

**EFFECTS OF FGM OR FMC ON PRIMARY SCHOOL GIRLS IN THE OGIEK  
COMMUNITY: A CASE OF SOGOO LOCATION, NAROK SOUTH DISTRICT,  
KENYA.**

**BY**

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## DECLARATION

The work that I have submitted is a product of my own effort. I certify all the material in this proposal which is not my own work has been identified and acknowledged. No materials are included for which a degree has been previously conferred upon me.

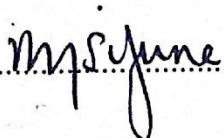
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**ABSTRACT**

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) encompasses all procedures that intentionally modify or injure female genital organs for non-medical reasons. Globally, an estimated 100 to 140 million girls and women live with the consequences of FGM/C. In Africa, approximately 92 million girls aged 10 and above have undergone FGM/C. Despite its illegality in Kenya, the practice persists clandestinely among communities such as the Maasai, Pokot, Somali, Kuria, Marakwet, and Ogiek. Although there is widespread awareness of its dangers, FGM/C continues in communities like the Maasai, Kipsigis, and Ogiek in Narok South District. The primary objective of this study was to examine the effects of FGM/C on primary school girls from the Ogiek community in Sogoo location, Narok South District. The research sought to: (1) identify factors contributing to the persistence of FGM/C; (2) understand how community members sustain the practice despite legal prohibitions; and (3) explore the relationship between FGM/C, poor school attendance, high dropout rates, and early marriages. A descriptive research design was employed. Data collection methods included questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis. The sample comprised 82 participants: nine purposively selected class teachers completed questionnaires; 46 girls and three head teachers participated in interviews; and eight men and 16 women were selected through snowball sampling for focus group discussions. Document analysis was conducted on class registers and enrollment records. A pilot study was undertaken to enhance the validity and reliability of research instruments. Data analysis incorporated both qualitative and quantitative approaches, with SPSS utilized for quantitative data. Findings regarding reasons for FGM/C persistence, current practices, and their effects on school attendance, dropouts, and early marriages were presented qualitatively, while enrollment statistics and demographic data were analyzed quantitatively using percentages. The main findings indicate that FGM/C serves as an initiation into womanhood, marriage, and social acceptance, as well as a means of imparting tribal knowledge and adult responsibilities. Although illegal in Kenya, the practice continues covertly within the Ogiek community and is associated with irregular school attendance, dropouts, and early marriages. The study concludes that the continued practice of FGM/C significantly impedes the educational advancement of Ogiek girls. It recommends implementing comprehensive, community-based strategies to combat the practice, and adopting affirmative measures to enhance Ogiek girls' education. Additionally, the government should establish mechanisms to prosecute those who perform FGM/C and address juvenile marriage through legal channels.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **Introduction**

This chapter includes the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, the objectives, research questions, significance, assumptions, delimitations, limitations, theoretical framework, definition of key terms, and organisation of the study.

### **1.1 Background to the Study**

Female genital mutilation is defined as all Procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia or other injury to the female genital organs, whether for cultural or other non-therapeutic purposes (World Health Organisation [WHO], 2008, P.1).

### **1.2 Prevalence of FGM/C**

Globally, estimates of 100 to 140 million girls and women have undergone some form of Female Genital Mutilation (WHO, 2008, p. 1). At least 3 million girls are at risk of undergoing FGM/C in Africa every year (WHO, 2008, p. 2). Female genital mutilation primarily happens in Africa, particularly in North-Eastern, Eastern and Western Africa. An estimated 92 million girls aged 10 and above have undergone FGM/C in Africa alone (Waris, 2011, p. 23). However, it also occurs in the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and among immigrants in Europe and America (WHO, 2011). Ethnic prevalence of FGM/C in Kenya is as follows; Somali 98%, Kisii 96%, Maasai 73%, Embu 51%, Kalenjin 40%, Meru 40%, Taita 32%, Kamba 23%, Kikuyu 21%, Mijikenda/Swahili 4%, Luo 0% and Luhya 0% (Demographic Health Survey [DHS], 2008, as cited in The Daily Nation of Feb 7th, 2011, P. 3).

### **1.3. Rationalisation of Nature and Forms of FGM/C**

FGM/C practices differ among practising communities (Toubia, 1995, p. 21). The specific type of FGM/C performed by a community determines the procedure. There are two main categories of FGM/C: clitoridectomy and infibulation. Clitoridectomy, which involves removing the clitoris, is said to be carried out to reduce a woman's ability to achieve orgasm, thereby decreasing her sexual desires. Infibulation involves removing the clitoris, the labia minora, and the labia majora. The remaining part of the labia majora is sewn shut, leaving only a small opening for urine and menstrual blood to pass. This procedure is often used to protect a woman's virginity and control her sexual desire (Toubia, 1995, p. 9). Subsequently, seclusion follows, which includes initiation into secret rituals, fertility invocations, casting off uncleanness, teaching tribal laws, and shedding the old self before becoming a full member of the tribe (Gathari, 2000).

Most communities practicing FGM/C view it as a rite of passage into womanhood, which is a necessary step for taking on responsibilities like marriage and childbearing (Toubia, 1995, p. 9). Some groups practicing infibulation, such as the Somali, believe that FGM/C ensures the preservation of a girl's virginity, which in turn protects the family honour and enhances the daughter's marital prospects. Other communities that perform FGM/C, like the Kuria, believe that clitoridectomy reduces sexual desire and, therefore, shields a girl from sexual temptations (Ondiek, 2010, p. 48). Hygiene, aesthetics, identity, tradition, social customs, and improved male sexual pleasure are additional reasons given for various forms of FGM/C (Lightfoot-Klein, 1989, p. 38). The majority of African communities where FGM/C is practiced often view it as a rite

of passage, but it is not limited to that alone. This is because the process encompasses holistic physical and spiritual education, including sex education, religion, guiding principles for proper social behaviour, and understanding the laws specific to each community (Gathiri, 2000).

#### **1.1.4 Articulations about FGM/C as Violation of Human Rights**

Many international agreements provide strong platforms to support grassroots efforts to end FGM/C (Population Research Bureau [PRB], 2010, P.3). For example, in 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights established the basis for classifying FGM/C as a human rights violation. In 1987, the Convention Against Torture and Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action all advocate for the elimination of FGM/C as a violation of human rights (PRB, 2010, P.3).

In Africa, numerous conventions provide a legal basis for ending FGM/C. These include the 1982 African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which addresses traditional harmful practices, and the 1999 African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (PRB, 2010, P.4).

Kenya's policy on FGM/C has never been consistent, and from the 1980s to the present (2012), it has undergone numerous changes. For example, in 1982 and 1989, President Moi, the then president of Kenya, issued presidential decrees banning the practice (Office of the Secretary for Global Affairs, U.S. Department of State, 2001, P.3). In 1990, the then Minister for Cultural and Social Services announced that it was the government's goal to outlaw this practice. In November 1996, Parliament rejected a motion to make this practice illegal (Office of the Secretary for Global Affairs, U.S.

Department of State, 2001, P.3). These efforts led to FGM/C being outlawed for females under eighteen years old, especially after the adoption of the Children's Acts Bill of 2001, section 14 (Government of Kenya (GoK), 2010, P.5). Additionally, provisions 234 and 251 of the penal code criminalize grievous bodily harm, including FGM/C (GoK, 2009, PP.177 & 88). The Kenyan constitution, as set out in Articles 3(d) and 55(d), protects children and youth from harmful traditional practices (GoK, 2010, pp. 38-39). On April 12, 2011, the FGM/C (2010) Bill—aimed at closing legal gaps to fully criminalize FGM/C and related activities—was successfully passed in parliament (The Standard, April 13, 2011, P.14). President Mwai Kibaki signed this bill into law on October 1, 2011 (Kenya Law Report, Vol. CXII, 2011, P.3).

### **1.1.5 Study Focus**

The United Nations Children's Fund's (UNICEF, 2005) argument that FGM/C contributes to early marriages, high rates of dropouts, and poor school attendance among teenage girls needs to be revisited, especially in communities where the practice of FGM/C has persisted to this day. This is because there is a growing gender disparity in the Ogiek community, driven by low enrollment of girls in school (Ohenjo, 2006, p. 6). It is estimated that more than 72 million children are out of primary school, of whom 60% are girls (World Bank, 2007). After undergoing FGM/C, some girls lose interest in school and fully identify with their new roles as 'women' (Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), 2009:6). Some of these girls continue to attend school despite being married, but they soon become pregnant and stop attending school (GTZ, 2009, P.6).

Although outlawed, FGM/C continues to be practiced by members of the Ogiek community living in Sogoo location (Atieno, 2007; Ogiek Women Empowerment Program [OWEP], 2011; Kratz, 2010). Nann Okoth's article in The Standard (28th Jan

2011, P. 6), 'Ogiek Still Yearning for a New Dawn,' claimed that the rights of Ogiek girl children have been violated by strict cultural practices. There is notably low participation of Ogiek primary school girls in formal education because girls' education is not prioritised in this patriarchal community (Oduor, 2006, p. 35). The number of enrolled girls in primary schools serving the Ogiek is lower than that of boys because most community members are not interested in educating girls (Mwaniki, 2010).

According to Oduor (2006, P. 35), there is a significant gender gap in primary school enrollment among members of the Ogiek community. Although enrollment is generally low in this area, data from the District Educational Office shows that in 2011, 970 boys were enrolled in classes 1 to 8, compared to 767 girls in only six selected schools serving the Ogiek in Sogoo location. At the same schools, 127 girls were enrolled in class 4 in 2008, but only 40 sat for the KCPE in 2011, reflecting a 68% dropout rate over 4 years (District Education Office [DEO] Narok South, 2012). As a result, Ogiek women professionals are rare. For example, in the teaching profession, there are very few Ogiek female teachers. The Teachers Service Commission's annual report on teachers' returns indicates that in 2006, in Mulot Division of Narok South District, there were only five female teachers from the Ogiek community (Teachers Service Commission [TSC], 2006). Therefore, the connection between the continuation of FGM/C and low primary school enrollment among Ogiek girls warrants further investigation.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) remains a persistent practice in several Kenyan communities despite extensive legal prohibitions, advocacy efforts, and increased public awareness of its harmful consequences. In the Ogiek community, emerging evidence suggests that FGM/C continues to affect the well-being and

educational trajectories of girls. Primary school girls in Ogiek-inhabited areas experience relatively high dropout rates, low school enrolment by gender, and increased vulnerability to early marriage. Records from the District Education Office indicate that schools serving the Ogiek community consistently report lower enrolment and retention of girls than of boys, raising concerns about broader social and cultural factors influencing girls' education.

Existing scholarship on FGM/C in Narok County has largely focused on larger, more visible communities such as the Maasai and Kipsigis, where the practice has been extensively documented and studied. However, scholarly attention to the Ogiek community has been limited, despite indications that the practice persists within the group. This lack of focused research has led to an insufficient understanding of the specific cultural, social, and educational dynamics that sustain FGM/C among the Ogiek.

Furthermore, while national-level studies have examined the general relationship between FGM/C and girls' education, few have investigated how the practice specifically shapes school attendance, dropout patterns, and early marriage among Ogiek primary school girls. Equally underexplored is how FGM/C has adapted or transformed to continue operating within the community despite Kenya's legal prohibition of the practice, including possible shifts toward secrecy or toward alternative forms.

The absence of empirical research addressing these issues creates a significant knowledge gap that limits the development of targeted interventions, policies, and educational strategies tailored to the Ogiek context. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the persistence of FGM/C within the Ogiek community and its implications for girls' education, particularly focusing on school attendance, dropout rates, and early

marriage among primary school girls.

### **1.2.1 Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study was to find out the effects of FGM/C on primary school girls from the Ogiek community living in Sogoo location, Narok South District, in Kenya, with regard to school attendance, dropouts, and early marriages.

### **1.3 Specific Objectives of the Study**

The study aimed to achieve the following objectives:

Identify the factors contributing to the continuation of FGM/C among the Ogiek community residing in Sogoo location, Narok South District.

To examine the current practices of FGM/C that allow members of the Ogiek community in Sogoo location to maintain the tradition despite its prohibition.

To explore the impact of FGM/C on the school attendance of primary school girls from the Ogiek community in Sogoo location.

1. To analyze how FGM/C contributes to school dropouts and early marriages among primary school girls in the Ogiek community.

### **1.2.3 Research Questions**

The study sought to answer the following questions:

- a. What factors sustain the practice of FGM/C among the Ogiek community living in Sogoo location?
- b. What current practices allow the Ogiek community in Sogoo to continue FGM/C despite its ban?
- c. How does FGM/C impact the school attendance of primary school girls from the Ogiek community in Sogoo location?
- d. How does FGM/C contribute to school dropouts and early marriages among primary school girls in the Ogiek community living in Sogoo location?



### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The study is important because it will offer insights into why FGM persists and its impact on the girl child, especially her education. The findings will highlight the roles of teachers, parents, advocacy groups, and society in efforts to close the gender gap among children attending Ogiek schools. Specifically, the results will provide data and recommendations to help organizations like the Ministry of Education develop policies, strategies, and intervention programs aimed at eliminating FGM/C, so girls from the Ogiek community can succeed academically. Additionally, this study will add to existing knowledge by documenting its findings for future reference. Moreover, the results, conclusions, and recommendations will contribute to the understanding of FGM and its connection to poor school attendance, dropouts, and early marriages. Finally, the study will offer valuable insights and a foundation for future research.

### **1.7 Limitation of the Study**

First, the study limited itself to Ogiek from just one location, division, and district. This is because the Ogiek are spread across several other districts, including Trans Mara, Narok North, Nakuru, and Konoin districts. For more conclusive results, all other Ogiek-inhabited regions could have been included. Second, Narok South District has poor infrastructure, making access to schools quite challenging. Furthermore, time and financial constraints limited the researcher since the study involved travelling long distances. Despite these challenges, the researcher used convenient modes of transportation, such as motorbikes. Fourth, in Narok South District, FGM/C is practiced secretly because it is illegal. Some participants and interviewees withdrew from providing information out of fear of being criminalized. Despite this, the researcher

used trusted community connections, engaged with less inhibited participants and interviewees to gather more information.

### **1.8 Delimitation of the Study**

The pupils and teachers included in the sample were only those present in the respective institutions at the time of the study. Additionally, the study focused on the Ogiek community and not on other FGM/C-practising communities nearby, such as the Maasai and the Kipsigis.

### **1.9 Assumptions of the Study**

In the proposed study, the following assumptions were made;

- All respondents will be cooperative and provide reliable responses.
- Women and girls who have undergone the custom will be willing to share their experiences on FGM/C.
- Female respondents will be able to be interviewed by a male researcher on FGM/C data.

### **1.10 Theoretical Framework**

This study employs structural-functional theory, developed over time by anthropologists such as Herbert Spencer, Talcott Parsons, Marcel Mauss, Bronislaw Malinowski, and Radcliffe-Brown. The term 'functionalist' was first coined by Bronislaw Malinowski (1813-1942), and in 1943, Radcliffe Brown (1881-1955) adopted the label 'structural functionalist theory.' This theory views society as a structure composed of interconnected parts. It suggests that society is a cohesive whole composed of functional elements such as norms, customs, traditions, and institutions. Each part contributes to the functioning of the entire system (Wallece & Wolf, 1986). These structures are considered functional because they support society's operation (Wallece & Wolf, 1986).

This theory informed the study in several ways, primarily by exploring why the Ogiek community continues to practice FGM/C and related practices. Parson (1967), a key supporter and analyst of this theory, states that: 'Each society has specific needs, requiring certain activities for social survival and growth. Rewards such as income, status, prestige, or power must be offered to motivate people to perform the necessary work' (Wallece & Wolf, 1986). In this context, Parsons' concept of 'rewards' refers to the factors the research examined as motivations for the Ogiek community to maintain FGM/C.

