

Christianity and western education: A gendered historical analysis of the colonial Maragoli case, 1895-1963

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the contribution of Christianity and Western education on the changing gender dynamics in colonial Maragoli from 1895-1963. Through Christianity and Western education, the established Pre-colonial Maragoli gender relations were greatly interfered with. Methodologically, the study employed a historical research design where both the primary and secondary data on the research themes were collected, analysed and thereafter sequenced into a historical narrative. The study was conducted in Maragoli land the present day Sabatia and Vihiga sub counties in Vhiga County. Through purposive sampling and snowballing, the study was able to locate the key respondents. Gender analysis was used as the theoretical frame work. Findings revealed that Christianity and western education both greatly contributed to the changes in colonial Maragoli gender relations. Through the Christian equality gospel, the previous Maragoli gender roles were dissolved with both men and women free to engage in any of the tasks. The western education on the other hand created new labour engagement avenues based on academic qualifications and not gender. The study therefore concludes that Christianity and western education as colonial policies introduced new policies which greatly impacted on the established Maragoli gender roles. The study recommends that policy makers should come up with strategies to ensure that the progressive Pre-colonial Maragoli ideals on gender roles that have been neglected curtesy of Christianity and Western education are revisited and integrated into the post-independence Christian and Educational policies for the common good of the Maragoli society and humanity as a whole.

Keywords: Colonial Maragoli, Christianity, Gender Relations, Men, Western Education, Women

I. INTRODUCTION

Through colonial imperialism, Western modernity introduced to Africa the imposing culture of the Western European Enlightenment. Fundamental to the Enlightenment project was a deliberate attempt by the European intellectual machinery to explain human existence through certain all-inclusive paradigms. The belief in scientific rationalism, universal culture, universal truth, order and even religion forms the spinal cord of the modernist scheme (Kisiang'ani, 2004). The earliest colonial imprint in Maragoli was marked in 1883 by the coming of Joseph Thomson who visited the area as an explorer. The post 1883 Thomson's visit witnessed increased European activities in Kenya and Maragoli in particular in form of trade and missionary work. It is in this regard that Maragoli received its pioneer missionary dose in 1902 at Kaimosi in the form of Friends African Mission (FAM)-Quakers (Mutongi, 2007). This was to be soon followed in 1909 by the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAC) at Nyang'ori. Christianity increasingly became a religion of choice and a dominant aspect of the Maragoli culture during the colonial period.

Through missionary zeal to convert the Maragoli into Christianity, mission schools were also set up in order to articulate the Maragoli into the colonial formal education set up. The 1900 to 1920 era witnessed a significant enrollment of the young boys from all walks of life into the few mission schools. This trend however changed in the 1940s when the Maragoli families realized that the empowered mission educated young men became more drawn to their capitalistic demands of establishing their homes through purchase of land. This was at the expense of their parents' welfare. The few families which had sent their daughters to schools seemed to reap more from their investment. Such educated girls rose to prominence in the new colonial civil service especially teaching and medical fields. This was from the evidence found in Maragoli which indicated that a high proportion of girls who had gone to school tended to use their education

to help siblings and were more concerned with contributing to siblings' school fees than boys who tended to emphasize acquiring capital to buy land (Mambai FGD). All these socio-economic transformations availed a more level ground for both Maragoli men and women.

After the 1940s, education became increasingly universal and included a growing desire for secondary schools. The end product of the rapid acceptance of Christianity and education was broader economic transformation in the post-war period. The Maragoli saw education as an avenue for accumulation of wealth, through employment as teachers and government employees as well as through involvement in commercial activities. The Church in Maragoli through its leaders took the lead role in championing for the girl child education. These leaders emphasized that education for their daughters was not only an investment, but also an investment in the family's social security. The success of female education made more parents begin to view girl child education equally important as that of boys. This attitude clearly reflected the new contrasting roles of Christian women and men, in the new economic situation of the 1960s.

