by retrogressive cultural factors in the district. The research concluded that secondary education is influenced by cultural and socio-economic activities. Wastage rate is relatively high and the effect of cultural and socio-economic activities varies with gender. The study recommended that schools should liaise with community leaders ensure that all students are retained in school by ensuring there is no child labour. Campaigns against retrogressive cultural practices such as female circumcision should be done in the district. Civic education on importance of education should also be done in public gatherings. Life skills, as a subject, should be emphasized in secondary schools.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction
This chapter highlights the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions and significance of the study. In the same chapter, the researcher will state the basic assumptions of the study, limitations and delimitations of the study. Theoretical framework, conceptual framework and definition of central terms will also be given.

1.2 Background of the Study
When a child is born there are a number of things and practices used to socialize him/her in order to fit well in the society. The child is expected to uphold the norms, values and the traditions of the society. Before joining formal education, the child learns the norms and the traditions from home. Home therefore acts as his/her first school in life. What he/she learns at home affects the child’s life both at school and in the larger society. Mazid (2010), says that home is the first school and mother is the first teacher. Parents are builders of children’s character and minds.

Different societies have different ways of life. That is, cultures are very diverse and they play an important role in the society. The cultural values of a community give it an identity of its own. A community gains a character and a personality of its own because of culture of its people. Culture is shared by members of a community. It is learned and passed from the older generation to the newer ones.
For an effective transfer of culture from one generation to another, it has to be translated into symbols. The language, art and religion serves as the symbolic means of transfer of cultural values between generations. Culture is a bond that ties people of a religion or community together. It is that one bond, which bring people of a community together. The customs and traditions that the people in a community follow, the festivals they celebrate, the kind of clothing they wear, the food they eat and the cultural values they adhere to, bind them together. According to Manali (2011), culture is seen as a system of social control, wherein people shape their standards and behavior. The cultural values form the founding principles of one’s life. They influence one’s principles and philosophies of life. They influence one’s way of living and thus impact social life. The importance of culture lies in the fact that it is a link between people and their value systems. The values and traditions of one society might vary with those of another society.

However, no society exists on its own. Societies interact with one another and in doing so, they influence each other. After interacting for some time, the larger society has acquired some universal values and norms.

In the modern world, formal education is among the values prescribed by the larger society. In the world over formal education has been given high priority. In 1990, Education For All (EFA) commitment was launched to ensure that by 2015 all children and particularly girls had access to education. The United Nations Education, Science and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) organized a meeting in
Jomtien, Thailand, to discuss the ways of achieving the goals of education for life and lifelong education. During the world conference on EFA, experts and leaders agreed that there was need to ensure that all the school aged children were afforded the opportunity to enroll. In April 2000, the world education forum meeting in Dakar, Senegal reaffirmed this commitment and even provided deadline for achieving the goals and set the year 2015 as the deadline for realizing all of them. Six goals and twelve strategies were set which all the countries, development agencies and civil societies committed themselves to achieving. The six goals of EFA are:

1. Expanding and improving comprehensive childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

2. Ensuring that by 2015, all children particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality.

3. Ensuring that the learning needs of the young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skill programmes.

4. Achieving a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015 especially women and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.

5. Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring
girls full and equal access to and achievement to basic education of good quality.

6 Improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all especially literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

Looking at the EFA initiative, it is clear that the world as a whole acknowledges the importance of education both to the individual and for the development of a country. The importance of education as a concept needs to be instilled in children from an early age. Education does not simply mean bookish knowledge or learning things by rote but holds a much bigger meaning. It means opening your mind to learn new things and pursue different options. Opting for higher education provides one with a clearer vision and makes one receptive to change. It makes a person rational with ability to think and question. And these are the bases on which reforms are made. Education also provides opportunities to interact with people from different walks of life. It leads to better understanding and an exposure on how the world lives and thinks. It is our duty to inculcate the importance of education in our children. They should be made aware that list of degrees that tail an individual’s name does not mean that one is educated. It holds a much wider perspective. Education means to go beyond the degrees and continue to achieve by acquiring knowledge. In the real sense education simply means to evolve from being an individual to a human being capable of, not merely ‘surviving’ but living
In September 2000, heads of states and government met at millennium summit and agreed on a set of eight goals, eighteen targets and forty eighty indicators on development and poverty eradication. These came to be known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). The MDGs have also put emphasis on education. The second goal says, “To achieve universal primary education”, while the third says, “promote gender equality and empower women”. The goals further emphasizes on ensuring that boys and girls alike complete primary schooling and that gender disparity at all levels of education should be eliminated. This is also an indication on how the world values education. In Kenya there has been emphasis on girl child education since some societies have been discriminating against them. According to Mwangi (2004), even with introduction of free primary education, access to it still remains a pipe dream to many Kenyan children. Whereas the introduction of free primary education saw an increase in enrolment, a sizeable number of children, especially girls finding themselves out of school owing to a number of reasons. Some parents justify the denial of girls of their right to education to prevent them from bringing shame to the family through early pregnancy. Yet others believe that women who are at the same level of education as the men are a disgrace to the community because more often than not, they will not get married and if they do, it will be to a foreigner. For such parents, early marriage is the best way to prevent this and at the same time
preserve traditions.

In a number of Kenyan communities, it is girls who spend more time on household chores than boys leaving them with very little time to study at home. In case a family member falls sick, girls drop out of school to look after the sick relative. The situation gets worse when a mother dies, forcing the girl child to take over her responsibilities. The situation has been exacerbated by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, which has forced children out of school to take up odd jobs to play the role of their parents.

But all is not lost. The government has however taken some initiatives in the promotion of children’s education by enshrining this right in the Children’s act, 2001. The act also created a department for children to deal with the rights and welfare.

Of significance also is the fact that a number of NGOs have been allowed to operate in areas where early marriage is prevalent. They are now educating the people on the importance of taking girls to school rather than marrying them off to older men. The government, in collaboration with NGOs has also established centers where girls rescued from early marriage are accommodated and counseled before being sent back to school.

Through strict interventions of the government there is hope for the children who have been out of school to pursue their lifelong dreams.
In Kenya, importance of education has been emphasized all through. Before independence, various commissions were set up to look at the running of education in Kenya. According to Eshiwani (1993), Kenya had an education system even before the coming of the Europeans. This was traditional African education, the main goal of which was to train individuals to fit into their societies and become useful members. Formal education was introduced in Kenya by the missionaries in the nineteenth century. Bogonko (1992) says that with the attainment of independence in 1963, it became crystal clear that there were no enough professional, administrative, technical and other skilled local people to man the new country. This threatened to delay and frustrate Kenya’s efforts to expand and modernize the economy. Considering education as a seed and flower of the economic development, its contribution to solve this problem was regarded as particularly critical in increasing the supply of high level and middle level manpower needed for development. Secondary education was particularly regarded as the most important point in the education system which could help in solving the manpower problem of the nation. Sessional paper number 10 of 1965 noted that the immediate objectives in education are to expand secondary level facilities rapidly as it was important to the training of manpower, acceleration of Africanisation, and increasing of promotion of Kenya Primary Education candidates that continued in education.

At present, the government of Kenya gives more emphasis to formal education. In
sessional paper number 1 of 2005, the government provides new direction on the provision of education and training at all levels. In the document the government seeks to improve access, quality, equity and completion rates. Since January 2003, the government has been implementing Free Primary Education (FPE). According to Kihumba (2007), introduction of FPE has resulted in an increased enrolment of children - from 5.9 million in 2002 to 7.6 million in 2007. The government puts emphasis on quality of education at all levels and calls for regular reviews of curriculum to improve its relevance and incorporate emerging issues.