Second, this theory was appropriate for investigating the current processes that lead members of this community to continue performing FGM/C despite its negative consequences. Parson (1967) claimed that, as changes occur, different parts of a society

become more specialized, adapting to new needs and problems (Wallece & Wolf, 1986). Changes in Kenya's legal system caused FGM/C activities to go underground in many practicing communities, especially after the ratification of the Children's Act Bill of 2001 and other legal measures that followed. This theory guided the study in examining how community members adapt to laws to evade enforcement while continuing to support the practice.

Third, this study adopts Durkheim's concept of 'social stability' to examine the relationship between FGM/C and poor school attendance. Durkheim points out that people in society recognise rules and adhere to shared moral guidelines to maintain social stability (Culture, Society and ICT, 2009:2). Functionalist theory is used to explain how Ogiek primary school girls are socialised to focus more on other social and cultural aspects than their education. To achieve what Durkheim calls 'social stability,' they undergo FGM/C and follow cultural teachings taught in seclusion, which in turn undermines their participation in formal education.

Fourth, the theory guided the study in examining the trend of early marriages and school dropouts in relation to FGM/C, focusing on primary school girls from the Ogiek community. Parson (1967) emphasised the principle of interdependence among different parts of society as a key feature of functionalism (Turner, 1987, as cited in Sociology, 250, 1999, P. 16). In communities practising FGM/C, there is a clear interdependence between this custom and the formation of family units. Usually, a teenage girl must undergo FGM/C before she is considered ready to get married. For example, it is common for an Ogiek man to choose a school-going teenage girl to form a family unit, which illustrates the functional social structure of this society. The theory was used to examine the interdependence between FGM/C, school dropout rates, and early marriages among primary school girls in the Ogiek community.

## **1.11 Organization of the Study**

### **Chapter 1: Introduction and orientations:**

this chapter covers the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives, research questions, significance, assumptions, delimitations, limitations, theoretical framework, definition of key terms, and organisation of the study.

### **Chapter 2: Review of related literature:**

This chapter provides literature related to reasons that justify the perpetuation of FGM/C, changing trends of FGM/C activities in Kenya, and the contribution of FGM/C to poor school attendance, early marriages, and school dropouts.

### **Chapter 3: Methodology:**

This section includes and describes the following: research design, geographical area of study, target population, sampling techniques, sample size, data collection methods, pilot study, instrument validity, instrument reliability, data analysis, logistical and ethical considerations.

### **Chapters 4: Presentation of data analysis, results, and discussions:**

This chapter presents data, analyses, interpretations, and summarises the key findings.

### **Chapter 5: Summary, conclusion and Recommendations:**

This chapter contains the summary of the findings, final conclusions, recommendations for decision-makers and suggestions for further research.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter examined literature on factors that sustain the practice of FGM/C, changes in FGM/C activities in Kenya, its impact on poor school attendance, and its connection to girls' dropouts and early marriages. It highlighted key findings and identified gaps within this specific field.

#### **2.1 Factors that Perpetuate the Practice of FGM/C**

Recently, there has been increasing interest among scholars in studying the factors that sustain FGM/C in various practicing communities in Kenya. For example, Yussuf (2003) cited reasons such as control of women's sexuality, preservation of virginity, increased marriage prospects, and religious obligations to explain the continuation of FGM/C among Somali women in Garissa town. However, although his study provides valuable insights into the reasons for performing FGM/C, it mainly focuses on strategies for eradicating FGM/C. This is reflected in his recommendation for further research, which suggests that scholars should explore the deeply rooted causes of FGM/C to understand why eradication efforts often fail. The current study aims to fill this gap by investigating the reasons why FGM/C continues among the Ogiek.

Chebet (2007, P. 4-8) studied FGM/C among the Kalenjin and identified several social and cultural beliefs supporting the practice, including reducing sex drive to prevent promiscuity, increasing sexual pleasure for the husband, hygiene, cutting off the clitoris as a symbol of childhood separation, qualifying for marriage, conforming to tradition, verifying virginity during circumcision, and the belief that the clitoris may cause deviant sexual behaviors like lesbianism. Her research provides valuable and comprehensive insights into why the Kalenjin continue FGM/C despite widespread campaigns against it. However, she does not specify reasons given by specific Kalenjin dialect groups such as the Ogiek, Pokot, Marakwet, Tugen, Kipsigis, and Nandi, which is the gap my study seeks to fill.

Lukurosia (2006), in her study titled *Assessment of the Impact of Health Campaigns against FGM*, listed the following reasons for practicing FGM/C among the Pokot: passage of rite, chastity in women, social acceptance, respect, marriageability, ease of childbearing, good tradition, a sign of courage, and an economic activity for others. She notes that for better generalization, research on the reasons for the continuation of FGM/C among other Kalenjin dialect-speaking communities in Kenya should be conducted.

A question that still lingers in the minds of many scholars is, ‘Why has this retrogressive practice persisted despite the existing awareness and dangers to the girl child?’ Hence, this research aimed to bridge this gap by examining the reasons the Ogiek have given for continuing FGM/C practices to date.

## **2.2 Changes in FGM Activities in Kenya**

The 2008/2009 DHS report recorded a decline in FGM/C prevalence nationwide, from 38% in 1998 and 32% in 2003 to 27% (DHS, 2010, p. 3). Nonetheless, various official reports suggest that the Kenyan law banning FGM/C has pushed the practice underground (Nyamataro, 2011). A similar pattern was noted by UNFPA and World Vision, indicating that after legislation prohibited FGM/C in Kenya, the practice shifted underground, significantly changing its methods (World Vision, 2011; United Nations Population Fund [UNFPA], 2008).

Many investigators have recently developed interests to study the practice of FGM/C in communities in Kenya. For example, Bonareri (2000) examined the FGM/C process among the Abugussi and provided a detailed qualitative description. Her account of the process among the Abugussi is comprehensive, enriching, and systematic. However, her description was based on a period when FGM/C activities had not gone underground, and it is limited to a Bantu dialect of the Abugussi.

Sociologists such as Peristiany (1964) provide a useful resource for the existing literature on the process of FGM/C among the Kipsigis, who are linguistically and culturally the closest Kalenjin dialect to the Ogiek. His study comprehensively described a process based on traditional practices carried out openly without legal consequences. Although the study focused on the Kipsigis instead of the Ogiek, its findings remain relevant to the existing body of knowledge. However, since the

research was conducted several years ago, FGM/C activities have evolved significantly, with some practices disappearing entirely. Among the Ogiek, FGM/C has not been eradicated but continues secretly. There is limited recent literature on its current procedures, allowing perpetrators to bypass the law. Consequently, this study aims to investigate how FGM/C persists within the Ogiek community despite bans.

### **2.3 Contribution of FGM/C to Poor School Attendance**

Bwana (2000:8), consulting for GTZ, conducted a baseline survey in the neighbouring Transmara district, which borders Narok South. He documented that the seclusion period among the Maasai and Kisii after FGM/C lasts long and affects girls' education. Although he studied the relationship between FGM/C and school attendance, his research was conducted more than ten years ago, and since then, many changes have occurred, especially regarding girls' education. His study is also limited to Transmara District and other communities, excluding the Ogiek.

Kahoro (2007) investigated the impacts of FGM/C on the education of public primary schoolgirls in Kinale and Kamae locations in Kiambu District. She found that FGM/C largely undermines girls' academic performance because, after the practice, they value marriage more than education. Her study is enriching and closely related to this one because it examines the relationship between FGM/C, early marriages, dropouts, and poor school attendance among primary school girls. However, she conducted her research in Kiambu District. To achieve better generalization, there is a need to document the trends among other FGM/C-practicing communities, such as the Ogiek living in Sogoo location.

Mukongo (2003) conducted research on the influence of circumcision ceremonies on the education of primary school pupils in Kandunyi Division of Bungoma District. She

found that circumcised boys in primary schools tend to lack concentration and discipline, have low school retention, experience a high rate of absenteeism, and have a greater chance of dropping out. Her study is very informative and useful; however, she focused on the effects of circumcision ceremonies on primary school boys from the Bukusu community. For better generalization, there was a need to examine the effects of such activities on the education of primary school girls, such as those in the FGM/C-practicing community of the Ogiek.

#### **2.4 FGM/C in Relation to Early Marriages and School Dropouts**

In most cases, FGM/C is performed on school-aged teenage girls, and many of them drop out of school to get married and start families (UNFPA, 2007, P. 6). It is estimated that 20-50% of school-aged girls drop out by age 18, with the highest rates in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia (African Medical and Research Foundation [AMREF], 2008). UNICEF (2001) estimated that 27% of girls in East Africa, 40% in West Africa, and 20% in North and Southern Africa marry before age 19.

According to the Kenyan Demographic and Health Survey (KDHS, 2010), 35% of girls aged 16 to 20 are still in school, compared to 50% of boys. Most cases of girls dropping out happen in January, after the long December holiday, when girls may be influenced by festivities and traditional practices like FGM/C (KDHS, 2010, P. 7).

Killian (1996, P. 48) studied school dropouts and early marriages in Lemek within this district, finding that 22% of teenage boys and 33% of girls drop out. He explains that parents keep sons out of school to herd, while girls are kept home to uphold Maasai marriage customs. His comprehensive research adds valuable insights to the literature. However, he does not link these issues to FGM/C. Additionally, his study is limited to the Maasai of Loita and Lemek and does not cover other communities in the district.

For example, the Ogiek of Sogoo have a relatively high level of early marriages and girl dropouts.

Hauff (2003, P. 6), in her research on The Effects of Development on the Maasai, maintains that Maasai girls are exploited through the custom of clitoridectomy and forced marriages. She further found that girls marry as teenagers within the year of the practice. Although she conducted her research in the vicinity of this proposed study, she did not capture the trend among the Ogiek community in the Sogoo location. This was the knowledge gap the study aimed to bridge.

### **SUMMARY**

This chapter's review of the literature largely highlights issues relevant to the specific research problem the study addresses. Overall, the literature review clearly cites numerous studies on FGM/C within Kenyan communities. However, there have been no studies focusing on FGM/C among Ogiek primary school girls.

The above review has cited studies on the reasons for the perpetuation of FGM/C in practicing communities in Kenya. The reasons given by FGM/C practicing communities may indeed be related due to shared socio-cultural ties. However, generalizing the reasons for the persistence of FGM/C in these communities is not sufficient because research has shown that trends of FGM/C activities across practicing communities vary. For example, the 2008/2009 KDHS survey indicates that, among the Kalenjin sub-tribes, FGM/C prevalence is relatively high among the Pokot, compared to the Kipsigis and Nandi. Therefore, it is not wrong to argue that reasons reserved by specific communities are unique to them, given their differences in customs, beliefs, and geographical settings. This study sought to document the specific reasons given by

the Ogiek community for continuing FGM/C practices into the 21st century.

The literature review above shows that in Kenya, FGM/C persists underground, adapting to survive bans by changing its forms. While many scholars have recently examined this sensitive issue, the criminalization laws have driven FGM/C activities further underground, creating a gap in understanding how it currently manifests within practicing communities. This study aimed to address this gap by examining ongoing FGM/C practices among the Ogiek community.

The literature review highlights the connection between FGM/C, low school attendance, early marriages, and school dropout in various practicing communities in Kenya. The Kenyan Government's policy to achieve Universal Primary Education (UPE) has achieved some progress, particularly following the implementation of free primary education in January 2003. However, providing basic education, especially for girls, has remained elusive. This is a significant challenge among marginalized communities such as the Ogiek, where FGM/C activities target primary school girls. The contribution of FGM/C to poor school attendance, early marriages, and school dropout, which is relatively high among Ogiek primary school girls, is not yet known. Therefore, this study aimed to address a knowledge gap.

## **CHEPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0. Introduction**

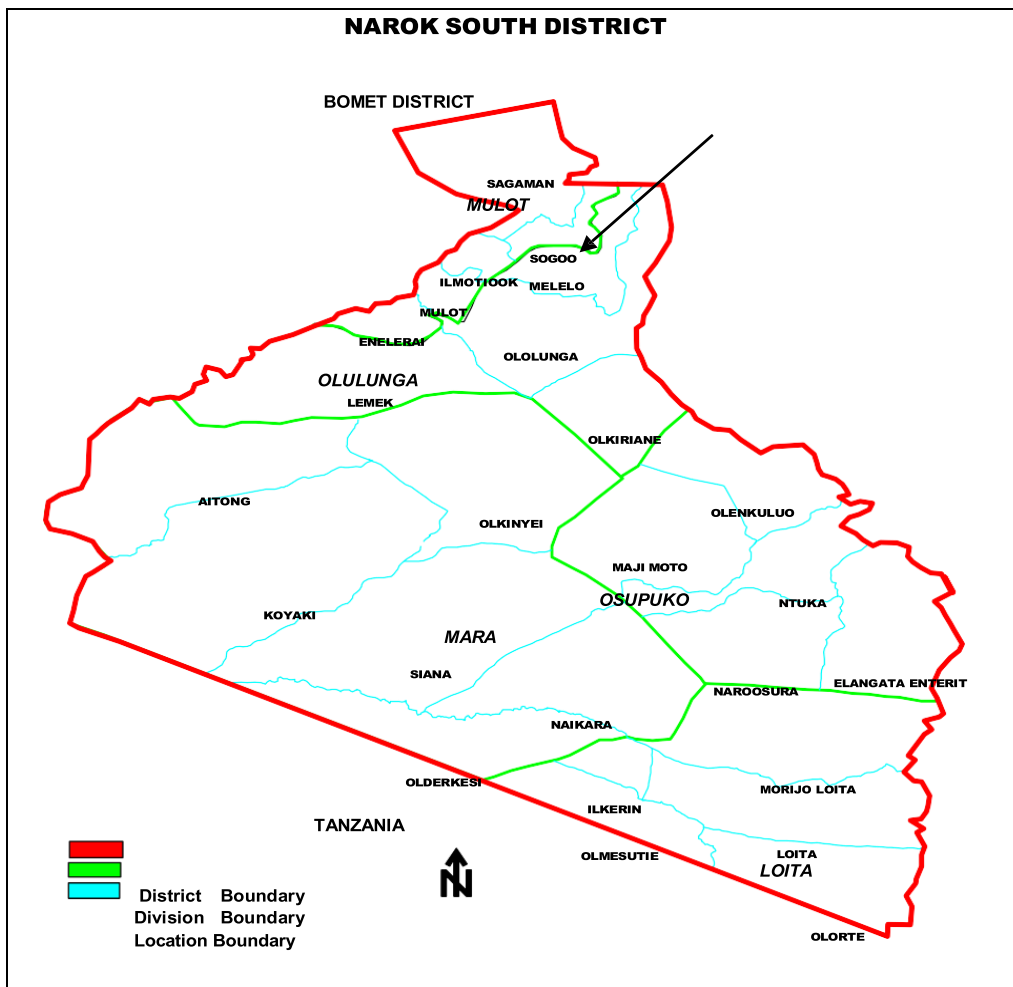
This chapter explains how data were gathered, including the study design, study area, target population, sample size and sampling methods, data collection techniques, pilot testing, instrument validity and reliability, data analysis, logistical and ethical considerations.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

This study used a descriptive survey research design, which involves observing and describing a subject's behaviour without interfering with it (Shuttleworth, 2008, p. 1). The descriptive survey focuses on the current or past status of phenomena and helps identify preliminary outcomes (Key, 1997). It also enables the description of causal relationships between variables (Sproul, 1988). The choice of this design was based on the fact that FGM/C occurred in the past, with its effects visible in pupils who had undergone it. Therefore, this design was suitable for investigating the current status of FGM/C and its impact on primary school girls from the Ogiek community in Sogoo location. Also, its descriptive nature allows for both qualitative and some quantitative insights into reasons for continuation, processes, and effects of FGM/C on primary school girls in relation to school attendance, dropouts, and early marriages. It also allows the use of instruments such as focus group discussions, interviews, and questionnaires (Gay, 1976).

### 3.2 Geographical Area of Study

This study was conducted among the Ogiek Community in Sogoo location, Narok South District, where pubescent girls are still subjected to FGM/C. Narok South District is part of Narok County, situated in the expansive Rift Valley, west of Nairobi. It borders Narok North to the east, Bomet County to the west, Transmara District to the southwest, and Mau Forest to the north. The district is predominantly inhabited by the Kipsigis, a Kalenjin dialect group, and also has a large Maasai population.