This study positions itself at the intersection of gender studies, African historiography and colonialism, focusing specifically on the impact of Christianity and Western education on gender relations in colonial Maragoli. By examining the Christian teachings and how these were integrated into the Maragoli gender setting, Western Education programs, together with the male and female gender inclusion into these programs, the research explores how these colonial aspects impacted on Maragoli gender relations. In doing so, it responds to a pressing national and scholarly need, offering insights that can guide gender studies, African historiography, religious doctrines, education stakeholders and policymakers in amplifying voices that can bridge the pre-colonial and colonial gap on the highlighted themes.

1.1 Research Objective

To analyse the contribution of Christianity and Western education on dynamics in Colonial Maragoli gender relations.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The study was pegged on the gender analysis theory. This theory is also known as the Havard Analytical Framework owing to its origin in the Havard institute of International Relations (March et al., 1999). As a theory, Gender analysis was advanced by Carolyn Moser in 1980s. The use of Gender Analysis began in the 1980s after scholars realized the importance of taking gender as an important analytical category. As a theory, Gender Analysis traces its tenets from philosophical, psychoanalytic and anthropological backgrounds. The theory is, therefore, interdisciplinary and therefore adequate enough to explain the current research interdisciplinary nature spread across the pre-colonial and colonial eras. Gender analysis problematizes gender relations in the on-going struggles between local actors over meaning and control of strategic resources and relationships. Through Gender analysis, a focus is put on the complex interactions of power, knowledge and agency on the analysis of gender relations and struggles (Reeves & Baden, 2000). By doing so, it is possible to explore how these interactions operate in every-day life and affect natural resource management through on going processes of negotiation and resistance within gender relations. Through this theory, the study was able to situate the role that social systems key among them being education and religion play in the formation of gender relations. The interaction of social relationships and ideology greatly impact on gender relations. In Africa, social systems and ideology have influenced the social organization of the societies. In pre-colonial period, the systems of patriarchy and matriarchy not only influenced the socio-political but also economic organization. The theory therefore adequately helped the study interrogate the tripartite relationship between education, religion and gender through the pre-colonial and colonial epochs.

2.2 Empirical Review

The colonial encounter in Kenya was deeply shaped by the twin forces of Christianity and Western education. Among the Maragoli people, these forces were not neutral; they were gendered, hierarchical, and deeply political. This review explores how missionary education and Christian conversion reconfigured gender roles and access to education in colonial Maragoli between 1895 and 1963.

Missionaries, particularly from Protestant denominations, were instrumental in introducing formal education to African communities. Their primary goal was evangelization, but education became a strategic tool for conversion. Mission schools taught literacy and religious doctrine, often privileging boys over girls due to both European patriarchal norms and local customs (Meier zu Selhausen, 2019). Mutongi while writing on the same topic observes that the Mission stations set up in Maragoli provided a safe haven for many orphaned Maragoli boys and later girls who ran there in search for the basics of life especially food and medicare. Such boys and girls turned up to be the first beneficiaries of the mission education and Christianity and. This group found its way into the colonial civil service a colonial avenue to prominence hence changing the precolonial despised status of widows as a desperate gender group. (Mutongi, 2007).

Berman (1974) argues that missionaries viewed education as a civilizing mission, with girls often relegated to domestic science and moral instruction, reinforcing gendered expectations. The Africa Inland Mission (AIM), and Friends African Mission (FAM) active in western Kenya, exemplified this approach, establishing schools that prioritized male leadership and literacy (Theuri, 2013, Mutongi, 2007). Colonial education systems institutionalized gender disparities. Girls' education was often limited to basic literacy and domestic training, while boys were groomed for leadership and clerical roles. De Haas and Frankema (2018) show that gender-specific literacy gaps widened during the colonial period, with long-term consequences for women's empowerment. In Maragoli, Christian conversion sometimes enabled girls' access to education, but this was exceptional. Families had to navigate complex trade-offs between tradition, religion, and opportunity. Nkirote's thesis on gender power relations in Meru County reveals similar patterns of exclusion and negotiation, suggesting broader regional parallels.