In secondary education, the government has established Free Secondary Education (FSE) from the year 2008. In its Economic Stimulus Package (ESP), two centers of excellence, one for boys and another for girls, are being established in each constituency in Kenya. This is to ensure that there is quality education all over the country.

In Igembe North district, it seems formal education has not been given the importance it deserves. Despite the much effort by the government to ensure that all children participate in formal education, a number of school aged children are still out of school. This is evident from the number of young people (especially boys) whom you find by the roadsides and in shopping centers at any given day and time of the week.

Trends in primary schools are also an indicator of poor participation in formal education. Primary schools have very high numbers of learners. Comparing the
high number with the number of Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) candidates indicates there is very high wastage rate between class one and class eight. It implies that dropout rate is high as the child moves to upper primary school.

Transition to secondary school is also poor. The number of KCPE candidates is high compared to the number of students in secondary schools in the district. A number of retrogressive cultural practices can also be identified in the society. They range from early marriages (both in boys and girls), social groupings in market places, and child labor among others.

According to Oyisi (1972), in order to live normal lives in reasonable peace, human beings must behave in prescribed ways. These ways are prescribed by the larger society. Whoever fails to follow the prescribed ways finds it hard to fit in the society. For instance, those who do not participate in the formal education will find it hard fitting in the modern society. This is because advancements in various dimensions of life are gained through formal education.

**1.3 Statement of the Problem**

Despite the importance given to formal education by the government, through financing and policies, there are still some societies which do not give much importance to education. In some areas participation in education is poor, levels of wastage are high and transition from primary to secondary schools is also very low. There are cases where majority of children join primary school and then dropout
before completion of the course and yet primary education is free in Kenya. In other cases some parents do not bother to enroll their children in schools even after attaining the school going age. Transition is poor since a number of KCPE candidates take class eight as a terminal point despite establishment of so many free day secondary schools through constituency development fund. Some opt for retrogressive cultural practices such as early marriage, child labor, and social groupings to the expense of formal education. Parents too allow the adolescents to make crucial decisions (such as participation in formal education) that will affect their entire life. To what extent do social cultural and economic factors affect participation, transition wastage and performance in secondary education in Igembe North district?

1.4 Purpose of the Study
The purpose of this study is to establish the extent to which cultural and socio-economic factors affect participation and access of students in secondary education in Igembe north district, Meru county

1.5 Objectives of the Study
The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To identify the main socio-economic and cultural activities affecting secondary school students in Igembe north district.

2. To find out the level of participation and wastage in secondary schools in Igembe north district.
3. To find out which gender, among the secondary school students, is the most affected by socio-economic and cultural activities in Igembe north district.

4. To determine the effect of parents cultural activities towards their children’s secondary education in Igembe north district.

1.6 Research Questions
There are a number of problems facing education in secondary schools leading to high wastage rate, poor retention and poor performance, in Igembe north district. This is despite the importance attached to education both to individuals and the society. This leaves a number of questions unanswered:

1. Which are these cultural and socio economic activities that affect youths participation in secondary education?

2. How are the cultural practices and socio economic activities influencing secondary education in the district and how can this influence are mitigated?

3. Which gender is the most affected by these cultural and socio economic activities and which factors contributes to this trend?

4. How can the government ensure that the cultural and socio economic activities in the district do not negatively influence secondary education?

1.7 Assumptions of the Study
The study made the following assumptions:
1. The researcher did not know the extent to which socio-cultural and economic activities have affected formal education in the selected district.

2. All secondary schools studied give the same amount of exposure to their students.

3. Students from the selected schools and their parents were from the same social-cultural background.

4. All respondents gave genuine responses.

1.8 Limitations of the Study
The study was limited to Igembe North District:

1. Information was gathered from the students who were enrolled in school at the time of going to the field.

2. There could be other factors which may affect secondary education, but this study limited itself only to those cultural and socio economic activities that are the most common in the district of study. The other factors were not considered in this study.

3. Teachers who were involved in the study were mainly class masters/mistresses, career masters (director of studies), guidance and counseling teachers and the school heads. Others who do not fall under the above groups were not involved.
1.9 Delimitations
The study was carried out mainly in public secondary schools since the district has only one private secondary school. Students and teachers who were sampled are those whom the school heads availed.

1.10 Significance of the Study
The findings of the proposed study will have both theoretical as well as practical implications on participation of formal education both in primary and secondary schools.

The study will give vital knowledge about development of a ‘whole person, that is, an individual who respects his/her culture and also values intellectual knowledge. It will express how formal secondary education can go hand in hand with people’s culture and socio economic activities without much tussle.

The study will also help in formulation of policies which will ensure that participation of the youth in formal secondary education is enhanced. Through its recommendations, the study will suggest the policies which can be put in place to ensure that the levels of participation and retention are increased without interfering with cultural values.

1.11 Theoretical framework
The study was guided by social learning theory by Albert Bandura. Social learning theory states that learning occurs within a social context. It proposes that people learn from one another through observational learning, imitation and modeling.
According to this theory, people learn through observing others’ behaviors, attitudes and outcomes of these behaviors. It explains human behavior in terms of continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioral, and environmental influences. Bandura believed in “reciprocal determinism”, that is, the world and the person’s behavior cause each other. While behaviorism essentially states that one’s environment causes one’s behavior, Bandura suggested that the behavior causes environment too.

**Basic Social Learning Concepts**

*Observational learning:* This is where an individual learns through imitating behaviors which he/she has observed in other people. Bandura explains this in his “Bobo doll” studies. He demonstrated that children learn and imitate behaviors they have observed in other people. The children in this study observed an adult acting violently towards a Bobo doll. When the children were latter allowed to play in a room with bobo doll, they began to imitate the aggressive actions they had previously observed. Bandura identified three models of observational learning: live models, verbal instructional models and symbolic models. Live models involve an actual individual demonstrating or acting out a behavior. Verbal instructional models involve descriptions and explanations of behavior. Symbolic models involve real or fictional characters displaying behaviors in books, films, televisions programmes or any media. On receiving the behavior through any of the means named, the observer demonstrates or imitates the observed behavior. This shows
that learning has taken place.

**Intrinsic reinforcement:** This spells the importance of mental states in learning. Bandura noted that external environmental reinforcement was not the only factor to influence learning and behavior. He described intrinsic reinforcement as a form of internal reward such as pride, satisfaction and sense of accomplishment. This implies what a person experiences inside contributes a lot in his/her learning. If the person feels satisfied and proud, he/she will learn with ease since there is intrinsic motivation above the environment.

**Modeling process:** The fact that somebody has observed a certain behavior does not mean that learning has taken place. There are factors which involves both the model and the learner that determine the success of social learning. For observational learning and modeling process to be successful, certain conditions are necessary:

Attention: For learning to take place, one needs to be paying attention. Anything that distracts the person’s attention is going to have a negative effect on observational learning. If the model is interesting, the learner is likely to dedicate his/her full attention to learning. Various factors increase or decrease the amount of attention paid. These include distinctiveness, affective valence, and prevalence complexity, among others.

Retention: This is the ability to store information. A learner can only remember what he pays attention to. Retention comes from symbolic coding, mental images,
cognitive organization, symbolic rehearsal or mortar rehearsal. Learning will be seen if the learner is able to pull up the information later and act on it.