Source: Narok South District D.D.O's Office June 2011

The Ogiek, a small Kalenjin dialect group, is located between these two major tribes, both of which still practice FGM/C. Sogoo location is in Mulot Division, bordering the southeastern edge of Mau Forest to the north, and lies between Mara (locally known as Amalo) and the Ewaso N'giro River. It is situated on the eastern side of the Mara River and the western side of Ewaso N'giro, to the southeast of Sagamian Location, west of Melelo Location, and northeast of Ilmotiok Location.

### **3.3 Justification for area of study**

This region is home to many Ogiek community members who practice FGM/C. The Ogiek are spread across Melelo, Oleshapani, and Sogoo, with Sogoo being their main concentration area. As a small ethnic group, they have historically received limited scholarly attention. Additionally, there is no documentation on the impact of FGM/C on primary school girls from the Ogiek community living in this region. An ideal research setting should be easily accessible to the researcher (Singleton, 1993). Therefore, the researcher chose Sogoo because of its familiarity and accessibility, making it a suitable location with the right demographic characteristics for the study.

### **3.4 Target Population and Sample Size**

This study involved 82 individuals. It included 3 head teachers, 9 class teachers, 8 men, 16 women, and 46 primary school girls.

Three head teachers and nine class teachers participated in the study to assess school attendance, instances of early marriage, and low retention rates. They also offered insights into community members involved in decision-making processes that support FGM/C despite legal bans, as well as factors that sustain its practice. Their familiarity with local FGM/C activities and the reasons community members cite for its persistence made them well-suited for this data collection.

They also assess, observe, and monitor school girls' behaviour after undergoing FGM/C.

The study involved 46 girls from the Ogiek community, all in grades six to eight, ages 12-18 years. These participants were interviewed to gather qualitative data on why FGM/C continues in their community despite being illegal. Topics included current

practices that encourage community members to continue FGM/C, school attendance, dropouts, and early marriages related to FGM/C. Some girls were selected because they might have undergone the procedure or were at the typical age for circumcision. They also knew peers who had dropped out of school to marry after FGM/C. Being part of this community helped them understand the motives for continuing FGM/C and how its practice has changed since it was outlawed.

Eight men and 16 women from the Ogiek community, aged 25 to 40, were selected to participate in the focus group discussion. This age group was chosen because they tend to be less inhibited about sharing sensitive information on FGM/C, as they are less bound by the taboos and superstitions associated with FGM/C compared to older members. They are also familiar with the practice because they observed it before 2001, when the Children's Act Bill was enacted, which forced FGM/C activities underground. As subjects of anti-FGM/C campaigns, they were more open, expressive, and willing to share data on FGM/C. Being out of school, they were important in supplying the study with qualitative data to augment the pupils', head teachers', and class teachers' information. Men were sampled because they play a role in both perpetuating and eradicating it. More women were sampled for this group because they directly face the consequences of FGM/C more than men.

### **3.4.1 Sampling Techniques**

Sampling technique is a process of selecting a number of individuals or objects from a population so that the chosen group reflects the characteristics of the entire population (Kombo & Tromp, 2006, p. 77). Sampling was done as follows:

**a) Selection of Schools**

Purposive sampling was employed to select three schools in the area, with head teachers, class teachers, and girls chosen. This approach was used because, in purposive sampling, the researcher targets specific groups believed to be relevant for the study. Purposive sampling involves selecting samples based on set criteria (Orodho, 2004). The criterion in this case was the Ogiek pupil population. Three schools on the northeastern side of the area were purposively sampled because they have a higher concentration of Ogiek students than others.

This technique was preferred because Ogiek's population is unevenly distributed across this large area. It also involves selecting samples based on specific criteria, ensuring the right schools are targeted (Orodho, 2004).

**b). Selection of Head teachers and Class Teachers**

Purposive sampling was used to select 3 head teachers and 9 class teachers (from grades 6 to 8 in all three selected schools). This technique was justified because it involves choosing samples based on specific criteria, ensuring the selection of the right head teachers and class teachers (Orodho, 2004).

**c). Selection of Pupils**

In the three selected schools, purposive sampling was used to select at least 5 girls from the Ogiek community per class, classes 6-8. This was to ensure a minimum of 15 girls from each school, for a total of at least 46 girls. Due to the nature of the data to be collected, only girls willing to provide information were interviewed. The use of this technique was justified because it involves selecting samples based on specific criteria (Orodho, 2004), thereby targeting the appropriate pupils (Targeted Standard 6-8 girls between 12-18 years from the Ogiek community).

**d). Selection of Men and women**

Purposive sampling was used to identify participants who possessed relevant knowledge and experience regarding FGM/C practices within the Ogiek community. To expand the pool of participants, snowball (chain referral) sampling was subsequently employed, whereby initially identified participants recommended other eligible individuals within the community. Snowball sampling involves beginning with a small number of participants and progressively expanding the sample as new respondents are referred by earlier participants (Kombo & Tromp, 2006, p. 83).

Recruitment for the focus group discussions (FGDs) began with a few interested men and women from the Ogiek community and gradually expanded through referrals until

a total of 24 participants (16 women and 8 men) had been identified. These participants were then organized into separate FGDs to facilitate open discussion and allow participants to freely share their perspectives on the persistence of FGM/C and its effects on girls' education.

This technique was suitable because it involves selecting a person who understands what makes a case information-rich (Patton, 1990 as cited in Thierfelder, 2003, P.37). Another advantage of this approach is that an interested individual can easily identify a resourceful, experienced, expressive, or less inhibited interviewee who can disclose sensitive information, such as on FGM/C (Patton, 1990 as cited in Thierfelder, 2003, P.37).

### **3.4.2 Sample Size Determination**

The 2010 Kenyan census report listed the Ogiek population at 78,691 (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics [KNBS], 2010). Sogoo location has a population of 14,532 (KNBS, 2010). The Ogiek population was estimated to make up 30% of the total population (OWEP, 2011). Sogoo location has a total of 12 public primary schools. In total, there were 1,542 girls in grades 6 to 8 and 104 teachers (Sogoo Zone Education Office, Jan 2012). The estimated number of pupils from the Ogiek community was 462, which is 30% of 1542.

This study was primarily qualitative, with some quantitative aspects. Therefore, it applied qualitative study principles to determine the sample size because it leaned more toward qualitative methods. According to De Paulo (2000:2), size does not matter in a qualitative study. However, Megan, (2001) states that if the sample size is too small, a study will not have a representative sample of the whole population. If the sample size is too large, the collected information may become unmanageable and increase costs.

The adequacy of sample size in a qualitative study is relative. Megan (2001) suggests conducting qualitative research until one hears repeated patterns of similar responses. This idea is also supported by Mason (2010), who argues that the guiding principle in qualitative research is saturation. Furthermore, the specific research method and sampling strategy used will determine the desired research outcome in qualitative studies (Ondiek, 2010, p. 79). Therefore, the study employed purposive sampling to select participants and respondents, as it is an established tool in qualitative research (Russel, 1993).

In conclusion, determining an adequate sample size in qualitative research is ultimately a matter of personal judgment (Sandelowski 1995, P.183 as cited in Ondiek, 2010, P.77). As a guideline, the researcher will use 10% of the accessible population in the study, as suggested by Mugenda and Mugenda (2003). The principle guiding the selection includes 3 schools, 3 head teachers, 46 girls, and 9 class teachers. The researcher, based on personal discretion, selected 16 women and 8 men to form 3 FGD cluster groups to supplement data collected from the schools.

### **3.5 Data Collection Methods**

Triangulation of data sources and methods was used to gain comprehensive insights into the nature of the problem and to enhance the study's internal validity. Methods applied are summarized in the table below.

**Table 3.1: Triangulations applied**

Samples	Methods applied
Pupils	Interviews
Head teachers	Interviews
Men	Focus group discussions
Women	Focus group discussions
Teachers	Questionnaires

### 3.5.1 Interviews with Pupils and Head Teachers

Interviews are questions asked orally (Kombo & Tromp, 2006, p. 92). Individual head teachers and pupils were interviewed at their respective schools. This was done to provide the research with insights into the reasons for the continuation of FGM/C, the current process of FGM/C that allows members of the Ogiek to maintain it despite legal bans, and its connection to poor school attendance, girls dropping out, and early marriages in the Ogiek community. Depending on the amount of information provided by the interviewees, the interview time ranged from 25 minutes to 1 hour.

This method of data collection was preferred because respondents provided in-depth information essential for qualitative data (Mukherji, 2010). Interviews were flexible, allowing interviewers to adapt to the situation and obtain the necessary information

(Mukherji, 2010). Its flexibility facilitated the collection of sensitive data, and less inhibited respondents were given more time to provide more qualitative data that inhibited respondents might not have disclosed (Mukherji, 2010). Since this was primarily a qualitative study requiring a limited number of respondents, interviews were suitable as they enabled the collection of detailed information quickly from a small sample (Kothari, 2004). The interviewer also followed up on responses if they appeared incomplete or ambiguous (Kothari, 2004). (See appendix 3 & 7, pages 99 and 110).

### **3.5.1 Focus Group Discussions with Men and Women**

To facilitate discussions with men and women, focus group discussions were considered the most appropriate methodology. A focus group typically consists of 6-8 individuals who share certain characteristics relevant to the study (Kombo & Tromp, 2006, p. 94). Focus group discussions were used to gather qualitative data on why FGM/C still persists in this community, the current process of FGM/C that allows members of the Ogiek to continue practicing it despite being outlawed, and its connection to poor school attendance, dropouts, and early marriages. The FGD consisted of women and men aged 25-40 years from the Ogiek community who participated. Most discussions followed preset questions. Three focus group discussions took place at the Sogoo shopping centre. Two groups comprised women, and one group comprised men. The study's researcher moderated the questions, assisted by someone taking notes. For question guides for FGD, see appendix 4 & 5, pages 100-102.

FGD was suitable for this study because it is an established qualitative research method (Kothari, 2004). Reluctant informants can be encouraged to participate, and taboo topics can be discussed more openly because less inhibited group members help break

the ice for shyer participants. Respondents can also offer mutual support in expressing feelings common to their group (Kitzinger, as cited in Thierfelder, 2003, p. 37). This offers flexibility and allows follow-up probing on related topics (Mukherji, 2010). Insights are gained when members share experiences (Mukherji, 2010). This approach enabled women and men from the Ogiek community, who could not read or write, to participate in the study.

### **3.5.2. Questionnaires with Class Teachers**

Questionnaires are printed lists of questions given to participants to gather information, especially in social research (Scott & Usher, 2000). The questionnaires used included both closed and open-ended questions. The closed-ended questions provided quantitative data that were easy to compute and analyze. Open-ended questions allowed for more in-depth responses for qualitative data. Questionnaires were used to collect primary data from class teachers.

This method was preferred because the class teachers were literate and understood the questions in the questionnaires. They maintained confidentiality, making it suitable for collecting sensitive data on FGM/C. They are also more objective because responses are gathered in a standardised manner (Milne, 1999, p. 2). Standardised questions improve measurement accuracy by applying uniform definitions to participants (Milne, 1999, p. 2). Questionnaires are used to ask people about their experiences, behaviour, or attitudes (Mukherji, 2010). A large sample can be achieved, and participants have sufficient time to provide thoughtful answers (Kothari, 2010). (For class teachers' questionnaires, see Appendix 7, page 103).

### **3.5.3 Document Analysis**

Secondary data were collected from class registers, school enrolment books, and written sources such as ethnographic studies. Before the actual study, it was important to conduct a pilot study. Once the questionnaires and interview guides had been constructed, they were tried out in the field. As a requirement, this was done in less than 1% of the entire sample size (Orodho, 2004). Piloting offered the researcher a chance to test confidence in identifying challenges and obstacles that could impact the actual collection of useful data. It also helped assess the validity and reliability of research instruments (Orotho, 2004). A pilot study was conducted at one primary school, and one women's FGD was held. The selected school, respondents, and participants were exempted from the final study. The findings helped guide the researcher on whether to adjust the instruments if necessary or to adopt them as they were.

### **3.5.5 Instrument Validity**

The validity of a test is a measure of how well it assesses what it is intended to evaluate (Kombo & Tromp, 2006, p. 77). It also refers to the accuracy and significance of inferences drawn from research results (Kombo & Tromp, 2006, p. 97). Additionally, it indicates the extent to which the results from data analysis truly represent the phenomenon under investigation (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003, p. 100).

This study assessed the content validity of the research instruments to be used, including questionnaires, interview schedules, and FGD preset question guides. This was established in two ways. The first step was to consult senior academic lecturers from the Department of Educational Foundations, the supervisors of this study, and colleagues, who were asked to make similar assessments. Their feedback was used to affirm and improve the instruments. Second, a pilot study was conducted in one selected

school in the study region to test and improve validity.

Regarding the interview guides, at least three pupils, one head teacher, and two class teachers were selected for the pilot study. One focus group discussion was conducted at Sogoo to test the validity of the preset FGD question guides. These participants and respondents were not included in the final study.

### **3.5.6 Reliability**

Reliability measures how consistent test results are (Kombo & Tromp, 2006, p. 97). The researcher used the test-retest method to assess reliability. Two schools from the study area were selected. Questionnaires were distributed to participants for response, and responses were scored manually. After 10 days, the same questionnaires were given to the same participants, their responses were scored again, and the scores were compared between the first and second administrations. The results from the two schools were correlated using the Spearman-Brown formula, which produced a correlation coefficient of 0.82.

### **3.6. Data Analysis**

Data analysis involves critically examining the coded data and making inferences (Kombo & Tromp, 2006, p. 117). Data from the questionnaires were analyzed through the following steps: first, data points were checked for errors such as improperly answered questions and misspelt words. Second, after correcting those errors, the data were sorted by variables like sex, age, and school. Third, the data were coded, tabulated, and processed using the statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS). Although minimal, the quantitative data collected in the study were presented in tables displaying frequencies and percentages.

Data from interviews and focus group discussions were analyzed through a systematic process: first, field notes were taken daily during data collection. Second, the collected data were reviewed for in-depth analysis. Third, the data were sorted by sex, age, occupation, and class of participants. The fourth step involved re-sorting the data concerning research questions on: reasons for continuance, process, school attendance, school dropout, and early marriages. Fifth, the data were coded by source and thematic area to facilitate analysis. The sixth step involved processing the data. For presentation and discussion, the processed data were transferred to Microsoft Word, printed, rearranged, and incorporated into the study's findings section.

### **3.7 Logistical Considerations**

A written authority to carry out the study was requested from the Department of Education, the Foundations of Kenyatta University, the District Education Officer, the headteachers, and the Zone Educational Officer.

### **3.8 Ethical Considerations**

Consent was obtained from all respondents, parents of the underage, and participants.

No coercion of any kind was used on the participants, and they could withdraw at any time. Anonymity and confidentiality were strictly protected.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION OF DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 4.0. Introduction

This chapter provides an analysis, results, discussions, and a summary of the key findings regarding the effects of FGM/C on primary school girls from the Ogiek community in Sogoo location, Narok South District, Kenya. The study included interviews with 3 head teachers and 46 primary school girls in grades six to eight from the Ogiek community. Additionally, questionnaires were completed by 9 class teachers from the three selected primary schools. Three focus group discussions involved 8 men and 16 women aged 25 to 40 years from the Ogiek community. The research aimed to address specific questions based on its objectives.

What are the reasons that contribute to the continued practice of FGM/C among the Ogiek community living in Sogoo location?

What is the current process that allows members of the Ogiek community in Sogoo location to perpetuate FGM/C and its activities despite it being outlawed?

How does FGM/C influence the school attendance of primary school girls from the Ogiek community in Sogoo location?

How does FGM/C contribute to dropouts and early marriages in primary school girls from the Ogiek community in Sogoo location?