Despite missionary dominance, African communities exercised agency. Some Maragoli families converted strategically to gain access to education, while others resisted missionary control by establishing independent schools or advocating for more inclusive curricula. Ronoh (2000) documents similar dynamics among the Kipsigis, where indigenous education systems coexisted and competed with colonial models.

III. METHODOLOGY

In order to collect the required data, this study employed a number of techniques including; administration of interview schedules and questions among the informants. The information obtained from the respondents was compared with other sources especially archival and secondary sources to reduce biasness. This particular research analysed its data by establishing the corroborative extent of the information from all the sources used. The oral data was carefully cross referenced with archival and secondary sources. All this information was sifted, sieved and analysed against the study objectives. This was in order to establish a historical perspective by showing causation and effect of the introduction of western education on the established Maragoli gender relations during the colonial era. This process helped the research develop themes and trends from the data collected. Thereafter, the study established the trends and patterns in the Maragoli education systems right from the pre-colonial through colonial era. This was along the gender lens to establish a sequence of events in regard to the Maragoli pre-colonial education in regard to western education. All these trends were hereafter developed and discussed in sub headings.

The study population was drawn from Maragoli Christian converts aged between forty to ninety-nine years. This age range was picked on the grounds that at forty, most of these individuals must have in a way or the other interacted with the themes under the present study. This is because within this age bracket, such individuals are considered as key players in the society decision making. Above ninety-nine, most of the respondents were noted having lost coherence. Both men and women were included since each gender had a unique contribution in the study. This particular study was contextualized within the historical analytical-research design. The study was carried out in Maragoli land-the current Sabatia and Vihiga Sub counties, Vihiga County in Western Kenya, with October 2023 to March 2024 serving as the field work duration. In order to get adequate data for the study from the field, 22 major respondents were interviewed.

Regarding the inclusion criteria, Elders from Maragoliland were contacted in order to provide useful information on the gender roles of both men and women in Pre-colonial Maragoli. The process of change that occurred among the Maragoli men and women after their interaction with Christianity. Those who work closely with the church, such as church administrators and church elders-These officials informed the research on the role of mission churches as agents of change in the areas where they were established. The other group of informants included Spiritual leaders and some Christian converts who played a crucial role as agents of change as was directed by Christian missionaries. This group proved insightful in furnishing the research with the needed data on the church teachings and doctrines and their impact on the established Maragoli gender relations, western education and its consequential impact during the colonial era. Individuals below 40 years, Adults above 100 years were excluded from the study due to their limited exposure to the themes under study and the lack of coherence respectively.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

4.1 Pre-Colonial era Maragoli Indigenous Education System

The pre-colonial Maragoli family was founded on the principal of highly gendered relations between the male and female members constituting the family unit. The individual family acted as the basic social unit that co-operated most widely and intensely in their activities of everyday life (Mambai FGD). It consisted of a husband, wife, and unmarried children. There was a clearly defined division of duties within the family. Both men and women played a significant role. However, this was only possible if one was married (Kavulavu, 2020). The woman was partly the co-owner of the land that belonged to her husband. Due to the patriarchal establishments in the Maragoli society, the man

was regarded as the titular owner /commander of the homestead-*Omwene hango*. However, this man's position was checkmated by the Maragoli high regard to the wife/wives of the homestead as the household owner-*omwene inyumba*. In order to preserve such gender relations among other key social economic and political Maragoli life-long customs; a system of beliefs was developed.