Reproduction: This is the actual performance of the observed behavior after paying attention and retention. If the behavior is practiced further, it leads to improvement and skill advancement.

Motivation: This involves rewards and punishments. They ensure that the learner dedicates himself/herself towards imitation of the modeled behavior.
1.12 Conceptual framework

According to Orodho (2009) a conceptual framework shows in diagrammatic form the relationship between different variables. The conceptual framework shows how the cultural and socio economic factors affect secondary education. Cultural factors such as early marriage, circumcision, and polygamy together with socio economic factors such as miraa business, affects wastage, enrolment, transition and performance in secondary education as shown in figure 1.1

![Diagram showing the correlation of socio-economic and cultural factors to student's participation in secondary education.]

**Fig. 1.1** Correlation of socio-economic and cultural factors to student’s participation in secondary education.

**Source:** modified from Orodho (2009).
The independent variables in blocks 1 and 2 have either positive or negative influence towards dependent variables in block 3.

Cultural factors can go hand in hand with education and none of them is negatively affected. However, some cultural factors may not be in line with education and hence negative effect. Early marriage denies a child access to education as she/he gets too much involved in family life. Male circumcision and FGM sometimes occur during school time and this may lead to wastage of school time and hence poor performance. Some students are from very big families. If the parent is not well up, it means that the child cannot get the basic education needs. This will lead to poor performance or dropping out.

If students are too much involved in socio-economic and cultural activities, it will have a negative impact on their education and may lead to high wastage, low enrolment and poor performance. If school children realize that they can get money through *miraa* business, they might prefer the business to education. This can happen even through assisting the parents in the business. Some parents can fail to enroll their children to school in order to get the assistance in economic activities. Cultural and socio-economic factors mutually affect each other. Involvement in some socio-economic activities is culturally motivated. For instance, chewing of *miraa* by young boys is culturally motivated.
1.13  **Operational Definition of Central Terms**

**Cultural practices:** the activities of a given society which are not necessarily acceptable to the others.

**Culture:** the way of life of a given group of people. The group may be ethnic or people living in certain areas.

**Formal education:** type of learning that takes place in a school set up.

**Socio-economic activities:** activities practiced by a given society for financial gains but are based on the locality.

**Larger society:** the world as one community with globally accepted norms and values.

**Participation:** active involvement in formal education

**Wastage:** loss of a student as they progress through education cycle through drop out and repetition.
2.1 Introduction
In this chapter the researcher evaluates other research reports, journals and books which are related to how societies’ cultural and socio economic activities affect formal education. This provides means of getting to the frontier in ones field of knowledge. It will also form the foundation and assist in identifying the gaps in knowledge as well as weaknesses in previous studies (Orodho 2009). The main areas of coverage will be education as a human right, education and culture as well as effect of socio economic activities.

2.2 Concept of education as a human right
According to Mundi (2008), education is a fundamental human right for all people for improving quality of life and is also an essential tool of social and human development. A child who does not go to school might not be in touch with the worldly trends in social, economic as well as political aspects. His/her thoughts will only be confined to the local environment which may not have much to offer to the child. This kind of a person may end up having problems latter in life as he/she tries to fit in the larger society.

According to UNICEF (2007), by 2005- 2006 as many as 93 million children were without access to education. The study continued to say that more than three quarters of all children out of school worldwide live in sub-Saharan Africa and
south Asia. In order to achieve the right of education to all children there must be right of access to education, quality education must be offered and there has to be respect within the learning environment.

Other than supporting oneself and family in later years, many social skills are learnt during school years. Therefore each child should have access to education for better living.

2.3 Importance of education
The importance of education in life cannot be doubted. Education opens up our minds and makes us broadminded. There is no better time than the present to understand this.

Globalization has transformed the world into one big village. It is possible for us to know about the different cultures or events taking place at the other end of the world today. All these have been made possible due to education. Education has broadened our minds, so that we are not confined to our countries and comfort zones anymore. We aren’t trapped in our small worlds, instead we have come out of our shells and began to explore and learn new things. Learning about new things and different cultures not only adds to our literacy bank but also instills in us humane qualities. For example when we see that a society in some other part of the world has accepted HIV patients and began to work for them, then we might also begin to do the same. May be we had resorted to shunning them earlier but the change in education can change our thought processes for the better. It
therefore helps in making us more tolerant and accepting. Education forms the basis for any society. It is responsible for the economic, social, and political growth and development of society in general. Education imparts knowledge whereby making discoveries and implementing them for the betterment of the society. The thread of the growth of society depends upon the quality of education that is being imparted. The better the quality, the better people can learn and utilize it to make reforms that lead to research and development.

2.4 From indigenous to formal education
According to Udo (1992), culture has never been something static; on contrary it has always been forced to be dynamic and to absorb all kinds of elements from other cultures in order to allow people to survive. He says that culture in Africa is alive but it is undergoing great changes. The present political, and economic situation in many African nations, makes it difficult for any culture to survive since people are forced to live in an environment dictated by worldly forces such as economic, political and social prosperity.

Indigenous education in its pure form is not visible anywhere in Africa. This is mainly because this kind of education has little to offer in the demands of the modern world. Indigenous education was very effective during the pre-colonial period. Today, this kind of education is ignored and assumed to be irrelevant in the modern world. (Kibera and Kimokoti) 2007)

Traditional education has a number of difficulties and weaknesses which makes it
inadequate for modern society needs. Above that adherence to traditions is a hindrance to development. This is because it makes the society to be static. It is not education for change but it is aimed at maintaining the status quo.

On the other hand, modern society is very dynamic. For one to fit in the modern society, he/she must have an education that accommodates change and individual development.

In the contemporary world, modern technology, formal education, cultural integration, concern for quality life and gender issues are gradually changing peoples’ perspective on traditional beliefs and practices (Kanake 2001)

This is because when one acquires literacy, he/she gains exposure to a variety of interpretations of reality. It also increases the capacity to think and reason out things with rationality.

2.5 Culture

According to Goodman (2009), culture comprises of the distinctive habits of a people in that it performs both a unifying and, more importantly, a directive role and that it involves the cultivation of a people towards a common end. The genus of culture can be derived from this: the distinctive habits of a given people. However, people have many different habits. Specifically, culture refers to those habits which bind a group of people together into a single group for a common end and this marks the specific difference.
2.6 Education and culture

Culture dictates a number of things in an individual’s life. This ranges from values, norms as well as economic activities of the society. In cases where cultural activities are highly regarded they have negative effect on formal education.

A survey carried by world vision (2010) in East Pokot and Baringo East districts in Rift valley shows that challenges against girls enrolment in the area are mainly FGM, early marriages as well as conflict between neighboring communities. All these activities are culturally oriented and they negatively affect education.

According to Equity News (2011), president Kibaki advised young people to avoid vices such as drug and substance abuse, HIV/AIDS, early marriages and child labor that negatively impact on their education if they are to take their rightful leadership role in the society. He urged them to remain focused and have a visionary attitude on what they want to achieve in life.

However, culture also plays a major role in development of curriculum. According to Shiundu and Omulando(1992), in planning and development of curriculum it is important to analyze the kind of knowledge, skills and competence that youths in society will need so that they can cope with tasks and roles in that society and the problems prevalent in the society for which education should provide an answer.
In the sociological foundation, the curriculum designer actually deals with cultural values, societal needs and the learners’ background. To a large extent, the institutions and forces that make up the culture and related analytical techniques determine the curriculum or program of education that schools will follow. The curriculum should also be able to examine and clarify obstacles prevalent in society which make change in positive direction difficult so that the youth can understand how these obstacles originate as well as how they can be dealt with.