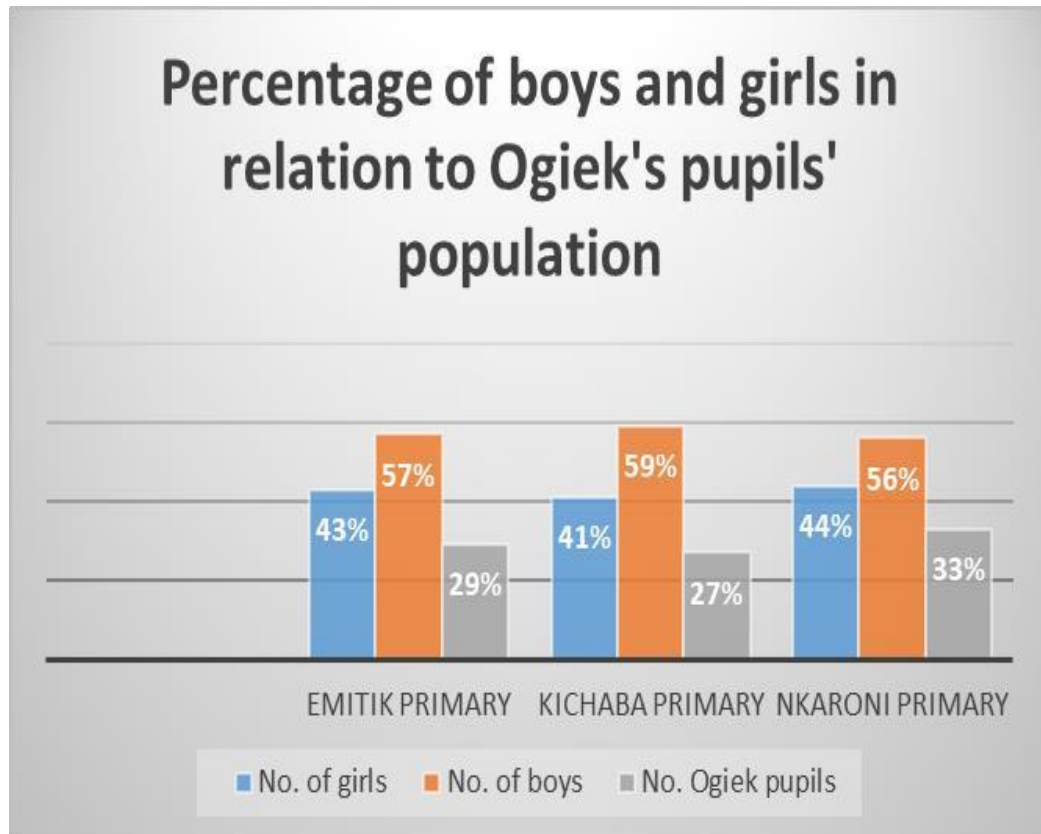
## **4.1 RESEARCH FINDINGS**

### **Introduction**

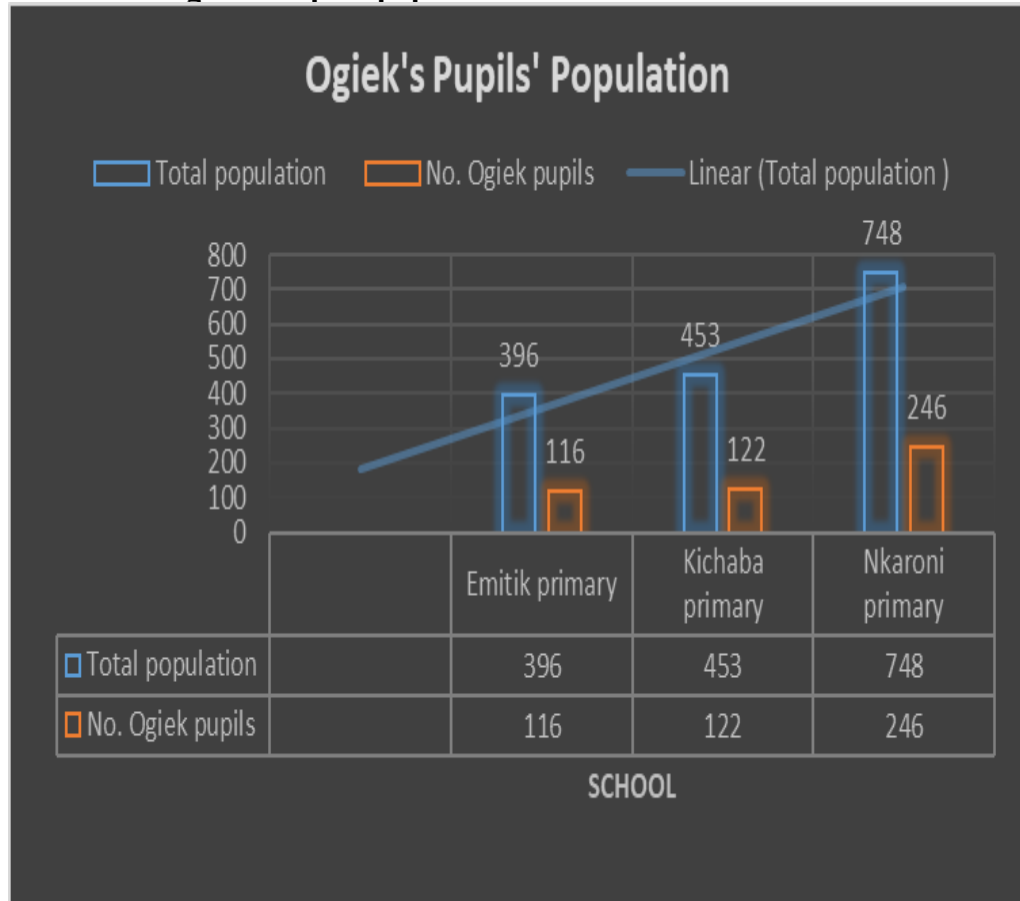
These research findings are discussed in relation to research questions derived from the study's research problem. This analysis method demonstrates that all research questions have been answered using the collected data. It also provides demographic information about the study, highlighting the characteristics of the selected schools, class teachers, pupils, focus group participants, and head teachers.

#### **4.2.1 Enrolment in the Selected Schools**

The study was conducted in three selected public primary schools in the Sogoo area. It involved 9 class teachers, 3 head teachers, and 46 girls from the Ogiek community in grades six to eight. The data collected is summarized in the table below.

**Table 4.1: Enrolment by gender in selected schools**

Source: Fieldwork

**Table 4.2 : Ogiek's Pupils' population**

The largest number of girls sampled was at Nkaroni Primary School, which is the most populous school in Sogoo location. Coincidentally, it also had the highest number of pupils from the Ogiek community. Although Sogoo location is home to the largest Ogiek population in Narok County (OPDP, 2011), Table 4.1 above shows that Ogiek pupils make up only 29.6%. Additionally, regarding the Ogiek population, the study found that the influx of other communities into Sogoo has caused the Ogiek's linguistic

identity to decline rapidly due to assimilation, especially by the Kipsigis. From the table above, it is clear that the population of girls is generally lower than that of boys. This suggests that certain factors contribute to lower enrollment or retention of girls in school.

#### **4.2.2 Profile of head teachers**

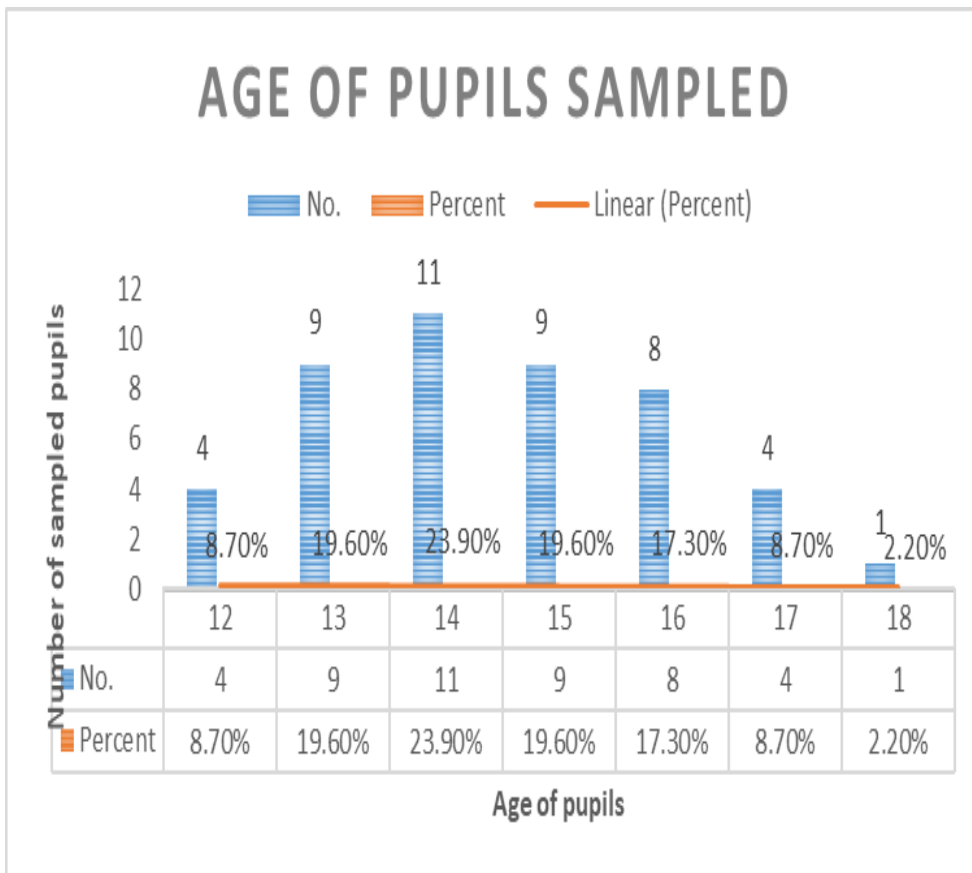
This study aimed to gather background information about the sampled head teachers. This information was essential because the researcher sought insight into head teachers' knowledge of the Ogiek community within their schools' catchment areas. Two of the three selected head teachers held P1 qualifications. One of them had a Bachelor of Education degree. Two had worked at the same station for more than five years, while one had worked there for less than five years.

##### Teachers profile

Among the 9 teachers sampled for the study, only one was female. One was under 25, three were between 26 and 30, and five were over 31. At the time of this research, five teachers had more than 5 years of experience at a single station, while 4 had less than 4 years.

##### Pupils age

The study sought to find out the ages of selected girls from the sampled schools, this was necessary because FGM/C and its activities in the Ogiek is targeted on specific age categories.

**Table: 4.3. Age of pupils sampled**

Source: Field Work.

As shown in Table 4.3 above, 80.4% of girls interviewed in grades six to eight were between the ages of 13 and 16 years. There were 8.7% of girls aged 17 in both classes eight and seven. One claimed to be 18 years old. This may suggest that the pupils might have delayed enrollment, or that, because most of their parents are illiterate, they may

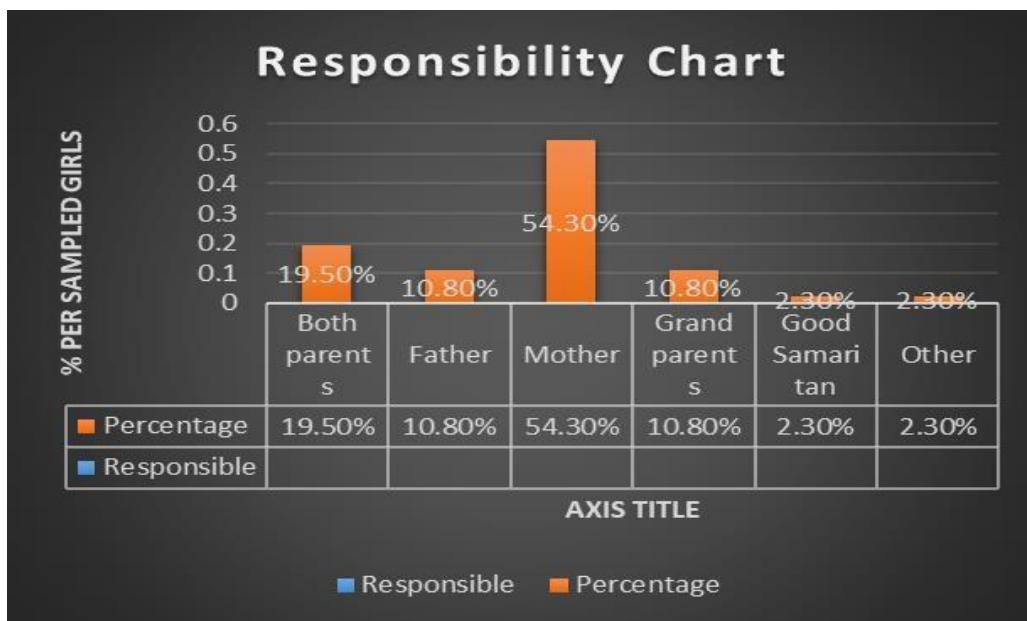
not accurately know their children's actual ages.

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### 4.2.3 Parents' Education Status and Responsibility

The study aimed to identify the person or people responsible for the pupils' educational needs. The results are summarised in the table below.

Table 4.3: Person (s) responsible for girls' needs in school



Source: Fieldwork

Fifty-four per cent of the girls surveyed stated their mothers were responsible for their school needs, while 10.8% said their fathers were in charge. Nearly 20% indicated that both parents shared responsibility for their school necessities. Additionally, 15% of the girls reported that their parents had delegated their responsibilities to grandparents, good Samaritans, or other concerned individuals. Although there are instances of

extreme poverty and natural disasters, the study revealed that some Ogiek parents were simply irresponsible in providing for their children.

From the above, it is evident that more mothers than fathers are responsible for their girls' needs at school. This may suggest that, although most mothers were illiterate (see table 4.4), they were more supportive of their daughters' education than the girls' fathers. Another key conclusion is that gender roles in the patriarchal Ogiek community are well-defined, and women tend to be more concerned with female children due to their shared similarities. Additionally, it might imply that Ogiek fathers are more frequently irresponsible regarding their daughters' needs.

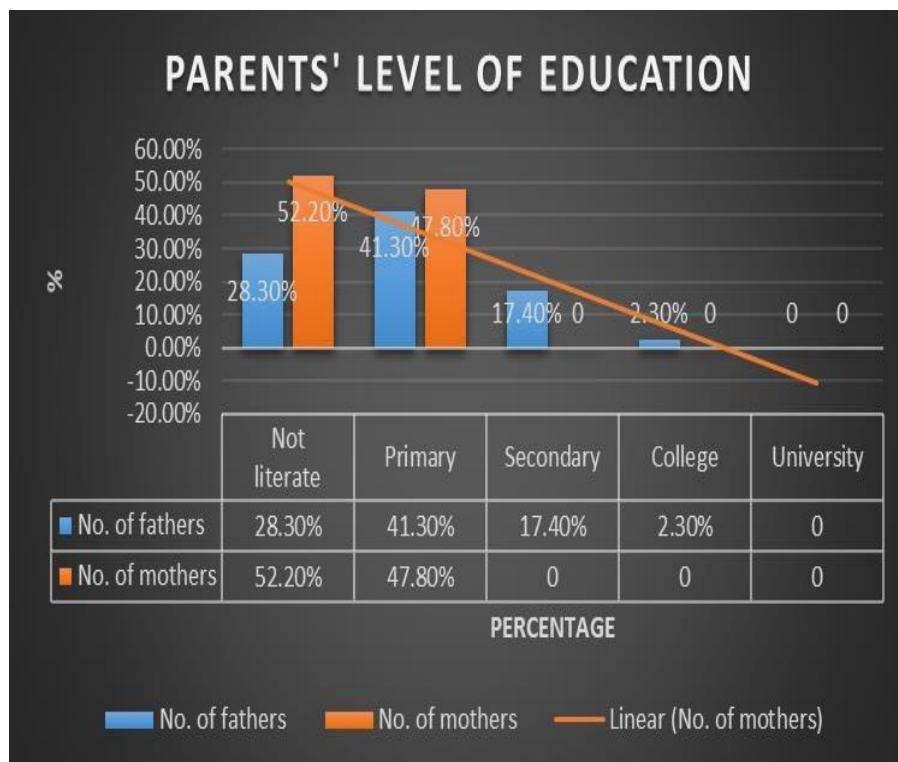
#### **4.2.4 Members of Focus Group Discussion**

The total number of FGD participants was 16 women and 8 men from the Ogiek community. All of them were married at the time of the study. Among women, 68.8% were illiterate. Only 25% had a primary school education, and just 6.25% had a secondary education. In the men's FGD, 75% had primary education. Only 12.5% had secondary education, and 12.5% were illiterate.

