# CHALLENGES FACING INFERTILE PERSONS IN THE AGIKUYU OF KIENI WEST DIVISION OF NYERI COUNTY, KENYA

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A RESEACH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTERS OF ARTS IN GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES OF KENYATTA UNIVERSITY

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## DECLARATION

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

Signature _____ Date 4/12/2012

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This project has been submitted with our approval as University supervisors

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigated the challenges experienced by infertile individuals amongst the Agikuyu community in Kieni West Division. The study was based on the premise that there are many causes of infertility, many psycho-social as well as economic challenges faced by infertile persons in the Gikuyu Community. These challenges are being experienced even when many initiatives at international and national levels have been put in place to elevate the status of all people. The study identified mechanisms used by the Agikuyu to address infertility as well suggesting ways of overcoming these challenges. The study was guided by Linda Sharon's theory (2000). It states that barrenness alters an individual's sense of self worth by creating feeling of deficiency, hopelessness and shame. Both infertile men and women experience self conceptual image as a result of infertility and although they may experience it differently, women often feel inadequate and defiant for failing to fulfill personal and societal roles, while men often feel inferior, ashamed and angry. The study targeted childless couples who have been married for at least seven years, medical practitioners, and members of the clergy, administrators and neighbours of the infertile persons. Snowball sampling was employed to sample infertile persons, while purposeful sampling was used to sample members of the clergy, chiefs and medical practitioners. Simple random sampling was employed to sample the neighbours of the infertile individuals. Data was collected using interview schedules for the infertile individuals while questionnaires were used in all other categories. Quantitative data was analysed through descriptive statistics and findings presented in charts, percentages and proportions, while qualitative data was presented in a narrative report. The research found that infertility can have serious effect on both the psychological well-being and the social status of both men and women .However, it was also noted that women pay the price of infertility in a marriage. To address these challenges ,the study recommends public education on infertility ,delivery of good infertility care bearing in mind the implications of infertility and insight into the context in which it occurs and guidance and counselling.