Schools are agents of social growth, development and reform. They operate within the society and are maintained by the society. Universally, schools should play the roles of preservation and transmission of cultural heritage, transformation of culture and as an instrument for individual development.

2.7 Cultural Factors and their Impact on Formal Education
Culture is passed from one generation to another. This implies that the parents view on education will highly determine their children view. World vision (2010) says that, once parents take up literally programs, they subsequently see the need and importance of their children’s education. This is because the old generation has a lot of influence to the young generation. If they show value for formal education, the young generation too will continue with the same.

According to Kibiego(2010), failings in areas of responsibility, respect, manners etc are more pronounced in conservative African society. He adds that parents and members of the immediate family are child’s first teachers. It is they who mould
the character of their children through word and deed. Therefore effect of the society cannot be ignored when it comes to children attitude towards formal education.

Peoples' way of life, including customary practices and economic sources, has a direct or indirect influence on formal education. A research conducted in Tanzania on factors affecting girls' education found that even communities which did not practice female circumcision as an initiation rite valued the girl child as an object for economic exchange. Such parents received cash value or animals as dowry in exchange for their daughters given for marriage. Thus, they feared to send their girls to school because they would not come back home having been used to a different way of life. Furthermore, school girls were considered less submissive and obedient, more resistant to local patriarchal systems and more promiscuous (Mbilinyi, 1991). Their schooling was not seen as raising their bride wealth but instead lowered their exchange value. These attitudes and perceptions continue to influence girls' enrolment in some African communities today.

Sichinga (2005) investigated the major cause of low enrolment of Yao children in Malawian schools. The findings indicated the major causes as early marriages, domestic chores, poverty, lack of exposure, community's (such as Muslim culture) negative attitude towards education and lack of educated people serving as role models in society. He noted that socio-cultural beliefs influence decisions to
withdraw children from school, thus impacting negatively on enrolment. Traditional initiation rites such as circumcision, payment of bride price and early marriages have been identified as some of the causes of dropping out of school and poor enrolment. There is evidence that children who have undergone circumcision or betrothed often undergo attitudinal changes and reject formal education, perceiving themselves to be adults and schools are meant for children. They begin to have a place among the adults, learning how to care for the extended family. According to Kihumba (2007), the dropout rate of boys in Igembe district is alarming. The reason given for the high rate is the ‘lucrative miraa business.’ This is because boys are used to harvest miraa from the trees. At the young age, they are light-bodied and cannot break the fragile miraa tree branches when they climb. As they gain weight and height, the study continues, they graduate from climbing up trees in the harvesting process to wrapping the miraa leaves and twigs and packing in gunny bags before loading into vehicles.

2.8 Socio-economic Factors and their Impact on Formal Education

In Kenya, most of the areas have their economic activities, such as tea farming, coffee farming, fishing etc. These economic activities should not be allowed to interfere with day to day running of formal education. Formal education trains a person how to be even good managers. It is the culture of the people which is to blame for involving school going children in their economic activities. The fact that children can earn money does not mean that they should not go to school.
Kinyanjui (1993) also found that in Kenya, the policy of sharing schooling costs with parents has a negative impact on girls' education. He asserts that economic constraints in sub-Saharan Africa have particularly damaging effects on the education and enrolment prospect. Poverty assessment showed a strong correlation between primary school attendance and household poverty levels. In most cases, children suffered the consequences of financial constraints of a family.

Mbilinyi (1991) undertook a study which attempted to clarify attitudinal and socio-economic factors acting as barriers to education in Tanzania. The study revealed that 47% of rural and 77% of urban respondents saw cost of education as one of the reasons for not sending children to school. About 25% of rural respondents asserted that domestic chores were the other reason.

A study by UNESCO in Senegal (2002) found out that while education is the cornerstone for overcoming poverty, poverty keeps many children from gaining access to education.

In Tanzania, Rajabu (2007) conducted a research to investigate the causes and effects of pregnancy among primary school pupils on secondary school education. The study revealed that the problem of primary school pregnancy is associated with low income of parents. Many parents are unemployed, single or polygamous. Consequently, they are unable to fulfill students' needs such as uniforms,
stationery and lunch. As a result, many young children fail to go to school. More seriously, youth in Ulanga (Tanzania) district start sexual activity very early, hence early pregnancy and continuation of the poverty cycle. The researcher also found out that early pregnancy among girls has a negative impact on their secondary education as few are enrolled and hence gender disparity in higher education.

In the teacher’s image (2007), the DEO Igembe agrees with this when he says that his office is working closely with provincial administration to sensitize community on the importance of ensuring that boys are retained in schools. This includes sensitizing leaders and parents on the need to stem dropout. If the attitudes of parents and the community leaders towards education changes, participation and retention in formal education will improve. Involving of children in economic activities is just but a culture. There are many other elements of culture which goes on in these societies and which also affects formal secondary education.

2.9 Summary and Gap Identification

Culture and education should run with harmony. While culture dictates the way of life, education shapes the life of an individual.

Most of the research work that has been done on cultural and socio-economic factors has concentrated on the description and social importance of these
activities in specific regions. However, a research has not been carried out in Igembe North District, nor the effects on secondary education been established. Thus creates a gap in analysis of Igembe North district as a region that is affected by cultural and socio-economic activities.

The above scholars stress on culture, socio-economic activities and education. They also recognize that home based factors have some effects on education. However, none of them has tried to explain how culture and socio-economic activities affects secondary education in Igembe North District. It is in this context that a study on the effect socio-economic and cultural factors on secondary education in Igembe North District becomes necessary.
CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction
The subsections of this chapter are geared towards describing the research design, target population and selection, research instruments and methods of data analysis (Orodho 2008). In this chapter the researcher also gives the locale of the study as well as explaining how sampling was done. Piloting of instruments has also been explained.

3.2 Design
The study adopted the descriptive survey design, to investigate the effect of socio-economic and cultural to secondary education in Igembe north district. Survey is a method of collecting information by interviewing and administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals (Orodho 2009). This design will help in collecting information about people’s attitude, opinions and habits on education and social issues. It will adopt a diagnostic approach in order to establish the contribution of socio-economic and cultural factors to poor performance, low access and lack of participation in secondary education in the district. The independent variables of the study are cultural practices and socio-economic activities involving secondary school students and parents. The dependent variables are participation, wastage, enrolment, performance and access.
3.3 **Locale of the study**
The study was carried out in Igembe north district. Igembe north district is a newly created district from former Nyambene district. It is about 400km from Nairobi and 50km from Meru town. The district headquarters are located at Laare market which also happens to be one of the main distribution centers of *miraa* in the country. In this area there is high wastage in both primary and secondary schools. Retrogressive cultural practices such as FGM, early marriage among others have also been witnessed in the area. Child labour has also been witnessed in the area especially in *miraa* business.

3.4 **Target population**
The study was conducted in 20 secondary schools in Igembe north district. It involved boys’, girls’ and mixed secondary schools in the district.

The main source of information was students (male and female) G&C teachers and principals. Depending on the population of the school, the information was collected from either all the streams or just some of them. The district has twenty secondary schools. Fourteen are mixed day secondary schools, three are mixed boarding secondary schools, two are girls’ boarding schools and one is a boys’ boarding secondary school.