These beliefs though uncoded due to the pre-colonial Maragoli pre-literate status, the Maragoli life-long informal education system greatly preserved the Maragoli cultural insights and ensured that these beliefs were religiously passed down from one generation to the next. These set of norms, knowledge and attitudes were demonstrable in the Maragoli social, political and economic milieu. Such knowledge helped the Maragoli interact with their physical environment with a sense of take and give (Muchanga, 1998). The peoples' knowledge is widely labelled as indigenous, ecological or traditional knowledge or referred to as folk ecology, folk science, ethnoscience, ethnoecology, traditional environmental or local scientific knowledge. In the true and actualized African view, folk science referred to that which has been harvested after hard labour and the result of which is usually guardedly kept in store for the purpose of alleviating human problems and food security. Wisdom is related to experience, skill, self-control and an understanding of the community's good depending on age. This explains why the custodians of this wisdom were old people from whom it was disseminated to the new generations in the course of the normal socialisation processes and apprenticeship (Chavakali FGD). Among the Maragoli, such knowledge was preserved through a taboo system-*imijiru*. Through this, the societal dos and don'ts were clearly defined to all and sundry and measures developed to ensure the rules were observed. This was in order to maintain political order and socio-economic tranquility. At the social level, the Maragoli education process was segmented into various stages of life. Key among these stages being the early infancy stage, the adolescent stage and finally adulthood. At infancy, the Maragoli had an induction like education system aimed at equipping the young ones with the society's cultures including but not limited to language, mannerisms and the basic traditional Maragoli work ethics.

The early life education was done at the family level with the parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles taking a lead role. At this stage, the wholesomeness and sacred aspects of the Maragoli way of life constantly infused into the infants' lives. This was with an emphasis on virtuous and communal aspects of the Maragoli way of life. The next stage was at the adolescence; the adolescence education acted as a preparatory adulthood education. At this level, boys and girls were often separated and taken through vigorous societal dictates that would help them squarely face life with its full challenges and opportunities (Wu Mulalu FGD) The boys' education at this level attained its climax during the post circumcision one to two months seclusion period. The Maragoli circumcision took place in specific river valleys/ forests-*vivanda* with the initiates-*vakuru* there after being led into a house of an elder in the village. Such a house became the *itumbi*. *Itumbi* house belonged to an elder of the village who was entrusted to teach the initiates about the socio-economic aspects of their society (Muchanga, 1998). In regard to the girl child education, it lacked a formal structure like their boys' counter parts due to the Maragoli not practicing clitoridectomy.

This notwithstanding, the Maragoli girls had evening sessions with their grandmothers during which they were taught on life issues ranging from cooking and how to be a responsible wife. On attaining adolescence, the girls of an extended family or village would all be gathered into a specific house of an old woman where they would be given finer tutorials on mannerisms and the societal expectations as young adults (Chavakali FGD, Ayot, 1990). Girls' pre-marriage education climaxed in the wedding preparations. An occasion during which the women folk as a significant social group of the society show cased their prowess in the preparation of the bride and finally presenting her for the traditional Maragoli wedding. Adulthood education was so amorphous and mostly individualized. There were for example cases where an ill-prepared wife would be sent back to her matrimonial home to be taught on certain key aspects pertaining marriage. Such included cooking, infidelity, disrespect to the husband and his relatives among others. These cases would also be forwarded to the women councils or sittings for discussions and later guidance (Mambai FGD). An irresponsible man would also be called to the council of elders for counseling sessions and thereafter be reprimanded through fines or any other form of punishment deemed fit by the council. All the above sessions were educational moments for the mature and adult male and female members of the Maragoli society.