#### 4.2.5 Parents Level of Education

The current study sought to investigate the highest level attained by parents of the girls interviewed. The results are summarized below.

Table 4.4: Parental level of education



**Source:** Fieldwork

Of the 46 pupils sampled, 28.3% reported that their fathers were illiterate. Forty-one per cent reported that their fathers had a primary-level education. Surprisingly, only one claimed that her father had college qualifications. None (0%) reported that her father had a university education. Of the girls interviewed, 52% reported that their mothers were illiterate. The total number of girls who reported that their mothers had a primary school education was 47.8%. Surprisingly, no girl (0%) reported that her mother had

gone beyond the primary level.

In relation to the information above, the study established that, though illiteracy levels are high in the Ogiek community, women are affected the most. These findings confirm the results of Ohenjo (2006:6), who states that, despite the government's efforts to improve educational status in Kenya, illiteracy levels among the Ogiek, especially women, remain very high.

The education of parents was an important aspect of this study because an uneducated parent might not see much value in education, especially for a girl. This fact is reflected by the willingness of a parent not to subject his or her daughter to FGM/C and let her continue with education. Furthermore, an illiterate mother may not be a role model to her daughter or assist the child with any type of learning, which could be a continuation of what is learnt at school or even discourage her from cultural practices that could lead her to drop out of school and early marriage. More so, high levels of illiteracy in women may indicate that women's education is not a priority in this patriarchal society.

#### **4. 3. REASONS FOR PERPETUATION OF FGM/C AMONG THE OGIEK COMMUNITY**

Before discussing the effects of FGM/C on Ogiek primary school girls, it was essential for this study to explore the reasons given by this community to justify continuing the practice. Reasons for maintaining FGM/C are numerous (WHO, 1997, p. 3). Some of the main reasons provided by the Ogiek are discussed below:

### **4.3.1 To increase Marriage Prospects.**

One of the main reasons for FGM/C among the Ogiek is to improve girls' marriage prospects. As the saying goes, 'Marriage does not come easily without sacrifice.' Therefore, Ogiek girls must sacrifice part of their bodies and education to 'qualify' for marriage. This supports the principles of functionalist theory, which states that 'rewards in terms of prestige, status, or power must be provided for people to carry out what is required of them' (Wolf & Wallace, 1986). The study found that failing to marry can have harmful social consequences for both the individual and their family within this patriarchal community. Interestingly, the research also revealed that the majority of women who participated supported FGM/C as a necessary step for marriage. This sentiment is reflected in procession songs sung by women after leaving seclusion, where they compare these social distinctions using metaphors: girls become 'heifers' to be given in marriage or stolen through elopement, while boys are seen as 'young lions'.

The findings of this study largely show that Ogiek girls are motivated to undergo FGM/C to improve their marriage prospects. For example, during an interview, one of the girls explained that: No man will want to marry a girl who has not undergone FGM/C. Usually, a man will ask the girl to go through the FGM/C process before marrying her. These findings are similar to those observed by UNFPA (2010), which indicate that FGM/C persists because it is sustained by social perceptions, including that the girls and their families will face shame, social exclusion, and diminished marriage prospects if they forego the cutting.

The research found that men in this community are unwilling to marry women who have not undergone FGM/C. This is due to the traditional belief that she will not behave

well during marriage and will not know how to care for her husband. This belief is so deeply rooted that a man is considered a failure if he marries a woman who has not undergone FGM/C. This clearly indicates that men play a significant role in maintaining FGM/C. A similar trend was observed by Gathiri (2004), who noted that men in practicing communities insist that the women they plan to marry undergo FGM/C. For example, in focus group discussions with men, one of them pointed out that:

During my prime marriage age, it was impossible to imagine a man of my age in his right senses marrying a woman who had not undergone FGM/C. My siblings and I had to marry the ones who had undergone the rite..... things are changing nowadays. At that time, it was really dishonourable.

This research also showed that some parents from the Ogiek community force their children to undergo FGM/C so they can get married. This mostly happens when the girl comes from a poor household. Their parents push them to do so to ease the economic burden, which can become complicated if the girl stays home and has children. This aligns with the findings of EL-Defrawi (2001), who observed that FGM/C is seen as a way to protect women, as it is believed to safeguard women from pre-marital promiscuity, pre-marital pregnancy, and also safeguard their future economic survival by reducing the risk of absolute poverty. For example, a 15-year-old student at one of the selected schools stated that:

Our parents will force us to undergo FGM/C because they want us to get married. They will not allow us to stay and have children because a big portion of our farm has been sold to Kipsigis, and what remains is not even enough for my brothers.

#### **4.3.2 Identity and Fear of Stigmatization**

The findings of this study support the idea that social pressures in communities where most women undergo FGM/C create an environment where the practice becomes a requirement for women's identity and social acceptance, thus ensuring its continuation

(Centre for Reproductive Rights [CPR], 2003, P.10). This view was reinforced by one of the girls interviewed, who claimed that:

Girls want to do what others are doing. If women from my village, clan, and sisters are doing it, then one is not special not to do what is required to be done.... no woman will wish to associate with anyone who has abstained from FGM/C.

The study found that gender inflected versions of cultural identity are core to Ogiek women's initiation activities. Though it will be discussed in depth later in this work, the FGM/C process among the Ogiek involves many top-secret rituals, which are revealed to initiates as they progress through the process to the end of seclusion. Identity is gained when young women emerge from seclusion and enter the sphere of adult gender relations through marriage. If a woman has forgone the practice, she is isolated by others because of the notion that she does not fit to be with 'adults.' The aspect of gender identity through knowledge of the process of FGM/C was explicitly expressed, especially by women's FGD. For instance, one of the women claimed that:

It is bad to visualise that you don't know what other women know about the secrets of the tribe because you fail to undergo FGM/C. You really feel isolated in mind and women's groupings...you know they also talk, and one can easily become an object of gossip if she has skipped FGM/C.

The researcher observed that when a parent is unwilling to subject her daughter to FGM/C, such parents are strongly opposed by older community members. These findings align with the DHS (2010, P.6) results, which indicate that although the national prevalence of FGM/C in Kenya is declining, a major obstacle remains the older generation, who still believe that FGM/C is a valuable tradition. Despite numerous socio-cultural indicators of maturity in today's world, older women in this community still think that a woman must undergo FGM/C to be considered dignified. This

perspective was shared by a 16-year-old schoolgirl who recalled an incident that happened about two years ago, at the time of this investigation. Her classmate from a single-parent family was almost subjected to FGM/C by her paternal grandmother, even when her Christian, devoted mother objected.

From FGD discussions, the study further established that the initiation process unites and bonds the girls throughout their lives. The process of FGM/C makes initiates feel a sense of belonging and identify with a group that highly respects one another and forms a close-knit social network. The level of respect can surpass that which is demanded by one's parents. Such companionship lasts a lifetime, and the bond is only broken by death. This is because, as colleagues of initiation, they have undergone similar rituals, vows, and sometimes painful or torturous experiences. In the Ogiek community, partners in initiation for both boys and girls are treated as brothers and sisters, respectively. Girls call themselves "pamwa" and boys "pakule," which means coequals. The mention of these terms by two individuals automatically commands respect, and a curse is cast upon anyone who breaches it.

#### **4.3.2 Social Cleansing**

The research found that some FGM/C activities are carried out for social cleansing and sometimes for religious reasons. Three out of nine teachers interviewed mentioned social cleansing as one of the reasons why the Ogiek still support FGM/C. Although it did not appear in the pupils' interviews, probably because of its abstract nature, it clearly resurfaced when members of the FGD were asked to describe the process of FGM/C. Both men and women in the FGD mentioned a ceremony called Pesenwek (settling social debts) that occurs just before excision. Pesenwek involves girls going through a period of confession where they openly admit wrongs committed against

parents, elders, and rude responses given to boys during their sexual advances. Members of the FGD also negatively mentioned the existence of a shrine (mabwaita) constructed on the eve of the operation; this is where religious cleansing ceremonies are performed to purify the novices. For instance, one of the women in the FGD affirmed that:

Secret rituals that accompany FGM/C ceremonies are meant to transform a child into an adult and cast away the unclean part of her. This will enable her to have children and take care of her family well because she has become a person (chito).

The results above align with the findings of Chebet (2007:8), who established that FGM/C activities among the Elgeyo, a Kalenjin dialect group, focus on various aspects of female genitalia and reproduction. The taboo that a woman is not considered fit for childbirth until she undergoes FGM/C is still widely maintained. Members of the focus group discussion expressed that there is a social cleansing ceremony called pited (spraying beer) performed to bless the initiates. For them, this ceremony is led by a respected male ritual leader called boiyot ab tumndo (old man of the ritual). This ritual is specifically meant to make the initiates pure and enable them to have children.

#### **4.2.2 Passage of Rite**

Based on FGDs, interviews, and teachers' questionnaires, the study found that the Ogiek support the continuation of FGM/C because it serves as a way to teach customs and perform rituals that mark the transition of children into adults. In other words, the transition from childhood to adulthood is ceremonially recognized. It became clear that, according to the Ogiek, a girl becomes an adult by cultural standards after undergoing FGM/C. These findings align with those of Kratz (2010:334), who states that adulthood is reached when all secrets are finally shared, as initiates move from seclusion into everyday life with a new status.

During FGD discussions, women were asked if they could isolate the educational aspect of the FGM/C process from the physical cutting. Surprisingly, most argued that it is their tradition and the two aspects are inseparable. The reason for this was unclear, but it may relate to the fact that excision is a prerequisite for cultural teachings, and a girl cannot be exposed to aspects of adulthood before the cut.

Men and women in the FGD expressed that FGM/C is solely intended to prepare young girls for adulthood. One woman, for example, said: *FGM/C activities help a girl grow, teach her, and make her a woman.* The explanation was consistent with comments made by a senior female teacher who was later interviewed on behalf of a head teacher from one of the selected schools. She stated that FGM/C is a rite intended to alter the natural course through 'supernatural means' by transforming a child into an adult within a month. This research produces results consistent with Orchardson's (1974) findings, an ethnographic study among the Kipsigis, the dialect most closely related to the Ogiek among the Kalenjin. He asserts that: *Initiation is considered rebirth, of which circumcision is the outward sign... during initiation, they are supposed to discard childish ways to learn to control their feelings and behave in a way superior to that followed by the uninitiated.*

#### **4.4 PROCESS OF FGM/C AMONG THE OGIEK**

Before discussing the effect of FGM/C on primary school girls from the Ogiek community, it was essential for this study to examine the current process and the way FGM/C activities have evolved to avoid law enforcement. As Kratz (2010, P.44) explains, before the ban, Ogiek initiation ceremonies were complex cultural performances, often dramatic and compelling. Most importantly, it should be noted that FGM/C activities have not been eradicated in this community but still operate underground (OWEP, 2011).

From FGDs, the study found that the surgical operation was only the first part of a series of secret ceremonies held during the period of seclusion. To date, details of these secrets are kept strictly confidential, and any breach is met with the curse of death, which the Ogiek still have complete faith in. Among the Kalenjin, a man is never supposed to know what happens during girls' secret initiation ceremonies, and vice versa (Orchardson, 1974). Even husband and wife never reveal the procedures to each other (Orchardson, 1974). From men's and women's FGD, it became clear that revealing details of secret initiation ceremonies remains taboo. For example, women might stop any further discussion on sensitive ritual secrets by saying *makimwai tum* (never disclose secrets of initiation), and if they are not careful, it could seriously affect the rapport built for future dialogue. To provide a comparison, before discussing its current process, it is important to describe the steps involved in the Ogiek women's archetypal initiation ceremonies.

#### 4.4.1 Preparation for FGM/C

The research found that initiation is an important time in the life of the Ogiek. Not only is it a critical point for the initiates, but for every member of the society. These ceremonies are usually held only once a year in November and December. Men, women, and children participate either in preparing for the ceremonies or in the dances. More importantly, it is also a time when women, in this patriarchal society, have the freedom to participate in ceremonial rituals that they almost entirely control.

According to FGD women, the first ceremony involved extensive preparations by the girls, parents, clan members, brothers, and all concerned community members. Preparing for both

#### 4.2.2 The Eve of Excision

boys' and girls' events required significant money, effort, and planning. For some parents, it could take a whole year of saving and organizing. Brothers and fathers went to the forest to gather honey for brewing and to find a cow to feed the invited guests. A lot of honey, beer *rootik*, and *busaa* maize beer were made for the occasion as a sign of friendship and fellowship. The girl's brothers arranged dance costumes. Parents discussed and chose *matirinik* (ritual leaders). All families involved consulted and planned to hold a single ceremony, though some went ahead with separate ceremonies. Young men and other community members helped decorate the house and cut trees for firewood. It is somewhat surprising that a suitor for the girl is also allowed to help with the preparations.

The research established that excision (the removal of the clitoris and labia majora), called *Kepa tumdo* by the Ogiek, is a ceremony performed before seclusion begins. The

Kepa tumdo ceremony starts early in the day. Between 7 and 9 a.m., the candidates and young people go to the forest to collect a special shrub called koorosek, which is used to make a shrine (mabwaita) at their homestead. A bonfire is lit on the east side of the shrine, where dances are performed just before excision. A black-and-white Columbus monkey-skin sewn onto a frame (*munyawa*) is placed on the girls' arms. They use whistles, leg bells, and flywhisks to accompany their dance movements. The dance takes place in an open area, with whistles and leg bells setting the rhythm. According to FGD men, the songs and dances were very exciting; for the young and old, to many this was the moment to let themselves loose.

#### **4.4.1 Excision (*kepa tumdo*)**

Information on *Kepa tumdo* is highly sensitive and confidential. Therefore, it could not be clearly identified by the respondents and participants. Some of the information given here comes from the researcher's firsthand observations.

After the dance around 3 in the morning, the girls gathered in a single house to eat, followed by *cherset* (words of encouragement). According to FGD discussions, *cherset* was performed by both men and women present. At this point, excision (removal of the clitoris and labia majora) was imminent, and its mood was set through *cherset*. At dawn, when the *chemosian*, the surgeon, was ready, the girls made a procession three times around the shrine *Mabwaita* while blowing whistles. A ring of adult men and women formed around the girls. The atmosphere was very tense, and total silence prevailed. The girls, who were now naked from the waist down, sat on ready leaves. Women sitting behind them spread their legs wide open. A man holding a spear stood in front of the girls, threatening them that if they showed cowardice, they would be stabbed.

The initiates were supposed to open their eyes wide without blinking and focus on the

man, not on the surgeon's actions. The surgeon, wearing a ceremonial beaded dress made of leather called *ntetut*, put a little flour on the girls' genitals to firmly grip their clitoris and labia majora before cutting them. This experience is extremely painful for the girls, and in most cases, after this moment, most of them collapse, while some remain in total shock. Most got up with some form of assistance, legs apart, blood dripping, and some were completely unable to walk. Any novice who showed signs of cowardice was ridiculed and called *chepitee* (one who failed excision). In its context of use, this derogatory name is indeed exceedingly offensive.

If the girls were brave, the women ululated with joy, jumped wildly in celebration, danced, and praised their family and clan. The novices were tied with *sinendet* (a sacred vine common among contemporary Kalenjin athletes) to symbolise the girls' success. Men danced in a line singing their celebration song, *Riret* (sea). Maize beer, *busaa*, or honey beer, *rotik*, was then served to women and men in their respective rooms to revel as long as they desired. Contrary to the girls hurting in pain because of the fresh cut, for others, this marked the beginning of merry-making, which lasted several hours and even days. People danced, sang, ate, and drank to celebrate the girls' success.