The population comprised of about 5700 students, 20 principals, 20 G&C teachers and 80 class masters/ mistresses. The total target population was 5820.
3.5 Sampling
The study used simple random sampling. Since the population was large, sampling was done in form of lottery. The researcher sampled at least 50% of the population. He began by coming up with the list of all the schools in the district. Using simple random sampling he got the schools in which to carry out the study. In the single sex schools, interval sampling was done in all the forms. This is after establishing the number of students to involve in every level. In mixed schools the researcher used stratified sampling. This was to ensure the subgroups (male and female) were well represented in the sample according to their numbers in the population. All guidance and counseling teachers, class teachers and principals in the sampled schools were used to collect information. Out of 20 schools in the district, the researcher sampled 10 schools selected randomly. In the sampled schools, four class masters/mistresses per school were involved. Among the students, the researcher sampled 5% of the whole population. This number was got from the sampled schools.

Stratified sampling was done in order to involve both genders equally. The total sample size was 345 subjects. (See table 3.1)
### Table 3.1 Sample Size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRATA</th>
<th>POPULATION</th>
<th>SAMPLE(%)</th>
<th>SAMPLE SIZE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N1</td>
<td>3300</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N2</td>
<td>2400</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N5</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>5820</td>
<td></td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**KEY:**

- N1- Female students
- N4- G&C teachers
- N2- Male students
- N5- Class masters/mistresses
- N3- Principals

### 3.6 Research instruments

The researcher used questionnaires and interview schedules in his data collection. Questionnaires were used to collect information from students and class masters/mistresses. This is because their population was large. The questionnaires were on performance, participation, retention and absenteeism. They also collected information on participation in socio-economic and cultural activities by the
youths and their effects on education. Information from G&C teachers and principals were collected through personal interviews. This was by seeking answers to a set of preconceived questions. The class teachers provided information mainly on cohort retention by gender. The G&C teachers provided information on causes of poor performance, low rate of participation, effects of socio-economic and cultural activities and gender disparity in participation. The principals gave the general picture on the effect of socio-economic and cultural factors in running education in their schools.

3.7 Piloting
Piloting of the questionnaires and interview schedules was done in Naathu secondary school which is in the district. The school was selected since it is similar (identical) to the schools which were latter used in the study. This is in terms of sample population and locale. According to Orodho(2008), questionnaires and interview schedules should be presented to the selected sample which is similar to the sample to be used in the study.

3.7.1 Validity
The validity of the instruments was done through the expert judgement of the supervisors. This was through evaluating the content of the instruments and improving them through feedback.

3.7.2 Reliability
The reliability of the instruments was ascertained using test-retest method. The
questionnaires and interview schedules were given to a group of respondents from the school for piloting. The completed instruments were then scored and the results recorded. After a week the same instruments were given to the same respondents and the completed instruments were then scored. The two scores were then compared using the spearman rank order to establish the consistency of the instruments to give the same results. They had a coefficient correlation of 0.74. The instruments were hence reliable enough.

3.8 Data collection
Before going to the field, the researcher got the permission from relevant authorities. This was done through delivering letters to various authorities after obtaining the permit from the National Council for Science and Technology. The researcher then visited the sampled schools to make necessary arrangements with the administration on when and how to carry out the research. This also helped in knowing the exact location of the schools. Questionnaires were administered to the students and they were given a period of about two hours to fill the questionnaires. Class masters/mistresses were left with the questionnaires for a period of one week. Interview schedules were organized between the researcher and the respondents depending on their convenience. All the information collected from the subjects was treated with confidentiality and was used for research purpose only.
3.9 Data analysis

After collection of data from questionnaires, editing was done. This was by removing the responses which were out of the context and those that were not fully completed. The edited data was then organized and coded. This was done by considering similar views and responses and grouping them together. The data was then tabulated according to variables where each table represented a variable. The data was then divided into main themes so as to achieve the stated objectives.

The information that was elicited through interviews was transcribed into written text by merging the notes taken during the interviews into a single coherent description of discussion. The data was then examined for relevance and analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively.

The results were then interpreted to show the magnitude of the effect of socio-economic and cultural activities to secondary education in Igembe north district.
CHAPTER FOUR
RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction
In this chapter, the researcher presents the findings from the study. This was done through the methodology described in chapter three. The findings were presented, interpreted and discussed as guided by the objectives of the study. This also provided answers to the research questions. The results of the findings were discussed in the light of the reviewed literature.

The research findings were guided by the following objectives

a. To identify the main socio-economic and cultural activities affecting secondary school students in Igembe north district.

b. To find out the level of participation and wastage in secondary schools in Igembe north district.

c. To find out which gender, among the secondary school students, is the most affected by socio-economic and cultural activities in Igembe north district.

d. To determine the effect of parents cultural activities towards their children’s secondary education in Igembe north district.

4.2 Cultural and economic activities and students’ performance in Igembe North district
The first research objective was to identify the main socio-cultural and economic activities involving secondary school students in Igembe North District. Socio
cultural and economic activities are part of every society. This is mainly determined by the culture of the people as well as natural factors such as climate and landscape. Igembe North district is a district mainly occupied by Ameru community. The landscape is hilly. The northern part which borders Isiolo County is semi-arid.

The research instrument utilized with teachers sought information on students participation on cultural and socio economic activities. Students too gave the main socio-economic and cultural activities in which they are mainly involved. There information is represented in tables 4.1 and 4.2

**Table 4.1 Economic activities involving secondary school students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>male</th>
<th>female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miraa business</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crop farming</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pastoralism</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From table 4.1, it can be noted that about 80% of male students and 10% of
female students get involved in *miraa* business. Most of the students were involved in trading of *miraa* which was from their parents’ shamba. About 60% of female students were involved in food crop farming while only 2% of the boys were involved in the activity. Female students are mainly involved in these activities during school holidays. They carry out these activities together with their mothers. The farming involves walking for long distances since most people do it away from their homes in the flat areas (Luanda) where *miraa* plants cannot do well. The farming is seasonal since it is purely dependent on rainfall. In the semi arid areas of the district, pastoralism is practiced. This is done in the community owned land. Majority of students admitted that their parents own cattle. However, they have employed people who take care of the cattle in the semi arid parts of the district bordering Isiolo County. Only 0.6% of male students admitted to have ever been involved in this activity. None of the female students has ever been involved in the activity. About 95% of female students mentioned fetching water as an economic activity in which they are involved. The district has a very serious problem of water owing to the fact that it has no single river. The water used for domestic purpose is mainly from the bore holes. According to G&C teachers, piped water is not reliable. There are months especially between July and October when the problem is so intense. At times students (mainly female day scholars) spend long hours of the night queuing for the little water available. Others even miss school altogether as a result of this
problem. The effect is mainly greatly felt by students in day schools which are the majority in the district.

These findings concur with Sichinga (2005) who says that domestic chores and poverty was among the causes of low enrolment. It is also in line with Mbilinyi (1991) who found that 25% of Tazanians believe that domestic chores were the main reason for not sending their children to school.

**Table 4. 2 Socio cultural activities involving secondary school students**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chewing <em>miraa</em></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early marriage</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circumcision</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polygamous family</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From table 4.2, 96% of male students chew *miraa*. Students from day school, (which are the majority) said that they can access *miraa* on daily basis for chewing. Most of the learners said that they learnt chewing *miraa* from either parents or close family members. They started the activity at their tender age but
the practice become rampant when they attained teenage hood as they joined socio groupings. Only 12% of female students said they chew miraa. Even those who do it, they do not do it frequently as their male counterparts. They said they do not like the practice since it is masculine. According to students they think 30% of female dropouts were as a result of early marriage. Only 1% of their male dropouts were a result early marriage.

