

**INFLUENCE OF INDIGENEOUS KNOWLEDGE ON THE
ADOPTION OF SCHOOL-BASED EDUCATION AMONG
KENYAN MAASAI: IMPLICATIONS FOR CURRICULUM
REFORM**

EGERTON UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

**BY
ALEXANDER K. RONO**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL IN
PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN
CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION OF EGERTON
UNIVERSITY**

EGERTON UNIVERSITY

OCTOBER 2008

EULIB



021 060

2009/78958



DECLARATION AND APPROVAL

DECLARATION BY THE CANDIDATE

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

Signed.......... Date.....15/10/2008.....

Alexander K. Ronoh, B.Ed (Nairobi), M.Ed (Kenyatta)

APPROVAL BY THE SUPERVISOR

This thesis has been presented for examination with my approval as University Supervisor

Signed.......... Date.....19/10/08.....

Prof. Lois Wanjiku Chiuri

2009/78958

COPY RIGHT

© 2008 A.K. Ronoh / Egerton University. All rights reserved. No part of this thesis may be produced or transmitted in any form, mechanical, photocopying or electronic without the permission of the author or Egerton University except, with acknowledgement, for brief quotations in books, journal articles, reviews or research reports.

DEDICATION

To my late father, Mr William Ketiénya, with fond memories

ABSTRACT

This study investigated how Indigenous Knowledge (IK) of the Kenyan Maasai influenced the adoption of school-based education (SBE) in that society during the colonial and post colonial periods. The study addressed IK and SBE as they have occurred among the Maasai of Narok District. Pertinent objectives and research questions guided the investigations. A review of the literature indicated a paucity of studies in the field of IK. Most of the available research reports simply claimed that the Maasai were resistant to change because of their culture. None of these studies examined the influence of indigenous knowledge as a factor in Maasai resistance to change in general and to modern education in particular. The study was carried out within the frameworks of three theories. These theories were Structural-functionalism theory that emphasised societal insistence on maintenance of *status quo* in their affairs; Articulation of Modes of Production theory, which focuses on economic and productive activities; and Culture theory, which maintains that in every society there exist learned biases that have immense effect on the rate of social change. This research study used qualitative approach to investigate the major problem. To a lesser extent, descriptive statistics were used to gain more insights into the pertinent issues that could not be explained from the qualitative data. The data for the study was therefore gathered using tools that were credible and amenable to this type of study. These tools included interview schedules, observation records, and documentary sources. The data thus collected was analysed and interpreted in the light of the objectives of the study and research questions.

When analysed, the data revealed that IK of the Maasai may be classified into three major domains Social/recreational knowledge, Economic/productive knowledge; and Ecological/environmental knowledge. The analysis of the data also established that Kenyan Maasai have not participated fully in SBE because of entrenched IK, which they find more appropriate to the needs, aspirations and interests. The study discovered that the values, skills and attitudes acquired through IK have negatively influenced Maasai attitudes to SBE. The results of this study imply that there is a need to reform the school curricula offered to Kenyan Maasai by incorporating or infusing certain aspects of IK. Such a reform would lead to more acceptance of SBE among the Maasai as the curricula would be relevant to their lives. The study recommends such a reform because countries like Bolivia in Latin America have successfully incorporated IK in their curricula, leading to better acceptance of SBE.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Successful completion of a work of this magnitude is impossible without God's guidance and the assistance, understanding and co-operation of many individuals and institutions. Consequently, I owe many forms of gratitude. Firstly, I thank God for enabling me to complete this work despite the many challenges I encountered. Secondly, I wish to express my profound gratitude and appreciation to my thesis supervisor, Prof. Lois Wanjiku Chiuri for guidance, constructive criticism and constant encouragement. Many thanks are also due to the Office of the President of the Republic of Kenya for issuing a Research Permit, and the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology for renewing it. I am equally indebted to Egerton University's Board of Post Graduate Studies and my family for providing research funds.

I also thank administration and education officials in Narok District for their valuable assistance. I am especially grateful to the then Narok District Commissioner, Mr. Joseph Kimiywi, for writing introductory letters to District Officers in whose areas of jurisdiction I carried out the research. I am also grateful to Chiefs and Area Education Officers in Loita and Olokurto Divisions for facilitating this research work in various ways. Special thanks are due to Mr. Laban Munene, the then acting Deputy District Education Officer in Narok District for showing a lot of interest in my work and offering immeasurable assistance.