#### **4.4.3 Seclusion and Ceremonies Involved**

##### ***Lapet ab eun***

The study found that *Kelap eun* (*v*) (dipping hands in water) was the first seclusion ceremony performed for both boys and girls. According to FGD, men and women, this ceremony was mainly intended to cleanse the initiates and allow them to wash their hands, which they had previously been forbidden to do. It took place three weeks after the operation, when all their genitalia had healed, and wounds resembled nearly dry scars.

The *Lapet ab eun* (n) ceremony marked the end of complete seclusion and severe uncleanliness for the girls. Before this ritual, the initiates could neither touch food with their hands nor light a fire. They used leaves and sticks to eat. These findings support Kratz's (2010, P.308) report of similar outcomes. According to focus group discussions with men and women, the purpose of the *lapet ab eun* was to allow initiates to touch things, because before then they were considered unclean and believed to pass their uncleanliness to others. After this ceremony, the girls found a secluded bush near their house where they could sit, sew ornaments, and make clothes. At this time, daily singing began. They sang a song called *Chelimen* every morning and evening.

***Ketuitos sumuusyek***

The research established that the second major ritual was *Ketuitos sumuusyek* (connecting the inner rooms). This secret ritual was performed after the *kalap eun* ceremony. These findings affirm the results reported by Kratz (2010, p. 308). The ceremony derives its name from the words *kituiyo*, meaning 'bring together', and *suum*, meaning 'inner room'. As the name indicates, initiates in a village or sub-location were gathered in a specific house. This ritual was conducted in one of the houses where the girls resided. What the initiates were taught in their respective houses and kept secret was shared at a designated place. During this ceremony, the initiates were shown women's secrets and their knowledge of song was once again tested. After this event, restrictions and activities commenced from the *kelap eun* ceremony. They were expected to, for example, sing daily, conceal themselves from adult men, and smear their bodies with white clay called *inturotoit*. Information obtained from FGD revealed two possible reasons for this: one was to disguise themselves, and the other was the symbolic meaning of being wild creatures. The initiates had to undergo all the rituals to be transformed from 'wild cows' into 'heifers' ready to be taken away in marriage.

***Tienjinet ritual (singing to them)***

Another ceremony that followed *ketuitos sumusyek* was the *tienjinet* (singing to them) ceremony, which involved teaching customary norms and women's secrets. These findings align with Kratz (2010, p. 309). The research found that the name of this ceremony came from the features of a song (*tiendo*), which needs a steady beat created by repetition to have rhythm. In fact, to make the many customary teachings clear, they were repeated like refrains in a song. For boys, corporal punishment might be used as part of teaching customary norms. A bundle of tied-together *korosek* shrubs was used to punish those who did not pay attention during the lessons. According to the men's FGD, only those directly involved in initiation participated. The main goal of this ceremony was to reinforce the teachings shared during the period of seclusion. For example, during seclusion, there should be no anger, quarrels, or abusive language. Good behavior and kindness were strongly emphasized. *Chelimen* was the name of the ceremony song, which the initiates sang in the morning and evening to accompany these rituals.

***Kelongunen oinet (coming out of the river)***

The research noted that *Kelongunen ouinet* (coming out of the river) is the final ritual performed to mark the end of FGM/C seclusion among Ogiek girls. Like all secret seclusion ceremonies, this also began in the evening. Again, men were not allowed to witness this ceremony. *Kayantaaita* was a song that accompanied the rituals of this event. According to Kratz (2010, P.334), this ceremony arguably reached its climax

when the last woman's secret, *chemosit* (ogre), was revealed. Late at night, the initiates received a final lecture on proper behaviour for adult women, including respecting others, staying at home, not roaming for men, and other norms. The speech was often loud and harsh. They were also told to keep women's secrets and warned that a curse would kill them if they disclosed any. The following day, the initiates were taken to the river (*Kepa ainet*) to bathe for the first time since seclusion began.

The last part of this ritual took place in the morning. It involved girls and the ritual leaders forming a procession as they came from the river through an archway erected for the occasion. Women and the initiates were to march around the shrine *mabwaita*, and each time around, the initiates were sprayed with *busaa* maize beer as a form of blessing. The procession returned to the cycle *mabwaita* while elders blessed the initiates. Lastly, a silent procession of novices and *motirenik* (ritual leaders) to a house where the initiates will sleep marked the end of the FGM/C process among the Ogiek.

#### **4.4.4 CHANGES IN FGM/C ACTIVITIES**

Human societies are dynamic and continuously evolving. The Ogiek community has also experienced significant changes. Over time, both the process and significance of FGM/C have shifted within this group. In recent years, certain aspects of FGM/C have either changed or disappeared in response to broader social and cultural transformations.

The second objective of this study was to investigate how the Ogiek community has transformed FGM/C activities to survive laws banning it. This is mainly because the practice has been outlawed by Kenyan law, including Section 14 of the Children's Act of 2001, provisions 234 and 251 of the penal code, articles 53 (d) and 55 (d) of the Kenyan constitution (GoK, 2010, pp. 38-39), and the FGM/C bill of 2010. This research

found that, although illegal, FGM/C among the Ogiek still flourishes underground.

The study revealed that all previously open aspects of FGM/C have now shifted to clandestine activities. These findings support the assertion by Manedeleo Ya Wanawake Organisation (MYWO, 1994) that criminalising FGM/C in Kenya has driven the practice underground, thereby complicating efforts to eliminate it.

The Ogiek reside in areas surrounding the Mau forest, which provides a setting conducive to the continuation of FGM/C. Interviews with girls indicated that FGM/C is often conducted in temporary shelters within the forest. Many respondents identified Kondeiyo, a large region in East Southern Mau, as a location where girls undergo FGM/C during November and December. A good number of them mentioned a place called Kondeiyo, where girls are taken to undergo FGM/C in the months of November and December. Kondeiyo is a vast region in East Southern Mau, which has been invaded by squatters. During the Mau restoration, evictions were carried out here in 2005 and 2008. However, thousands of squatters still inhabit the region. They include the Kipsigis, the Ogiek, and a few Kisii. It is a wide area covering hundreds of hectares, with no schools, chief camps, or any form of government administration. Therefore, it is not surprising to note that illegal activities like FGM/C are done here unabated.

Another significant finding identified by the current study concerns the roles of grandmothers in maintaining FGM/C practices. Grandmothers, particularly those residing in remote homesteads, significantly contribute to the continuation of FGM/C. This viewpoint was primarily expressed by the head teachers and pupils interviewed.

One head teacher, for example, said:

FGM/C is left for grandmothers to complete... a girl is sent under the pretence of visiting her grandmother, where they perform the procedure and allow her to recover for a few days. You see, girls are not like boys; they don't take long to recover. After a few days, she'll be seen chatting with women as if nothing has happened.

One unexpected finding was the cooperation of government officials, such as chiefs, in

perpetuating FGM/C. Kenya is internationally recognised for widespread corruption, which often benefits wrongdoers at the expense of those with little power and rights (Lumumba, 2010). A girl claimed that assistant chiefs, village elders, or even the chief himself can be bribed to stay silent about FGM/C activities. This claim was also supported by a head teacher who observed that:

Some of these people in the government are part of the community, and it is not surprising that some of them support the practice of belonging and avoiding backlash from their community... chai (bribe) is known to make things smooth and keep FGM/C activities successful.

Furthermore, results of this study indicate that some girls are married before undergoing FGM/C, and then, because it is a requirement that they undergo it in their matrimonial homes or during delivery. In most cases, their matrimonial homes also provide a safe haven for such activities. For instance, one of the men in FGD observed that:

FGM/C in marriage is gaining popularity, and soon this is what may be adopted because no one makes any squabble on what somebody does to his wife while another one claims that some of these girls who are married before going through FGM/C undergo it during delivery because of the belief that a 'child' is not supposed to beget a child.

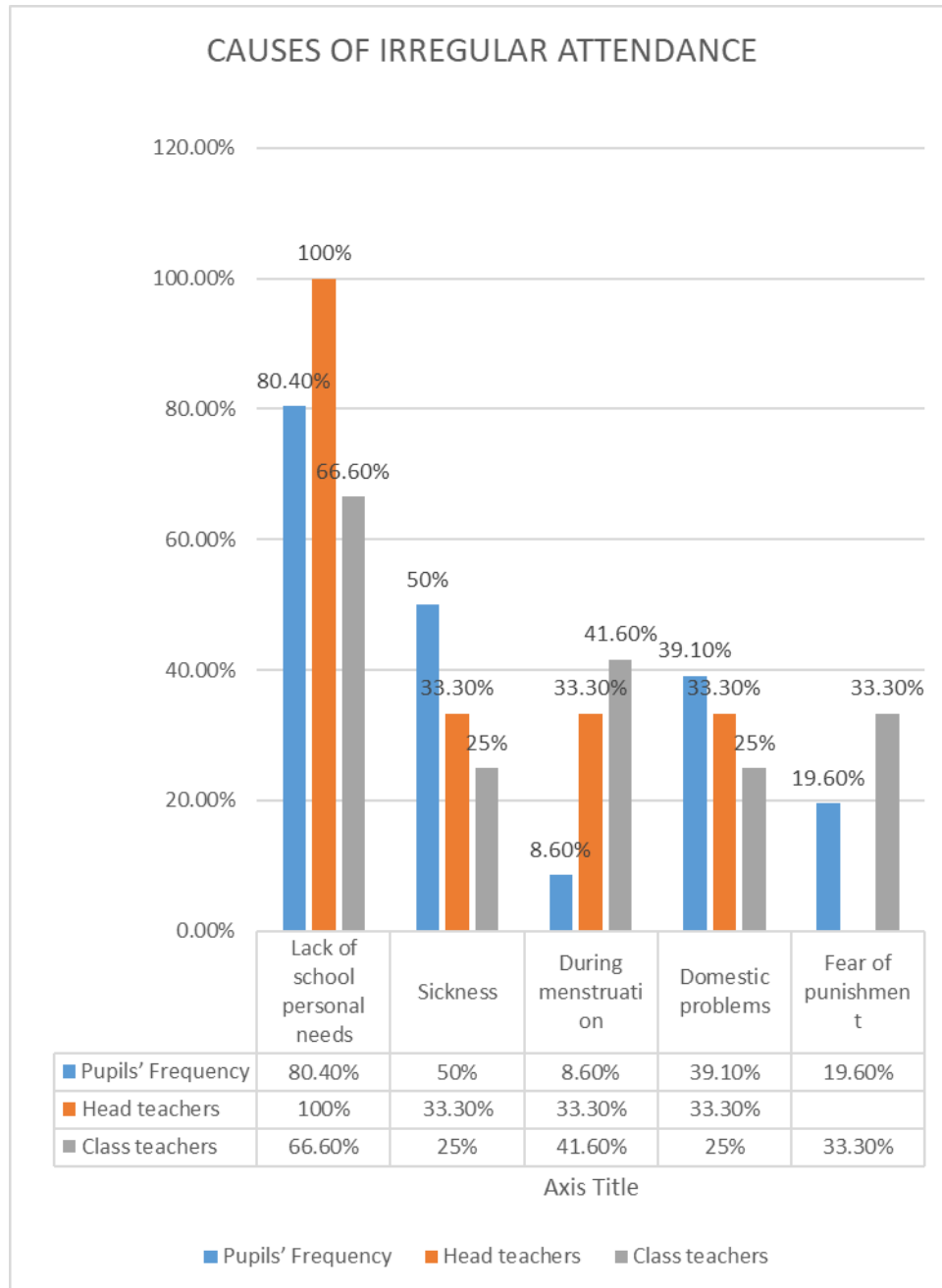
From the interviews, questionnaires, and FGD, all sampled individuals agreed that, despite the practice being illegal, its activities still thrive underground. The study found that all respondents and participants recognised that the Ogiek continue the practice, just as they recognise other prohibited activities. For example, one of the head teachers stated:

Nowadays, we don't see grand festivities like before... they know it is illegal and take the necessary precautions. There are not many activities supporting girls' ceremonies like there were about three years ago... but let no one deceive you, the prevalence is still very high. Probably what was lost is the ceremonies that used to accompany the practice.

### 4.5 SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Before discussing the connection between FGM/C and poor school attendance, the study first needed to identify other factors that cause girls from the Ogiek community to attend school inconsistently.

Table 4.7: Reasons for irregular school attendance



Source: Fieldwork

As shown in the table above, this study found that 80.4% of the girls interviewed, 100% of the head teachers, and 66.6% of the class teachers reported that Ogiek girls might skip school due to unmet personal needs, such as a lack of school uniforms.

Although sickness was not listed as a reason for Ogiek girls dropping out of school, it was cited as a factor affecting irregular school attendance. For example, 50% of the pupils interviewed identified this as a reason why some Ogiek girls fail to attend school. This research found that 41.6% of the teachers interviewed reported that some girls skip school during menstruation. These findings align with those of PATH (2010), which noted that the costs of sanitary protection also contribute to higher educational barriers for girls compared to boys. Because of its sensitivity, only 8.6% of the girls interviewed mentioned menstruation as a reason they might miss school. This also suggests that normal menstruation was not a problem for them, especially since, at the time of the study, the government was piloting a project that provided free sanitary towels to primary schools in Narok South District. As a result, lack of menstrual pads—which can hinder school attendance—was not an issue for these girls then. Additionally, 39% of the girls admitted that they could skip school due to domestic issues such as parental conflicts. 19% of the girls and 33.3% of the teachers cited fear of punishment as a reason Ogiek girls might skip school.

This research found poverty to be one of the major reasons making girl pupils from the Ogiek skip school. The results of this study concur with the findings of UNICEF (2008, p. 8), which assert that, even when school fees are not formally charged, the cost of education, including school uniforms, pens, books, and evaluation test fees, can be prohibitive for some parents from poor households. Faced with severe poverty, the study found that the Ogiek often send their school-going girls and boys to help augment

household income or assist their parents on farms. For some families, even putting food on the table is a challenge. Such parents keep their children out of school to engage in activities that seem to yield immediate results. This observation was supported by a woman member of the FGD, who remarked: *Some parents absent their children from school to help relieve work pressure at home... they see that school does not provide an immediate solution to domestic and economic problems at hand.*

This study also found that being a girl from a minority group in a marginalised community presents challenges because girls' motivation to pursue education is influenced by societal factors and, more significantly, by their illiterate parents. As shown in the demographic characteristics table, the Ogiek have a very high illiteracy rate of 4:4. These results confirm the findings of Ohenjo (2006, p.6), who stated that the illiteracy rate among the Ogiek, particularly women, is very high. As indicated by Sifuna and Chege (2006, p.42), adult literacy plays a crucial role in shaping parental attitudes towards girls' education. All three interviewed headteachers noted that Ogiek girls attend school irregularly because their parents lack interest in their education. Such parents tend to keep their children at a distance and focus on their own needs or the community rather than on their children's educational needs. For example, one of the headteachers claimed that: *the majority of Ogiek parents do not care if their children attend school or not because most of them are illiterate and attach less value to education, especially for girls.*

#### **4.5.2 Effects of FGM/C On School Attendance**

This study aimed to determine whether the persistence of FGM/C is linked to poor school attendance among girls in the Ogiek community. The findings indicated that girls who undergo FGM/C often have irregular school attendance because they are

psychologically affected, facing teasing, satire, disdain, or mockery from their classmates. This occurs because they are viewed as backward for participating in a 'primitive' cultural practice. Thanks to widespread campaigns to eradicate this tradition in the district, awareness among school children about the negative effects of FGM/C has increased. The study also revealed that this community is in transition, with people holding mixed opinions about the significance of FGM/C. This leads some girls from the Ogiek community to be mocked for experiencing a so-called 'mediocre' custom. Such comments make them feel inferior and out of place. For example, during an interview, a 16-year-old student stated that:

Some boys, especially the older ones, often see them as backward and make fun of them. They call them chepkelelik (newly initiated girls) and constantly remind them that they no longer belong in school but should be elsewhere attending to their husbands. Some feel very upset and end up not attending school.