All (100%) male students have undergone circumcision. According to them this happened between standards 7 and form 2. About 2% of female respondents admitted to have undergone circumcision. According to G&C teachers and principals, the number might be higher than that. This is because the practice is done in a very secretive manner. Of all the students’ respondents, 52% of female students and 49% of male students are from polygamous families. Most of them have step brothers and sisters. According to G&C teachers, “you can find as many as four children from same father but different mothers”. They further explain that according to Ameru culture, the child belongs to the father. Therefore the man has to take care of all the children he has sired in his life time. Some of the children came to know of their other siblings while already in school. This concurs with Rajabu (2007) who found out that in Tanzania the problems with secondary education are caused by unemployed or polygamous parents who cannot fulfill students’ needs such as uniforms, stationeries and lunch.
4.3 The level of participation and wastage in secondary schools in Igembe North district.

The second research objective sought information on the level of participation and wastage in secondary schools in Igembe North district. According to information from class masters and class mistresses, the levels of wastage are high in day secondary schools compared to boarding secondary schools. The researcher sought information from class teachers on the number of learners who have dropped from school for the last one year.

The students who were taken to be dropouts were those who had stayed out of school for a period of one term or more and had not transferred to another school. The data was available for form 2, 3 and 4 since the previous forms 4 had left and form one admission was yet to be done. The total number of students who had dropped out per form was taken and given as percentage of total number of students in that form. Finally the grand total was taken and calculated as percentage, the data on the number of students who had dropped out is as shown on table 4.3.
Table 4. 3 Class teachers’ responses on dropouts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Form III</th>
<th>Form II</th>
<th>Form IV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the table it is evident that in each of the sampled schools, there was loss of a number of students. From the table it can be seen that the dropout rate is high at the lower forms.

In form 2, the percentage of the dropout ranges from 2.0% and 10%. In form 3 it ranges from 0.6% to 5 % while in form 4 it ranges from 0% to 5.0%.
According to guidance and counseling teachers, students in lower forms are prone to drop out because some of them have not made up their minds whether to terminate education at primary level or secondary level. There is a number of their colleagues who are out there who according to them are living free life. According to responses given by the principals in the sampled schools, poverty too plays a great role in the menace. Most of the parents would enroll students in form one. As time goes by, the issue of school fees rises. When some students are sent home for schools fees (mainly subsistence) continuously, some end up dropping out altogether.

According to guidance and counseling teachers, students drop out of school due to varied reasons. They concur with the principal in that poverty plays a major role. Others drop out as a result of socio cultural reasons. When some girls and boys undergo the cut, they take themselves to be mature enough to get into adult life. Some girls get married almost immediately. Circumcision mainly goes on during school holidays and in the lower forms, especially forms one. Some boys too over indulge in socio economic activities such as miraa trading to the expense of education. Since the business gives them quick money they end up opting for the business and hence dropping out of school.

According to class teachers in day secondary schools, the levels of absenteeism are also high. Eighty percent of secondary schools in the district are day secondary schools. Out of all the students’ respondents, none of them has ever
attended school 100% in a given term. According to class masters and mistress, sometimes attendance is almost below 1% especially the first one week of opening. This is because 99% of the parents can only pay school levies after their children have been sent home. This is in agreement with Kinyanjui (1993) who found that in Kenya the policy of sharing school costs with parents has negative impact on education. He found a strong correlation between school attendance and household poverty levels.

4.4 **Effect of socio cultural and economic activities in Igembe North District.**

The third research objective sought to find out which gender in the most affected by socio-economic and cultural activities in Igembe North District.

First the researcher sought to analyze the main socio socio-economic and cultural activities affecting each gender. (See table 4.1 and 4.2). The researcher enquired from the students their feelings towards the contribution of socio-economic and cultural activities to their education. Table 4.4 shows the responses of students on the effect of socio-economic and cultural factors towards education.
Table 4.4 Student’s responses on the effect of socio cultural and economic activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chewing <em>miraa</em> affects education negatively</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female circumcision negatively affect education</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polygamous, marital status of parents negatively</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early marriage has contributed to drop out in your</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>class</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty affected participation in secondary</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male circumcision negatively affects education</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From table 4.4, 32% of the students strongly agree that chewing of *miraa* has a negative impact on their education. However another 32% disagree with this view. The learners (43%) agreed that female circumcision has a negative impact on their education and they were for the ongoing campaign against FGM in the country.
A whooping 79% of the respondents believe that their parent’s polygamous status negatively affects their education while only 10% think that the marital status of their parents does not affect their education. About 86% of the learners believe that early marriages played a major role in the levels of dropout cases, while 91% believes that participation in secondary school education is highly affected by levels of poverty. Majority of the learners (93%) were of the opinion that male circumcision has no major negative effect on education.

The researcher sought the opinion of guidance and counseling teachers on which gender is the most affected by socio-economic and cultural activities. According to the teachers boys were mainly affected by economic activities such as miraa business while girls were mainly affected by cultural issues such as early marriage and teenage pregnancies which we mainly cultural. In the interview schedule for guidance and counseling there was a question on which gender is the most affected by socio-economic and cultural activities. The responses indicated that the effect depends on the gender since the two groups are not affected by the same factors. This data was presented in figures 4.1.
According to figure 4.1, 20% belief that majority of girls education is mainly affected by socio-cultural factors. About 28% beliefs that girls’ education is affected by socio-economic factors while about 14% beliefs they dropout due to other factors. The main cultural activities affecting girls were identified by the G&C teachers as early marriages and FGM. The economic activities affecting girls were like food crop farming, fetching of water and looking after their siblings especially in cases where the parents have died. This is in agreement with Sichinga (2005) who found that early marriage, domestic chores and poverty had negative impact on education.
Fig. 4. 2 G&C teachers views on socio-cultural and economic factors affecting boys

According to figure 4.2, 67.5% of the G&C teachers were of the view that boys are mainly affected by the economic factors. About 11% were of the view that they are affected by the cultural factors while 21% belief tat they were affected by other factors. The main socio economic factors affecting boys were identified as miraa farming and trading. Social grouping (among others) was identified as cultural factors affecting boys. This agrees with Kihumba (2007) who said that the high dropout rate in Igembe district is as a result of ‘lucrative miraa businesses. There were other factors which were identified to affect both genders.
Those factors were said to have just a minimal effect though not negligible. Some of the factors were like discipline, sickness, and criminal activities.

4.5 Effect of parents’ cultural activities to their children’s secondary education in Igembe North District

The fourth objective sought for information on the effect of parents’ socio-cultural activities to their children’s secondary education in Igembe North District.

In the principals’ interview schedule, the researcher sought information on some of the main socio-cultural practices involving the parents and has negative effect to their children’s secondary education. According to principals the illiteracy level among the parents was very high. This was proven by the fact that 100% of parents meetings in all sampled schools are addressed in Kimeru. This is because about 95% of the parents do not understand the spoken English or Kiswahili. “The problem is cultural since majority of them never attended formal schooling”, said one of the principals. He continued to say that due to this level of illiteracy some parents are conservatives and they do not accord education the importance it deserves some end up neglecting education altogether.