From the ongoing discussion on Maragoli indigenous knowledge, it is evident that the pre-colonial Maragoli society had varied descriptions and terminologies regarding this knowledge. Terms such as "Knowledge of the world" *Ovogeti vwi kivara/ ovogeti vwu kwivurwa navwo* or man's knowledge that was not common were used in reference to this knowledge. From the Maragoli oralities, this knowledge comprised of witchcraft, healing, rainmaking, hailstone stopping, identification of good soils, animals to be hunted, the best grass, identification of totem animals and the like. The Maragoli traditional leaders/ elders were the custodians of this knowledge. This was because, the elders through constant interaction with the environment had accumulated experience. It was from these elders that the youthful generation tapped this knowledge and passed it to posterity. A section of such knowledge was attributed to the ancestral spirits *Misambwa*, making some people talented in mysteries on the environment. Others simply inherited it from their grandparents (D16, O.I: 2023, Muchanga, 1998).

The traditional Maragoli education had distinct salient features. These included; it was transmitted through apprenticeship. In this education, the target was the youthful generation who were made to observe and note what their masters were doing as a learning process. This aspect of learning seems to have been not only among the Maragoli but cut across a significant portion of the pre-colonial Africa. Kenyatta while writing on how the experienced Agikuyu herds men trained their youth to keep count of their livestock, notes that the young boys would be made to know the flock not by counting their number but keenly memorized the sheep features such as colour, gender, and even body structure (Kenyatta, 1938). Among the major skills passed on to the boys included curing of animal diseases, basketry and weaving, iron working and smelting and even house building skills. Some of these skills such as herbalism were hallowed and thus sacredly guarded and only transmitted after a thorough training and coronation. Such stringent measure in transmission were mechanisms to safeguard the skills from possible abuse. Apprenticeship as a process called for obedience, frequent testing and hard work from the learners. Upon acquisition of such specialized skills, a token of appreciation was given to the master.

Indigenous Maragoli education was also holistic in nature, a quality that enabled the Maragoli as a people value and appreciate the interconnected nature of life. Through this education, both the moral/immoral aspects of life were taught, the social political and economic aspects and even the feminine and masculine essentials of life were all packaged and disseminated in their entirety (Chavakali FGD). The Maragoli community due to patriarchal tendencies, the men and women were never equal, but their roles were coined to complement each other. This was because men and women needed each other's labour for social production (Kavulavu, 2015). Through the taboo system, there was an established gender balance to ensure that the woman place was redeemed and dignified and never suffocated by the male dominance. Among the Maragoli for example, the worst curse that one would ever receive came from a woman (Mambai FGD). In such a scenario, the elderly woman would strip naked. This was later followed by the woman bitterly condemning all the displeasure she was going through. The magnitude of such a curse made all the society members including men to fear women and not push them beyond their limits; be it their wives or relatives.

In conclusion, it is worth noting that the pre-colonial Maragoli education was utility driven, gender sensitive and a life-long process. It was an education developed to enable the Maragoli be responsive and adaptive to their immediate environment both physical and spiritual. It is from this premise that the Western education and Christianity as key colonial socio-economic agents of change on the pre-colonial Maragoli gender relations will be measured.

4.2 The Colonial Era

4.2.1 Western Education and Christianity During the initial Colonial Era; 1895-1920.

The period 1900-1910 could be defined as a decade of missionary scramble for the region. The Friends African Mission (FAM) had acquired Kaimosi in 1902 and the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAC) Nyang'ori in 1909 (Amisi, 2021). The scramble for mission stations in Maragoli following the difficult era of conquest and subjugation of imperial forces in a way depicts the manner in which colonization occurred. First missionaries were used as pawns in the imperialist Chess game, then as instruments of alienation by wilfully enticing the Maragoli into accepting the Europeans way of life all in the name of civilization (Aseka, 1989). Willis R. Hotchkiss, Edgar T. Hole and Arthur B. Chilson were the first missionaries to work in Maragoli. They were descendants of evangelical Quakers who left the Eastern United States in the mid- to late nineteenth century and moved westward to seek greener pastures and more religious freedom (Mutongi, 2007). These frontier Quakers became evangelical fundamentalists, setting themselves apart from their Hicksite brothers back East, who stressed the need for quietness and waiting upon the Spirit. The idea of establishing a mission in Africa originated from Hotchkiss who had earlier worked in Ukambani for four years in late 1890s as a Scottish missionary. In July 1902 these three pioneer missionaries arrived in Kaimosi from Mombasa using the newly constructed Kenya Uganda railway. The Maragoli chiefs warmly welcomed the missionaries with a willingness that greatly impressed the missionaries (Ibid). The chiefs gave them land and intelligence in regard to how to easily navigate through the Maragoli land. Additionally, through the chieftaincy, the missionaries were accorded the necessary administrative backup in implementing their mission (Mambai FGD). From this Kaimosi centre, various mission centres in Maragoli were established. It therefore becomes obvious that the contribution of the local people was heavily relied on in the establishment and the spread of Christianity in Maragoli.

Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada PAC, was another pioneer mission Church in Maragoli. The church was later changed to Pentecostal Assemblies of God (PAG) in 1918. This was after, the Pentecostal conference held in 1913 at Arkansas in America (Bosire, 2017). On its inception, PAC drew its preachers from a diversity of backgrounds including fishermen, farmers, tradesmen and other professionals. In the gender dimension, it was notable that a majority of the church pastor trainees were men with women forming a minority. Such a background was assumed necessary in enabling the churches adequately respond to the diverse needs of the church both social and economic. Mugambi (2009) and Kavaya (2003) note that PAC work in Kenya was pioneered by Rev. Otto and Marion Keller in 1918. Marion was a wife to Rev. Karl Wittick who was a missionary in Tanzania. Otto Keller was initially a business man but abandoned it on getting the sad news about the death of his friend Karl Wittick. He then decided to come to Africa in order to complete

his friend's missionary call. He landed in Kenya but because of World War 1, he was not allowed to go to Tanzania then a German colony (ibid). Marion joined Otto Keller in Kima Church Mission Society (CMS) and later got married. The two are accredited to be the founders of PAG church in Kenya. Initially, Nyang'ori missions land belonged to Clouder Miller a missionary of the independent Pentecostal Mission in 1908. The land belonged to British army officers Bolt and Gahmers. Owing to his agricultural background, Otto Keller met Miller in the agricultural farm in Nyang'ori and became friends. Out of this friendship, Miller left Keller in charge of this farm and mission station as Miller went back to Furlough. It was in 1920s that Miller sold the mission to Keller under PAC mission which met the cost of the farm for PAG missionary activities (Bosire, 2017). It is therefore evident that the founders of PAC were great agriculturalists and academicians by extension. It will be interesting therefore to keenly follow the PAG later doctrines and see how the church will later integrate western education ideals into its congregants and even the theological trainees from the mission. The church has also been founded by a woman effort, hence another interesting aspect to be monitored on how the church will integrate and solidify the gender relations phenomenon in its operations.

In the foregoing discussion on church establishment in Maragoli, a number of questions emerge from this realization. These include; What factors led them to establish schools, what influenced local people to become Christians and acquire Western education? The most appropriate answers to these questions can only be sought by a deeper analysis of the intentions and nature of colonial conquest in Kenya and Maragoli in particular. Among the characteristic features of colonialism right from its onset was its need to establish a new political order distinguished by new political values and power relationships. Colonialism also came in with a new economic order based on materialism and exploitation. In their administration, the British administrators and the local African representatives ruled oppressively. More often or not, these officials threatened to employ force with a number of occasions actualizing their threats (Ndege, 1987). Such tendencies scared away the locals. Within no time, the Maragoli were made to copy the social forms of the colonialists. This was through adapting Christian ideals and values, going for formal education and finally assimilating the value systems which were acceptable in the new colonial dispensation. This phenomenon, explains Paulo Friere position that, the oppressed, at certain point of their existential experience, adopts the attitude of adherence to the oppressor.