Analysis of class registers indicated that girls suspected of having undergone FGM/C during the December holiday attended school irregularly, with most dropping out within a short period. This finding aligns with Sifuna and Chege's (2006:45) observation that initiation ceremonies create dilemmas for girls, negatively impacting school attendance. For example, in one sampled school, the attendance of two Standard Seven girls who had undergone FGM/C, referred to here as Cherono and Nini, was tracked. Both missed school during the first two weeks of the first term in 2012. Cherono returned on the Monday of the third week, while Nini returned on Wednesday. In the following weeks, both showed irregular attendance. Although Nini's attendance improved, she dropped out in week nine, reportedly due to early marriage. By the end of 15 weeks, or 75 school days excluding weekends, Cherono had missed 29 days, representing 38% of the total number of lessons. Despite strong academic prospects, she also dropped out at the beginning of the second term, and her whereabouts were unknown to the class teacher at the time of the research. Such cases are common, with most girls who attend school after FGM/C dropping out within the first six months.

Information from headteachers indicated that girls who have undergone FGM/C experience social isolation in school. Their peers perceive them as adults who possess knowledge and secrets others do not. Some believe in a fable created for Ogiek children that during seclusion *chemosit* an ogre, swallows the initiates and vomits them alive. To complicate this situation further, girls in seclusion are encouraged to avoid associating with 'children' because they have become 'adults.' Therefore, in many

incidences, girls who have undergone FGM/C usually keep each other company, and because they become fewer and fewer in school as they are married off, the remaining really suffer psychologically, making them unevenly attend school.

The main reason for subjecting these girls to FGM/C is to transform them into adulthood. Seclusion indoctrinates the girls to see themselves as adults and view school as for 'children.' These results confirm Sifuna and Chege's (2006:45) observation that girls who have gone through cultural activities such as FGM/C have a negative attitude towards uncircumcised girls and teachers. All three headteachers interviewed claimed that some of these girls, after undergoing FGM/C, look down on female teachers who have not gone through the process. In support of this claim, one girl during an interview said: *They don't want to go to school with girls like me who have not undergone FGM/C. So they start skipping school as they wait for marriage.*

This study shows that Ogiek girls tend to lose interest in school after leaving seclusion. This is because the traditional teachings they receive do not emphasise the importance of education but focus on marriage and other adult responsibilities like childbearing. This fact was reinforced by a headteacher who commented; *You know what the Motirenik (ritual leaders) teach the girls in seclusion is a different 'curriculum' ...they prepare them for marriage when we are encouraging them to pursue their education before thinking of marriage.*

#### **4.5. School Dropouts and Early Marriages**

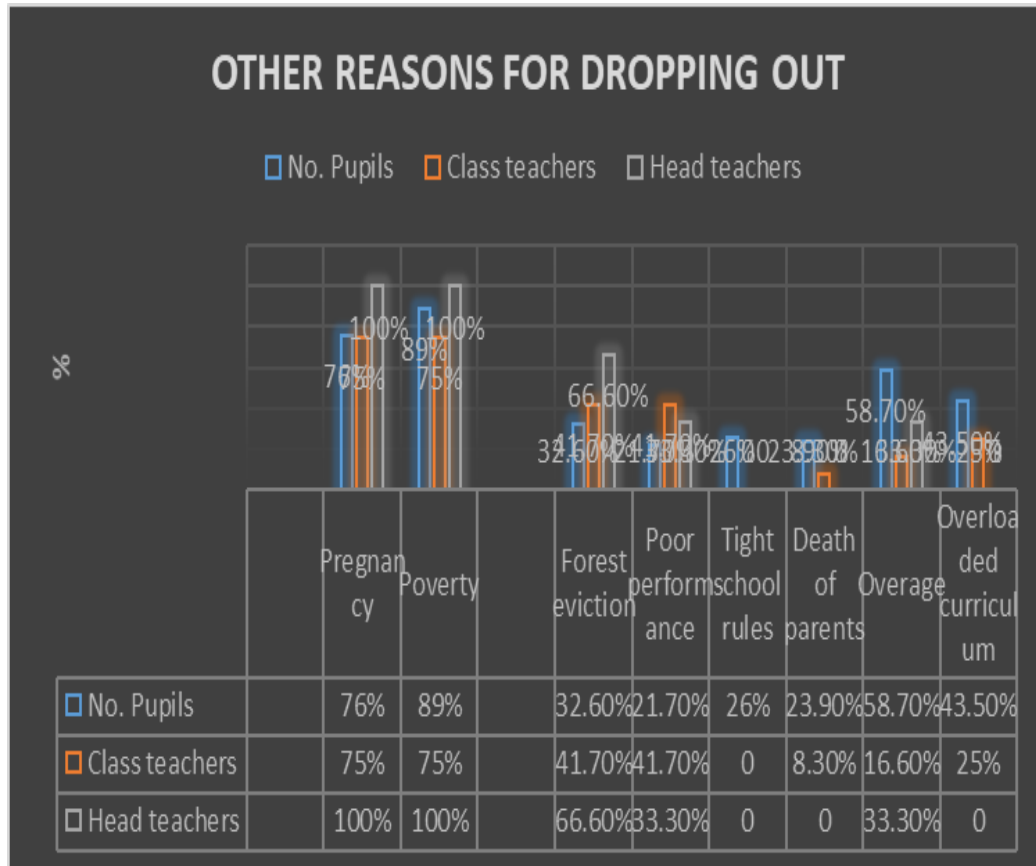
This section addresses the fourth research question, which aimed to examine how the continuation of FGM/C contributes to high rates of early marriages and school dropouts among Ogiek girls in Sogoo location. Despite numerous efforts by the Kenyan government to expand access to education and provide free primary schooling,

dropping out before completing the cycle and early marriages among the Ogiek remain significant obstacles to achieving universal primary education for all (Ohenjo, 2006, p. 6).

#### **4.5.1. Causes of school dropouts in Ogiek primary school girls**

Before investigating the relationship between FGM/C, high dropout rates, and early marriages among Ogiek primary school girls, it was also important to explore other causes of this issue. This was necessary because the factors associated with dropping out are numerous and interconnected.

Table 4.8: Other reasons causing girls 'drop out



Source: Fieldwork

This study found that pregnancy is a major reason why Ogiek girls drop out of school. Seventy-six per cent of the pupils interviewed, all teachers, and all head teachers identified pregnancy as a key factor contributing to the dropout of Ogiek girls. As shown in the table above, some cases of dropout among the Ogiek girls are involuntary, resulting from external circumstances beyond the pupil's control over.

For example, 66.6% of the head teachers interviewed gave forest eviction as a reason for girls to drop out of school. This was witnessed in 2005 and 2008. Education handicapped dropouts include those who do not get promoted to the next class because of poor performance, being over-aged and finding the curriculum to be overloaded. From the field study, just like in the case of poor school attendance, poverty, for a second time, came out to be one of the chief causes for Ogiek girls' dropping out of school. The findings of this study corroborated the observations of Sifuna and Chege (2006, P. 42) that economic development is an incentive for educating a daughter. The research established that poverty among the

Ogiek is very high, and the Maasai's nickname *iltorobo*, meaning "poor people with no cows," still haunts them. For instance, one headteacher observed that:

Poverty is so high among the Ogiek that most of them cannot afford the expense of school uniforms and other necessities for their children. As a consequence, some of them are forced to make the painful decision of not sending their children to school, and in particular, girls, because these people still think that education is meant for boys.

#### **4.5.2. HOW FGM/C CONTRIBUTES TO EARLY MARRIAGES AND SCHOOL DROPOUTS**

This study found that the Ogiek's main goal of FGM/C is to transform a girl into an 'adult' and prepare her for marriage. It was shown that no other reason takes precedence over this. As discussed above, young girls after seclusion are symbolically seen as 'heifers' ready to be married off by 'prancing lions' (men). Notably, a suitor can participate during the preparation of these ceremonies and immediately after the girl's seclusion. When headteachers were asked about the connection between the continuation of FGM/C and high girl dropout rates and early marriages, all of them associated it with the practice. For example, one of them observed that:

The assumption is that once a girl undergoes FGM/C, she becomes an adult, even if she is only 13 years old. In eighth grade, we have some Ogiek girls who have undergone FGM/C. They mainly stay around just to take exams, which is what has kept them in school. Most of their *pamwaisiek* (co-initiates) are married by now.

The study aimed to identify the age at which Ogiek girls undergo FGM/C. Results show that the practice mainly affects school-aged girls, particularly those in primary school. At this stage of development, the girls are unable to make fully informed decisions, although traditional norms view their consent as sufficient.

As previously noted, FGM/C is usually performed in November and December. Analysis of class registers from Nkaroni, Emitik, and Kichaba primary schools showed that most Ogiek girls suspected of undergoing FGM/C during this period do not return to school in January. Among those who do come back, many withdraw shortly afterwards. This pattern is especially clear in standards six and seven, as students in standard eight often stay in school to complete the KCPE examination. Focus group discussions with men indicated that marrying a girl who has recently been initiated in January or February, right after seclusion, is seen as desirable because these girls are believed to be virgins. The findings of this study are consistent with those of GTZ (July 2009), which reported that: most cases of school dropout among girls happen in January, following the December holiday when FGM/C and related festivities are common.

Furthermore, this study found that some parents force their pubescent girls to undergo FGM/C and marry them off immediately as a way of protecting them from unwarranted sexual advances. These findings align with those of Gathiri (2004), who claimed that: FGM/C has cultural significance with the belief that it promotes chastity and guarantees marriageability, which in turn brings honour to the family. As previously mentioned, the Ogiek feel secure when their girls are in the custody of a single male guardian. It was observed through discussions in focus group discussions (FGD) that men and women noted that parents marry off their young daughters to uphold family dignity and honour. Within the Ogiek community, it is regarded as dishonourable for a daughter to remain unmarried and have children. As a result, some of their parents subject pubescent girls to FGM/C and arrange early marriages to avoid potential embarrassment and uphold family honour. As one headteacher observed:

A parent feels content when their daughter is married before having children at home. For them, FGM/C qualifies and presents a girl for marriage. In the Ogiek community, after FGM/C, a girl is considered an adult, free to be approached for marriage. Their parents want to marry them off as soon as possible to protect them from sex pests like boda boda (motorbike riders) boys, who may impregnate the girls and cause them to stay at home without marriage.

The study further identified a link between FGM/C and higher rates of pregnancy among school-going girls, which often leads to school dropout and early marriage. This finding supports Kahoro (2007), who reported that FGM/C contributes to increased teenage pregnancy levels. After FGM/C, girls are viewed as adults, and men frequently see them as available for sexual advances, raising their vulnerability to sexual pressure and subsequent pregnancy. This assertion was supported by an observation made by a headteacher who claimed that:

By experiencing maturity, these girls might sleep carelessly with men, and some may become pregnant. Although it is tricky, some get lucky and are married by their responsible boyfriend. ...there will be no option for such a girl but to drop out of school and start a family at the onset of the problem, even if she is only 14 years old.

The study further found that men contribute to early marriage and school dropouts by supporting FGM/C and marrying school-attending girls. This supports the findings of Ohenjo (2006, P. 7), who asserts that underage marriage among school-attending girls has negatively affected Ogiek women's empowerment. One man who participated in the FGD claimed that Ogiek men feel pride when they marry young girls because they believe they are virgins. Unfortunately, most of the 'virgin girls' fall into the category of school-attending pubescent girls.

Furthermore, the study found that, due to widespread poverty among the Ogiek, some parents support FGM/C and early marriages as a way of relieving the financial burden of education. Evidence shows declining incomes from land, high illiteracy rates, landlessness

due to eviction, and land issues. Land selling, diminishing economic benefits of the Mau forest due to destruction and invasion, have further marginalised the Ogiek (Mwaniki, 2010). In relation to this claim, one headteacher observed that:

The Ogiek are extremely poor people because they sold land carelessly to the Kipsigis...believing in hunting more than farming, they never valued land or education. Therefore, they encourage FGM/C and early marriages as a means of cutting the cost of education.

This study confirms UNICEF's (2010) observation that poverty is a major factor underpinning school dropouts and early marriage. A family survival strategy may be for young girls to be married off to relieve their parents of economic burden, especially when poverty is acute. A head teacher further supported this by claiming that:

Most Ogiek parents can't afford secondary school fees, so they can only support their daughters' education... Girls' education is not quite encouraged by these people because they believe that girls are to be married off, stay home and have children. Therefore, they subject them to FGM/C to create avenues for marriage as a strategy of reducing the economic burden of educating them.

## **SUMMARY OF THE KEY FINDINGS**

In line with structural functionalist theory, the findings in this chapter align with the idea that the Ogiek community possesses a unique value system within which its members are expected to operate. As an essential part of Ogiek culture, for example, FGM/C must be carried out on a girl to gain social and cultural rewards such as prestige, social acceptance, respect, and marriage.

Respondents and participants in this study agreed that FGM/C is one of the most important rites of passage in the Ogiek community. They also demonstrated that it is only after this

practice that an individual is socially cleansed, educated on the community's secrets, allowed to marry, have children, and become a full community member. She is also able to avoid social stigmatisation associated with those who have not undergone FGM/C.

The results in this chapter show that although the Ogiek hold mixed opinions about its importance, FGM/C still occurs in secret and has not yet been completely eliminated. This section demonstrates that, in recent years, some aspects of FGM/C have changed or disappeared, particularly in response to laws banning it. In summary, all visible activities are now performed covertly, and most previously communal events have been reduced to private family affairs. Before its prohibition, the study found that activities such as shrub (*korosek*) picking in the forest, constructing the shrine (*mabwaita*), encouraging bravery (*cherset*), and settling social debts were done openly.

Disclosed excision (*keba tumdo*), beer brewing, dancing before excision, celebrations after excision, and numerous ceremonies that were done in the open have either completely disappeared, gone underground, or taken on a different form.

This chapter highlighted that, at the time of this inquiry, FGM/C was found to be associated with irregular school attendance, school dropouts, and early marriages among Ogiek primary school girls. Furthermore, the findings in this section have shown that almost all pubescent girls who undergo FGM/C withdraw from school shortly afterwards to get married, based on the belief that the practice has made them adults ready for matrimony. This chapter also revealed that, during the seclusion period, the girls are taught to prioritise marriage over other social aspects affecting their lives, such as education.

The above also indicates that Ogiek men support the continuation of FGM/C and juvenile marriage. This chapter also reveals that high poverty and illiteracy levels among the Ogiek of Sogoo are major obstacles to girls' education. Due to the existing poverty, most Ogiek parents from impoverished households do not value their children's education, especially

that of girls. As a result, they subject them to FGM/C and early marriage for economic relief. This has led to a lack of role models and motivation, because nearly all female parents are uneducated, while at the same time, present-day Ogiek females have limited education. In conclusion, the main reasons highlighted in this chapter are: to enhance marriage prospects, rites of passage, social cleansing, female identity, and fear of stigmatisation. This section concludes that FGM/C among the Ogiek is still widespread and has not yet been eradicated. From the findings discussed in this chapter, it can be inferred that the process of FGM/C has changed significantly, especially in response to the ban. The above has shown that the continued practice of FGM/C has disadvantaged Ogiek primary school girls in their pursuit of education. After girls undergo FGM/C, their school attendance often becomes irregular, and most drop out soon after, typically to get married. The findings also indicate that the Ogiek community is at a crossroads, with mixed opinions regarding the relevance of the practice in today's society. Another conclusion that can be drawn from the discussion is that, apart from FGM/C, factors such as early marriage, irregular school attendance, school dropouts, high levels of poverty, and illiteracy serve as additional barriers to the education of Ogiek girls.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter summarises the findings, conclusions, recommendations for decision-makers, and suggestions for further research. The main purpose of this study was to examine the effects of female genital mutilation on primary school girls in the Ogiek community residing in Sogoo location within Narok South district, Kenya.

The study revealed that deeply rooted factors cause the Ogiek to continue FGM/C. For example, the power of tradition and the fear of rejection among the Ogiek are so strong that teenage girls choose to undergo FGM/C to avoid stigmatisation and social exclusion. The research also found that the initiation process unites and bonds the girls throughout their lives. This is so the specific objectives of the study were to:

Identify reasons that lead to the perpetuation of FGM/C among the Ogiek community living in Sogoo location in Narok South District.