I am also grateful to all my respondents particularly secondary school focus groups as well as primary and secondary school headteachers, for their co-operation in providing the bulk of the field data. Many thanks are also due to my research assistants: Mr. Alex ole Tikani and Miss Naomi ene Kosen at Olokurto Site as well as Mr. Stanley ole Kone, Mr. Salankat ole Meriki and Miss Francisca ene Baari at Morjo Site, Loita. All of them did their work with enthusiasm and diligence. Very special thanks for hospitality go to my friends, Mr and Mrs Vincent ole Ntekerei, in whose home I stayed while gathering field data at the Morijo Site in Loita Division.

I am equally indebted to the staff of various resource centres for their invaluable assistance. I wish to single out for special mention the staff of the Kenya National Archives in Nairobi, the National Museums of Kenya in Nairobi and Narok, Egerton University libraries at Njoro and Laikipia Campuses, the University of Nairobi and Kenyatta University libraries.

I cannot forget to thank friends and colleagues who became fountains of encouragement and focus by engaging me in very helpful academic discussions in relation to my study and research work in general. These included: Dr C. K Chepkwony, Dr J. N. Bosire, Dr A. K. Sang, Prof. A. M. Sindabi, Dr J. K. Kiboss, the late Prof. Ong'ondo, and Dr M. K. Rotich. To all of you, I say thank you very much.

Especial thanks go to members of my family. I am grateful to my parents, Mrs Rebecca Ketienya and the late Mr William Ketienya, for the sacrifices they have made towards my scholastic journey and for being incessant sources of encouragement. Finally, I wish to express affectionate thanks to my wife Mrs Edina Ronoh, and our children: Hilda, Faith, Felix, Lioba, Edith and Anthony, for readily allowing me to commit family resources to this project and for their understanding, tolerance and encouragement.

EGERTON UNIVERSITY
OCTOBER, 2008

A. K. RONO

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION AND APPROVAL.....	i
COPYRIGHT.....	ii
DEDICATION.....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	x
LIST OF TABLES	xv
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xv
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.0 Background Information.	1
1.1 Context of the Problem	4
1.2 Statement of the Problem	7
1.3 Purpose and Objectives of the Study.....	8
1.4 Research Questions	8
1.5 Assumptions of the Study	8
1.6 Significance of the Study.....	9
1.7 Scope of Study.....	9
1.8 Limitations of the Study.....	10
1.9 Operational Definition of Terms.....	11
CHAPTER TWO.....	12
LITERATURE REVIEW.....	12
2.0 Introduction.....	12
2.1 Indigenous Knowledge (IK): A Global perspective.....	12
2.2 Indigenous Knowledge (IK) in Africa.....	14
2.3 IK and SBE among Kenyan Pastoral Societies.....	15

2.4 IK in Maasai Society.....	18
2.5 Incorporation of IK in SBE.....	19
2.6 Introduction of SBE among Kenyan Maasai.....	20
2.7 SBE and Socio-Economic Changes in Kenya's Maasailand	21
2.8 Educational Planning and Curriculum Reform	23
2.9 Theoretical Framework	29
2.9.1 Structural-functionalism Theory.....	29
2.9.2 Articulation of Modes of Production Theory.....	30
2.9.3 Culture Theory.....	31
2.10 Summary.....	32
CHAPTER THREE.....	33
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	33
3.0 Introduction.....	33
3.1 Research Design	33
3.2 Study Area and Research Sites.....	34
3.3 Sampling Procedures.....	36
3.3.1 Secondary School Students' Focus Group.....	39
3.3.2 Interview Respondents.	40
3.4 Data Collection Techniques.....	41
3.4.1 Interviews.....	44
3.4.2 Focus Group Discussions	44
3.4.3 Direct Observation.....	46
3.4.4 Archival, Museum and Library Research.....	47
3.5 Data Processing and Presentation.....	48
3.5.1 Coding and Collation of Field Data	48
3.5.2 Analysis and Interpretation of Data	48
3.5.3 Presentation and Discussion of the Findings	49
3.6 Summary.....	49
CHAPTER FOUR	50
RESEARCH FINDINGS: PART ONE.....	50

DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOL-BASED EDUCATION (SBE) AMONG THE MAASAI, 1911-1998.....	50
4.0 Introduction.....	50
4.1. Introduction of School-based Education (SBE) among the Maasai.....	50
4.1.1 Government Control of SBE in Narok District, 1911—1939.....	55
4.1.2 School Curriculum in Narok District from 1918 — 1939.....	60
4.2. The Role of Local Native Council (LNC) and Other Players in the Establishment of Out-Schools.....	65
4.2.1 The Role of LNC in the Establishment of Schools.....	66
4.2.2 The Role of Christians Churches in the Establishment of Schools.....	67
4.2.3 Challenges for SBE in Narok District.....	68
4.2.4 Curricula for SBE.....	73
4.3. Post-colonial Development of SBE and Policy Issues in Narok District, 1964—1998.....	80
4.3.1 Post-colonial Improvements in Instructional and Leadership Skills in Narok District.....	86
4.3.2 Gender Issues and School Enrolment in Narok District.....	87
4.4 Summary.....	103
 RESEARCH FINDINGS: PART TWO.....	 104
INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE (IK) AND ITS INFLUENCE ON THE ADOPTION OF SBE AMONG THE MAASAI.....	104
4.5 Introduction.....	104
4.6. Social/Recreational Knowledge Domain.....	105
4.6.1 Indigenous Maasai Games.....	105
4.6.2 Riddles.....	109
4.6.3 Proverbs.....	113
4.6.4 Oral Narratives	116
4.6.4.1 Myths.....	116
4.6.4.2 Legends.....	118
4.6.4.3 Folk Tales.....	120
4.6.5 Songs and Dances	122
4.6.6 Oral History.....	126

4.6.7 Religion.....	129
4.6.8 Etiquette	131
4.6.9 Puberty Changes.....	136
4.6.10 Initiation Rites	138
4.6.10.1 Girls' Initiation.....	138
4.6.10.2 Boys' Initiation.....	139
4.6.11 <i>Murranism</i>	144
4.7 Economic/Productive Knowledge Domain.....	156
4.7.1 Animal Husbandry.....	157
4.7.2 Domestic Work.....	160
4.7.3 Crafts and Trade.....	161
4.8 Ecological/Environmental Knowledge Domain.....	164
4.8.1 Geography.....	164
4.8.2 Wildlife and Hunting	166
4.8.3 Pasture and Browse Identification and Utilisation.....	168
4.8.4 Curative Arts	169
4.9 Philosophy of Learning in Maasai IK.....	172
4.9.1 Indigenous Maasai Instructors and Modes of Instruction.....	174
4.9.1.1 Telling/Listening	174
4.9.1.2 Imitation.....	175
4.9.1.3 Observation	176
4.9.1.4 Participation	177
4.9.2 Indigenous Learning and Evaluation in the Maasai Society.....	177
4.9.2.1 Self Directed Learning.....	177
4.9.2.2 Interactive Learning.....	178
4.9.2.3 Evaluation of Learning in the Maasai Society	179
4.10 Implications for Curriculum Process Reform	180
4.10.1 Curriculum Reform.....	180
4.10.2 Implications for Curriculum Planning and Instruction	181
4.10.3 Selection of Learning Experiences for the Maasai.....	183
4.11 Summary.....	187

CHAPTER FIVE.....	189
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	189
5.0 Introduction.....	189
5.1 Summary of the Study.....	189
5.1.1 Context of the Problem.....	189
5.1.2 Literature Review.....	190
5.1.3 Research Methodology.....	190
5.1.4 The Findings.....	190
5.2 Conclusions of the Study.....	195
5.3 General Recommendations.....	196
5.4 Specific Recommendations.....	197
5.5 Suggestions for Further Research.....	198
REFERENCES	199
APPENDICES	213
APPENDIX I- INTERVIEW GUIDE PARTS I & II- FOR ELDERS, YOUTHS, SOCIO- CULTURAL LEADERS AND SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' FOCUS GROUPS.....	213
APPENDIX II – INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERS:- HEADTEACHERS, AREA EDUCATION OFFICERS AND DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICERS.....	220
APPENDIX III- INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CHIEFS AND COUNCILLORS.....	222
APPENDIX IV- DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' FOCUS GROUPS.....	223
APPENDIX V-OBSERVATION RECORD FORM.....	229
APPENDIX VI- RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION.....	230