Another parental cultural belief affecting education is seen in financial management. Culturally, finances from miraa are managed by men. A number of men have had serious financial mismanagement. This leads to suffering of women and children. Due to this mismanagement, secondary education of their children is also affected since the parent cannot provide the basic education needs to the
Some children are in and out of school due to subsistence levies. Some do not even have proper school uniform. When the suffering becomes too intense, some of the children opt out of school.

According to guidance and counseling teachers, some parents are conservatives in cultural issues. “Quite a number of the parents (men) are in polygamous family although they do not have the financial strength to support a large family”, said one of the G&C teachers. This leads to suffering of children and women. Among the casualties, is secondary education. This occurs where the family cannot afford the basic needs leave alone money to finance educational needs in secondary school. “The men who are not polygamous have concubines in shopping centers”, said another teacher. This has contributed much to the spread of HIV/AIDS in the region. There are a number of children orphaned by AIDS. These children find it difficult to proceed with their secondary education. Table 4.5 shows the guidance and counseling teachers’ responses on the cultural issues affecting the parents and which have a negative effect towards their children secondary education in Igembe North District. The researcher took the opinions of the ten G&C teachers sampled and represented their responses in tabular form.
Table 4.5 G & C teachers’ opinion on the parents’ activities affecting secondary education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Polygamous family</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children out of wedlock</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illiteracy</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial mismanagement</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV / AIDS</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From table 4.5, 80% of the teachers felt that parent’s polygamous marital status affect their children secondary education negatively. This is mainly where the parents are unable to provide the basic education needs due to the high number of children. Subsequently, 50% of the teachers felt that children who are born out of wedlock have their education affected. This is because these children are either brought up by their grandparents or their stepmothers. In most cases they are brought up by their stepmothers who tend to favour their biological children. “You might find two children from the same father but one has never gone home for fees while the other is always out of school”, said one of the G&C teachers.
This is an indication of the levels of favourism towards the biological children. “Unfortunately children are aware of this and this too affects them psychologically”, said the teacher. Illiteracy was also sighted by 60% of the G&C teachers to have a great effect on children’s secondary education in the district. In cases where both parents are totally illiterate, they do not give much value to education. This becomes worse to those who are poor since they are of the opinion that secondary education is a preserve to those who can afford. Almost all the teachers (90%) sighted financial mismanagement (especially by men) to have a great effect on their children education. This is where men live luxuriously to the expense of mothers and children. “It is rare for you to see a man coming home early. They are in bars and meet joints. After all they are the custodians for all the family finances”, said the G&C teacher. The fact that men rarely meet their children after school, (because of timing), makes it difficult for the children to express their educational needs. This leaves the entire burden to the mother who also gets money from the father. “About 70% of those meetings are women. Men do not pay much importance to education”, said one of the principals. If the financial managers of the families do not pay attention to education, it implies that education will be affected negatively. A number of G & C teachers (40%) sighted HIV/ AIDS also have a great effect on their children education. There are a number of students in every sampled school who have either been totally orphaned by HIV/AIDS or some whose parents are too sick to provide for them.
The spread of HIV/AIDS is associated with high moral decay especially in market areas. Since the finances are in liquid cash (from miraa trading), there are high cases of prostitution in the market. This has contributed to the spread of AIDS.

The researcher also sought information from students on how their parents’ socio economic and cultural activities affect their education.

The students too indicated the same socio economic and cultural activities as the G & C teachers. Those who indicated that their parents’ socio economic and cultural activities affected their education were asked to state the one which in their opinion had the highest effect to their secondary education. Data on the impact of the parents, socio economic and cultural activities to their children secondary education is presented in figure 4.3

![Pie chart showing student responses on how their parents’ socio economic and cultural activities affect their education.]

Fig. 4.3 Student responses on how their parents’ socio economic and cultural activities affect their education
Majority of the learners (52%) indicated that their parents financial mismanagement, highly affected their education. However, 24% of them felt that their parents’ illiteracy made them not to value education as required and this had a negative effect on their secondary education. Others felt that their parents marital status (polygamous and step motherhood) and HIV/AIDS had a negative effect towards their secondary education.

The findings on parental activities are in agreement with Rajabu (2007) who found that when parents are unemployed, single or polygamous, they are unable to fulfill student’s needs such as uniforms, stationery and lunch, and as a result many children fail to go to school. This also concurs with Teachers’ image (2007) where the DEO Igembe says that parents and leaders need to be sensitized on importance of education. This means that it is evident that a number of parents have not internalized the importance of secondary education. In one of the sampled schools, the principal was planning a parent’s seminar to sensitize parents on their role towards promoting secondary education.
CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction
This chapter gives a summary of the findings, conclusion and recommendations drawn from the findings. This was done in connection with the assessment of the main cultural and socio-economic activities and how they affect secondary education in Igembe North district.

5.2 Summary
The study findings from analyzed data are represented below under themes derived from the objectives of the study. After analysis and interpretation of the collected data, the major findings were:

5.2.1 Main cultural and socio-economic activities involving secondary school students in Igembe North District
The research showed that secondary school students were participating in socio-cultural and economic activities. Male students were mainly involved in socio-economic activities. This assumption was supported by 80% of male students who said that they participate in Miraa business, 6% in food crop farming and 3% in other economic activities. Students from both genders were involved in cultural activities. All (100%) male students have undergone circumcision as compared to 20% of their female counterparts. Miraa chewing is mainly done by male students with 96% of them saying they chew while only 12% of their female counter parts participate in chewing. However early marriage mainly affected female students
with 30% being involved while only 1% of boys were involved.

5.2.2 The level of access and wastage in Igembe North district
The study showed that there was drop out in the schools in the district. The dropout’s rate was high in lower forms. In form 2 it ranged between 2% to 10% while in form 4 it ranged between 0% and 5%.

5.2.3 Effect of cultural and socio-economic activities to secondary education in Igembe North district
Cultural and socio-economic activities have negatively affected Secondary education in Igembe North district. The study showed that each of the cultural and socio-economic activities identified in the district had some negative affect to secondary education. Male students are mainly affected by socio-economic activities while girls are mainly affected by cultural factors. Boys are mainly affected by *miraa* chewing, circumcision and food crop farming. Girls are mainly affected by early marriages and domestic chores. Cultural factors involving parents affected both gender.

5.2.4 Effect of parents’ cultural activities to their children’s secondary education in Igembe North district
The clinging of parent’s to retrogressive cultural activities has negatively affected secondary education in Igembe North district. Families which are polygamous have problem providing the students with basic education needs. This was supported by 80% of G & C teachers who said that most of the children from polygamous families have problem being retained in school.
Financial mismanagement especially by men had a great negative impact on secondary education in Igembe north district. This was supported by 52% of students who said that it’s their parents’ financial mismanagement that lead to problems they face in school. Illiteracy and HIV/AIDS also negatively affect secondary education though not to a large extent.

5.3 Conclusion
Based on the result of the findings, the following conclusions have been made:

a. In Igembe North District, there are number of cultural and socio-economic activities in which secondary school students are involved and hence affect their education. The main cultural activities are circumcision, early marriage miraa chewing and polygamy. The socio-economic activities affecting secondary education are miraa business, crop farming and pastoralism.

b. The level of wastage is relatively high in the district. The rate is higher in day secondary schools than in boarding schools. Most of the drop out cases is mainly in form two and one.

c. In Igembe North District, the effect of cultural and socio-economic activities varies from one gender to the other. While boys are mainly affected by socio-economic activities, girls are mainly affected by cultural activities.

d. Parents are involved in a number of retrogressive cultural and socio-
economic activities such as polygamy, children out of wedlock, male dominance in financial management and illiteracy. These activities have greatly affected access and wastage in secondary education in the district.