Investigate the current process of FGM/C that enables members of the Ogiek community in Sogoo location to sustain the practice despite of it being outlawed.

Investigate how FGM/C affects the school attendance of primary school girls from the Ogiek community living in the Sogoo location.

To examine how FGM/C contributes to school dropouts and early marriages in primary school girls from the Ogiek community.

#### **5.1 Summary of The Findings and Conclusion**

Because the process of FGM/C causes the initiates to belong and identify themselves with a group of individuals who fully respect each other and form a close-knit social network.

The study observed that being unmarried has harmful social effects on both individuals and families. In this context, the study further found that the Ogiek is a deeply patriarchal society where women and children are entirely dependent on men. Consequently, women try to 'qualify' by any means, even if it requires enduring harmful practices such as FGM/C. Men, meanwhile, determine the kind of woman they wish to marry, and one of the criteria is undergoing FGM/C.

The study found that, although there are many socio-cultural indicators of maturity in the modern world, the Ogiek, particularly the older generation, still believe that a girl must undergo FGM/C to become an adult. Additionally, FGM/C has a religious connotation of removing the unclean part of a woman, and perhaps the surgical operation was only the first step in a series of secret cleansing ceremonies performed during a period of seclusion.

The study established that FGM/C activities among the Ogiek have not been eradicated but still thrive underground. However, FGM/C procedures and processes in this community have undergone many changes due to laws banning it and other social dynamisms. The findings further pointed out that all activities of FGM/C that were carried out in the open have either disappeared or adapted a different form or gone underground, and what still remains as crucial is excision.

The study also found that this community is in transition, and that people currently have mixed opinions about the significance of FGM/C. For instance, due to extensive campaigns to eradicate this custom in the district, school-going children are knowledgeable about its negative consequences. Additionally, the majority of girls, men, and women sampled for this study expressed the need to eliminate the practice because of its adverse effects on girls' formal education and other aspects of their lives. Some respondents and participants claimed that FGM/C is no longer relevant in the present-day Ogiek community.

The study found overwhelming evidence indicating that FGM/C in this community is

practised similarly to other prohibited activities. The Ogiek live around Mau Forest, creating a conducive environment for such practices to thrive. In some cases, the study revealed that FGM/C is performed secretly in matrimonial homes or during delivery. To avoid legal repercussions, the study established that some perpetrators of FGM/C cooperate with corrupt government officials, such as chiefs, to continue the practice.

Data drawn from the field indicate that high poverty and illiteracy levels among the Ogiek of Sogoo are significant barriers to girls' education within the community. Historically, the Ogiek relied on hunting and gathering for their survival, and their traditional nature made them slow to adopt new socio-economic trends. The study found that extreme poverty leads some Ogiek parents to undervalue their children's education. For some, providing basic school needs is a challenge.

This is a problem. Therefore, some from poor households subject their pubescent girls to FGM/C and early marriage to relieve them from economic burden. The study clearly showed that FGM/C significantly contributes to girls' irregular school attendance, primarily due to isolation, mockery, and a loss of interest in education as initiates begin to value marriage over schooling. For example, data from class registers revealed that girls suspected of having undergone FGM/C during the December holiday attend school sporadically, and most drop out within a short period.

This study established that girls' dropout and early marriages among the Ogiek are quite high. It also found that one of the major factors contributing to low enrolment of girls is the perpetuation of FGM/C. This is because the practice targets girls at critical school-going ages of 12 to 17 years and prepares them for early marriage. Additionally, the study revealed that virtually all pubescent girls who undergo FGM/C tend to withdraw from school soon after marriage due to the belief that the practice has transformed them into 'adults' ready to be seduced into marriage.

The study found that literacy levels among the Ogiek are very high, with women most affected. Although most mothers are illiterate, the study observed that they support their daughters' education by providing school supplies more often than their daughters' fathers do. It was also discovered that some fathers support their daughters' education, indicating a changing attitude towards girls' education in the Ogiek community.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

In conclusion, the study found that, mainly, FGM/C is an instrument used to prepare 'ideal' women in the Ogiek community, and therefore, one can understand the reason behind the enormous value placed on this practice. Additionally, the Ogiek community has many reasons that justify the continuation of FGM/C. However, most of the reasons stated cannot withstand the realities of modern life, especially in a changing society where women should not be limited to household and wifedom activities.

The study has concluded that the lack of glamour and grandeur associated with FGM/C ceremonies in this community does not mean that the practice has been eradicated. All activities previously conducted openly are now performed in secrecy, and what was once a public event has been reduced to a clandestine family affair.

The patriarchal society of the Ogiek has negatively affected women's progress, and given the current situation, women may lack the ability to effectively oppose this regressive practice. For teenage girls to achieve social and economic status, they must undergo FGM/C to improve their marriage prospects. Conversely, men who control economic resources recommend the type of women they wish to marry based on the standards set by the community.

Perpetuation of FGM/C by the Ogiek community is associated with a relatively high rate of primary school girls dropping out, early marriages, and irregular school attendance. This is

because what girls are taught during their seclusions upholds marriage more than their education does.

#### **5.4 Recommendations for Decision-Makers**

The study found that members of the Ogiek community still have deeply rooted reasons that sustain the practice of FGM/C. To accelerate its eradication, policy-makers should recognise that simply introducing laws criminalising people's customs is not enough without considering the community's attitude towards them. Therefore, to achieve better results, a combination of strategies from both the government and the Ogiek community should be employed.

The study has found that criminalising FGM/C among the Ogiek has not significantly contributed to its immediate eradication because offenders have sought ways to bypass the laws. Therefore, this study recommends that the government establish mechanisms to track down and actively enforce the law banning FGM/C.

This study has found that, due to widespread poverty in this region, the cost of education is beyond the financial reach of most Ogiek parents from low-income households. The government, therefore, should prioritise providing bursaries to needy children with academic potential. This will support the government's goal of ensuring equal access to education for all, regardless of their socio-economic background. Furthermore, the government should make deliberate efforts, through affirmative action, to promote girl-child education and encourage working-class women from this community to serve as role models for Ogiek girls in school.

The findings of this study indicate that FGM/C targets primary school girls and is directly linked to high levels of dropout rates and juvenile marriage. This implies that the government has not put in place mechanisms to help avert underage marriage. Hence, the

government should vigorously use legal means to punish perpetrators of early marriages in order to discourage this vice.

### **5.5 Suggestions for Further Research**

The current study has raised many questions that require further investigation; therefore, it offers the following suggestions for future research.

The current study observed that members of the Ogiek community have mixed opinions regarding the relevance of FGM/C in modern times. Therefore, an assessment of the impact of anti-FGM/C campaigns among the Ogiek is necessary.

The study found that due to laws banning FGM/C, the practice has been driven underground among the Ogiek of Sogoo. As a result, further investigations are needed into the shape that FGM/C has taken in other practising communities in Kenya.

The study established that criminalising FGM/C has not helped much in its immediate eradication among the Ogiek of Sogoo. For this reason, a study is needed to investigate the efficacy of laws criminalising FGM/C in its eradication.

The present research has noted that there is a high level of Ogiek primary school dropouts due mainly to poverty, retrogressive cultural practices such as FGM/C and early marriages. For these reasons, a study investigating the primary-to-secondary school transition rate among Ogiek school-going girls is needed.

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### APPENDIX 1: RESEARCH TIME-LINE

SN	TIME	ACTIVITY	REMARKS
1	JAN 2011-JAN 2012	Proposal writing	Done as planned
2	FEB 2012	Designing of instruments	Designed and used
3	FEB-2012	Piloting	Done
4	JULY 2012	Data collection	Done
	JULY 2012	Data analysis	Completed

**APPENDIX: 2 RESEARCH BUDGET**

S/No	Item	Units	Unit cost (Kshs)	Total cost (Kshs)
1	Research assistants	1	5,000	30,000
3	Transport, meals and Accommodation	-	-	50,000
4	Piloting and binding	-	-	80,000
6	Laptop Computer	1	30,000	100,000
7	Pre-analysis data	-	-	20,000
8	Data analysis			50,000
9	Printing			30,000
10	Report writing			30,000
11	Miscellaneous			20,000
	<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>410,000</b>

### APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR HEADTEACHERS

You have been chosen to participate in this study. Please respond to the following questions accordingly. Your response will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Name of the school.....

Name of the Head Teacher.....

Age.....

Sex.....

Level of education.....

Sub location.....

1. What is the current enrolment by gender in your school from standard one to eight respectively? (Please indicate number of repeaters in each class).
2. State the number of pupils who have dropped out of your school by gender from standard four to eight.
3. Name the communities that are served by this school.
4. What is the approximate population percentage of girls from the Ogiek community?

5. What are the major reasons for girls dropping out of the Ogiek community?
6. What are the in-school factors that affect Ogiek girls' participation in primary education?
7. Explain the out-of-school factors that affect Ogiek girls' enrolment and completion rates in your school.
8. Explain the existence of FGM/C practice among the Ogiek community in this area.
9. What are some of the reasons given by members of this community for supporting FGM/C?
10. Explain how FGM/C practice contributes to poor school attendance of girls from the Ogiek community.
11. Explain how FGM/C practice contributes to school dropout and early marriages of girls from the Ogiek community.
12. The practice of FGM/C has been outlawed; briefly explain how members of the Ogiek community carry on its activities without facing legal consequences.
13. Suggest ways in which FGM/C can be eradicated among members of the Ogiek community.

#### **APPENDIX 4: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR FGD (MEN)**

1. (a) Are you all married?
- (b) Is polygamy still being practiced in your community?

- (c) If so, how many wives do each one of you have?
  - (d) Can you estimate their ages?
  - (e) Are they educated? If not, give reasons why?
  - (f) What are the qualifications that men in your community check in a woman before she is marriageable? Please explain.
2. Are you aware of the persistence of FGM/C in your community? If so, give reasons why your community supports the practice.
  3. In your view, do you think that FGM/C is a good practice? If so, why?
  4. Please briefly explain the processes of FGM/C before it was banned. Base your answers on preparation, what happened during the day of the practice and activities in seclusions.
  5. If FGM/C and its activities still persist, what is the current process that enables perpetrators to sustain the practice without facing legal consequences?
  6. Which age groups does the practise of FGM/C target? Please explain.
  7. Does the practice of FGM/C have any effect on school attendance in girls from your community? If so, give reasons for your answer.
  8. Do you think this practice encourages girls to early marriages and dropping out of school? Please explain.
  9. Which role can men in this community play to eradicate this practice?
  10. Given a chance, will you subject your daughter to FGM/C? Explain your answer.
  11. Can you suggest possible steps that can be taken to help stamp out FGM/C in your community?

## **APPENDIX 5: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR FGD (WOMEN)**

1. (a) Are you all married?
  - (b) If yes, are you both members of the Ogiek community?
  - (c) Can you estimate the age at which you got married?
  - (d) For those who are married, who have a higher level of education?
- Briefly explain your answer.
- (e) What must a woman in your community fulfil before she is marriageable?  
Please explain.
2. Are you aware of the persistence of FGM/C in your community? If so, give reasons why your community supports the practice?
  3. In your view, do you think that female circumcision is a good practice? If so, why?
  4. Please briefly explain the process of FGM/C before it was banned. Base your answers on preparations, what happened during the day of the practice and activities in seclusions.
  5. If FGM/C and its activities still persist, how do members of your community carry on their activities?
  6. Which age groups practise FGM/C target? Please explain.
  7. After FGM/C practice, explain what happens to teenage school-going girls.
  8. Does the practice of FGM/C have any effect on the school attendance of girls from your community? If so, give reasons for your answer.
  9. Do you think this practice encourages girls to early marriages and dropping out of school? Please explain.

10. Given a chance, will you subject your daughter to FGM/C? Explain your answer.
11. Which role can women in this community play to eradicate this practice?
12. Can you suggest possible steps that can be taken to help stamp out FGM/C in your community?

### **APPENDIX 6: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CLASS TEACHERS**

You have been chosen to participate in this study. Your responses will be absolutely confidential. You are kindly asked to complete the questionnaire provided without reservation. Please do not discuss your responses with others.

#### **PART I**

Questions in this part seek general information about the teacher. Kindly respond to each of the questions by choosing the answer which is appropriate to you and tick (✓) in the provided box.

1. What is your sex?

Male

Female

What is your age bracket?

Below 25

26-30

Over 31

2. You are a class teacher for which class?.....

3. How long have you been teaching here?

Less than two years Below 5

years

Over 5 year

**PART II**

This part is divided into five sections. Answer the questions as honestly as possible.

Tick in the box which best represents your most appropriate feeling to the statement or give an explanation where needed.

**SECTION A**

1. List the communities that are served by this school.

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

2. What is the approximate percentage of pupils from the Ogiek community in your class?

.....  
.....  
.....

3. Do some pupils from the Ogiek community drop out before completing the cycle?

Yes

No

4. If yes, at which level of their primary school education do they drop out more?

Lower primary

Upper primary

5. Dropout rates are common in which gender?

(A) Males (B) Female

6. Specify the possible reasons for dropping out (i)

briefly.....

.....

.....

.....

(ii) .....

.....

.....

(iii) .....

.....

.....

(iv) .....  
.....  
.....

7. Is the practice of FGM/C (Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting) persistent among members of the Ogiek community?

Yes

No

(a) Do girls who have undergone the rite of FGM/C all come back to school?

(A) Yes (B) No (C) Some

(b) If not, then state what happens to those who never return? (Please specify briefly)

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**SECTION B****Process of FGM/C**

1. At which age bracket do girls from the Ogiek undergo FGM/C?

Below 10 years

10-18 years

Above 18 years

2. After the operation, do the girls undergo a period of seclusion?

Yes No

3. Are members of this community aware  that the practise of FGM/C is illegal?

Yes No

4. Briefly explain how they carry on the practise without facing legal consequences.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

**SECTION C**

**Reasons for continuance**

1. Why do you think FGM/C practice has persisted among the Ogiek of this area? (Please state briefly)

(i) .....  
.....

(ii) .....  
.....

(iii) .....  
.....

(iv).....  
.....

2. List reasons that members of the Ogiek community give for supporting FGM/C.

.....  
.....

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**SECTION D**

**School attendance**

1. (a) Does FGM/C lead to poor school attendance of pupil from the Ogiek community?

Yes  No

If yes, briefly explain

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**SECTION E**

1. What suggestions can you give concerning;

(a) What needs to be done to stop the continuation of FGM/C in this community?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

(b) What can be done to reduce Ogiek girls' dropouts in relation to FGM/C.?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

(c) What can be done on cases of early marriages due to FGM/C.?

.....  
.....  
.....

(d) How to improve the Ogiek girls' school attendance.

.....  
.....  
.....

**APPENDIX 7: INTERVIEW GUIDED FOR THE PUPILS**

You have been chosen to participate in this study. Your responses shall be highly confidential.

### **Introduction**

Name of the pupil.....

Name of the school.....

Class.....

Age.....

1. Can you tell me where you were born/home area?
2. Which community do you come from?
3. What is the total number of pupils in your class?
4. What is the population of boys and girls from your community in your class?
5. Do some girls from your community drop out of school before completing the cycle?
  - (a) If yes, briefly explain what makes them drop out of school.
6. Are you aware of the existence of Female Circumcision that young girls from your community undergo?
7. Which reasons do you know that are given for the continuation of this practice?
8. Do you know that FGM/C is illegal? If yes, explain how members of your community carry on FGM/C practice and its activities despite it being outlawed.
9. Do you know some of your friends who have undergone FGM/C?

- (a) If yes, how regularly do they attend school after undergoing FGM/C?

Briefly explain your answer.

- (b) Do some of them stop coming to school after undergoing FGM/C? If

yes, briefly explain what happened to them.

10. (a) How many sisters do you have?

- (b) Have they undergone FGM/C?

- (c) Have you ever been convinced or coerced to undergo FGM/C?

Briefly explain your answer.

- 11.** What is your opinion or feeling of FGM/C? Do you like it or not?

Give reasons for your stand.