

This dissertation is the result of field research carried out among the Akamba people of Machakos District. The study was carried out with a view to:

- a. Examining the Akamba religious beliefs surrounding taboo.
- b. Examining the impact of Christianity on the Akamba belief in taboo.

It was thought necessary to examine the Akamba belief in taboo because even though a great deal of information has been written on Akamba religious concept and life in general, no serious study on this subject in the said Districts is on placing on record for present and future generations the role played by taboo in the lives of the Akamba people. Moreover, it was thought necessary to examine the Akamba concept of taboo in the context of cultural changes in order to find out whether the Akamba people have totally abandoned their beliefs concerning taboo due to the influence of Christianity.

The informants who were both traditional and church elders were sampled from the seven administrative divisions of Machakos District and interviewed orally. All the interviews were tape recorded in order to also to facilitate the collection of oral data. The oral data in the tapes were then transcribed and incorporated with library sources to provide the basis for analysis and interpretation.

In analysing the data, the researcher chose to follow a classification suggested by the Akamba elders themselves rather than any of the various classifications suggested by authors who studied other cultures in order to give the thesis a real touch of authenticity. According to this classification, the Akamba taboos fell into three main groups namely:

- i. Taboos that gave rise to thavu
- ii. Taboos that gave rise to death
- iii. Taboos that gave rise to disaster

Concerning the impact of cultural changes on taboos, the major finding was that the belief in taboo has been weakened to a great extent by Western education, urbanization and Christianity. Nevertheless, there are certain taboos which are still observed by the Church elders.

The dissertation has been organized into five chapters. Chapter one gives an introductory information one needs as background to understand the entire study. Chapter two surveys the literature related to taboo with a view to showing what has been written on this belief so far. Chapter three has gone into various definitions of taboo. Moreover a detailed discourse on the concept under investigation among the Akamba people of Machakos District have not uprooted the Akamba people of Machakos District has been offered.

In Chapter four, an analysis of the impact of cultural changes on taboo has been offered. The chapter has shown that despite the impact of cultural flux certain taboos continues to be a reality among the church elders. This is significant in showing that the forces of change in Machakos

District have not uprooted the Akamba people from their social and religious roots. Chapter five summarises the entire work showing the major findings and conclusions of the study. The chapter has also given certain recommendations which shows much further implications of this study for Ethics and Theology.