5.4 Recommendations
The current research made the following recommendations depending on the findings from the study:

a. The study noted that there are number of cultural and socio-economic activities in which secondary school students are involved in Igembe North district. The study recommends that the schools should liaise with the local community elders and provincial administration to ensure that no student abandon school to participate in either cultural or socio-economic activities. This should also be emphasized at primary school level to increase transition rate.

b. The government should ensure that there is no child labor in Miraa trading in order to save the boy child who has been greatly affected by the economic activity in the district.

c. Campaigns against retrogressive cultural practices such as female circumcision and early marriages should be emphasized in the district.

d. Students who absent themselves from school should be followed strictly to establish the cause in order to reduce the levels of wastage in the district especially in day secondary schools.
e. Parents in the district should be informed, through social gatherings and public barazas, on the importance of secondary education. In schools life skills should be emphasized in order to get rid of retrogressive cultural and socio-economic practices from future generations in the district.

5.5 Further research
Based on the findings and recommendation of the study the researcher suggests that another study be carried out to assess why there are more girls than boys in mixed day secondary schools in Igembe North District.
REFERENCES


Manali O. (2011). Importance of culture. An article in Buzzle.com


APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

STUDENTS QUESTIONNAIRE

I am M.ed student from Kenyatta University carrying out the research on education in this region. The answers given will only be used for research purposes.

Instructions

1. Please answer all the questions.
2. Do not write your name.
3. Answers can be more than one for a given question.
4. Where choices are provided, tick only one answer.

School ........................ Form ..........................

Age ............................ Gender ........................

1a. How many of your primary school mates are not in secondary school? (tick one)

Very many ............... Few ............... None ............... 

1b. Those who are not in secondary school, the majority: (tick one)

1. Dropped in primary school .......
2. Only completed class 8 .........
3. Dropped in secondary school ....

2. What contributed to their dropout or not joining secondary school? .........................

3a. How many are you in your class?

3b. How many students have dropped out of school from your class this year? (tick one)
1. None……
2. 1 to 5…………
3. 6 to10…………
4. More than 10………..

3c. What contributed to their dropout?

4a. Have you undergone any type of initiation? If yes name it.

4b. How did it affect your education?

4c. Are there people whom you know and they were affected too much by the practice? If yes, explain.

5a. Do you chew miraa?

b. If yes, how often? Daily……..Weekly……..Monthly……..Any other………..

c. When did you start chewing miraa?

d. Who introduced you to the practice?.

e. Does your chewing miraa affect your studies?

If yes, explain

6. Other than chewing miraa which other activities are you involved in as part of your culture?

7. In your opinion, has culture contributed positively or negatively in your education?

Explain…

8. Are there some cultural practices which you feel should be stopped?

If yes, name them:

9. Does culture affect your parent’s participation in your education? If yes,
10. In this section you are given series of statements with five possible answers.

   Strongly Agree  [SA]
   Agree           [A]
   Undecided       [U]
   Disagree        [D]

   You are expected to tick any of those which says your opinion regarding the statement.

   a. chewing miraa affects education negatively
      
      Strongly Agree  [ ]
      Agree           [ ]
      Undecided       [ ]
      Disagree        [ ]
      Strongly disagree [ ]

   b. female circumcision negatively affects education
      
      Strongly Agree  [ ]
      Agree           [ ]
      Undecided       [ ]
b. Polygamy in families has negatively affected education

- Strongly Agree [ ]
- Agree [ ]
- Undecided [ ]
- Disagree [ ]
- Strongly disagree [ ]


c. Male circumcision negatively affects education

- Strongly Agree [ ]
- Agree [ ]
- Undecided [ ]
- Disagree [ ]
- Strongly disagree [ ]

d. Early marriage has contributed to dropout

- Strongly Agree [ ]
e. Poverty has affected participation in secondary education.

    Strongly Agree [ ]
    Agree [ ]
    Undecided [ ]
    Disagree [ ]
    Strongly disagree [ ]
APPENDIX II
CLASS TEACHERS’ QUESTIONNAIRE

I am M.ed student from Kenyatta University carrying out the research on education in this region. The answers given will only be used for research purposes.

Instructions
5. Please answer all the questions.
6. Do not write your name.
7. Answers can be more than one for a given question.
8. Where choices are provided, tick only one answer.

School…………………… Form……………………

1. How long have you been a class teacher?

2a. Do you have students who are frequently absent in your class?

b. If yes, give three main reasons for their absenteeism:

3a. Do you have students who have completely dropped out of school in the last one year?

b. If yes, give three reasons for their dropout

4a. Do your learners get involved in cultural practices?

b. Which are the main cultural practices?

C. Do they affect learning? Explain
APPENDIX III
HEAD TEACHERS’ INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

I am M.ed student from Kenyatta University carrying out the research on education in this region. The answers given will only be used for research purposes.

1. When was your school established?

2. What is the school enrolment?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>BOYS</th>
<th>GIRLS</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FORM 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FORM 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FORM 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FORM 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. How is the wastage rate in your school?

4. For the time you have been the principal how is the retention?

5. Which classes are the most affected?

6. Which are the reasons for the high or low retention?

7. Does culture play a role in retention, enrolment or performance in your school? Explain

8. How do you rate parent’s participation in education?

9. Does the parent’s participation in education affected by the cultural issues? Explain

10. In your opinion, how does the community (parents, students and the larger society) perceive?
APPENDIX IV
GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING TEACHERS’ INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

I am M.ed student from Kenyatta University carrying out the research on education in this region. The answers given will only be used for research purposes.

1. For how long have you been to this school?

2. How long have you served as the G&C teacher in the school?

3. Which are the main problems do students present to you?

4. What do you think is the origin of these problems?

5. Which gender is most affected?

6. Which are the major indiscipline cases presented to you?

Which factors affect education in this region?
APPENDIX V
LETTERS

JULIUS WAMBUGU WACHIRA,
THRO’
KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL

THE D.E.O,
IGEMBE NORTH DISTRICT,
P.O BOX……..
LAARE.

RE: REQUISITION FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH
I am a master of education student from Kenyatta University. I would like to conduct my research in secondary schools in Igembe north district in Meru County. My area of study is “Effect of culture to secondary education”. I will be glad for your assistance. Thanks.

Yours faithfully

Wachira J.W
JULIUS WAMBUGU WACHIRA,
THRO’
KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL

THE D.C,
IGEMBE NORTH DISTRICT,
P.O BOX……..
LAARE.

RE: REQUISITION FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH
I am a master of education student from Kenyatta University. I would like to conduct
my research in secondary schools in Igembe north district in Meru County. My area
of study is “Effect of culture to secondary education”. I will be glad for your
assistance. Thanks.

Yours faithfully

Wachira J.W
JULIUS WAMBUGU WACHIRA,
THRO’
KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL

THE PRINCIPAL,
…………… SECONDARY SCHOOL,
P.O BOX ………………

**RE: REQUISITION FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

I am a master of education student from Kenyatta University. I would like to conduct my research in secondary schools in Igembe north district in Meru County. My area of study is “Effect of culture to secondary education”. I will be glad for your assistance. Thanks.

Yours faithfully

Wachira J.W