Although the Maragoli were converted to Christianity because of its material appeal, their expectations were never realized. Their enthusiasm for western education was neither completely satisfied nor rewarded. The education and Christian religion however made it possible for the colonial capitalism to be effectively established in Maragoli. Through this education for example, the Maragoli were articulated into the new colonial demands through an intellectual reorganization and new preferences on life issues. The educated Maragoli men and women for example became the new colonial chiefs and professionals with sufficient salaries to set the new colonial pace for others. This elite class was the first to appreciate the new colonial cash crops and modern seeds. Such included the exotic bean, maize and the newly introduced groundnut varieties (D13, OI: 2023).

These colonial endeavours to articulate the Maragoli into the new colonial order was never devoid of challenges. For instance, the mission education curriculum was not relevant to the needs of the local people (Ndege: 1987). Financial limitations meant that throughout the colonial period the number of schools was very small relative to the local people's demand for education. Nevertheless, through the gospels of salvation, obedience and work, Christianity and colonial education performed its socializing role in the colonial world. Education, both in the hands of the missionaries and under the supervision and control of the colonial state, was simple, aimed at implanting certain truths with a minimum of reasoned explanation. The African was assumed to have little power of reasoning. Learning was carried out by rote and by faith. All that was taught was accepted as legitimate by virtue of the authority of the teacher. Little attempt was made to make education practical and relevant to the local peoples' everyday experiences.

The new colonial education system impacted on Maragoli gender relations in a number of ways. The children who were initially depended on for household labour were now increasingly joining formal education through mission stations especially the Kaimos mission centre. Kenda Mutongi while writing on this observes that young men, who had disobeyed their widowed mothers by frequenting the missionary centres, were thriving (Mutongi:2007). They ate well at the centres, and the missionaries provided them with the medicines they needed. Under the close tutelage of their benefactors, the young men spent their days working in the fields or in the household, learning to read and write and listening to the missionaries discuss the Bible. This colonial education was looked at as avenues to secure the new white-collar jobs availed in the colonial employment structures.¹ During the Mambai FGD sessions, it was confirmed that formal education sessions delinked the Maragoli youths from the apprenticeship sessions which were vital in inculcating the necessary food production skills such as cultivation, hunting and gathering, together with iron working (Mambai FGD, Amisi, 2020). Christianity and Western education thus emerged as colonial tools that helped articulate the Maragoli young men and women into the new colonial spectrum. This was first by changing their mannerisms and

mindset to fit into the new Christian religious thinking. Though gradual, this change was a permanent way of entrenching the western ideals into the Maragoli society.

The converts were expected to forego their so-called superstitions and instead take up Western habits (Mutongi, 2007). Part of these considered superstitions were Maragoli cultures and education systems regarding ecological knowledge on food preservation and cultivation techniques which had been previously passed to the youths informally through traditional education (D14, O.I: 2023). These new converts were also expected to value, even covet, material goods and - as true capitalist Protestants - work hard to get them. Such teachings greatly contributed to the dissolution of the established Maragoli communal lifestyle. Since most of the early Maragoli converts were young boys mostly of widowed women who lacked a father figure to stamp the necessary fatherly authority. Such boys grew up into a modern capitalist generation later to be depended on by the society to spread the new colonial gospel of modernization as per the colonial definition. The exclusion of women in the pioneer Christian conversion led to gender bias against women in church leadership.

This further limited women alternatives to life forcing them to concentrate on agriculture hence feminization of Maragoli agriculture. This was part of the colonial capitalism ideology of using religion as a platform of articulating the Maragoli into the new capitalist mode of production.

According to the Missionary gospel, the Maragoli only needed to transform their laziness to industry and to earn their keep, and then they would become less prone to take what is not theirs (Mutongi: 2007). This reference to taking what was not theirs, is a demonstration of a clear conflict between the previous Maragoli communal ownership in the transition process to capitalistic life. Ownership as per the Maragoli pre-colonial establishment had been based on necessity. During the Pre-colonial era in Maragoli, for somebody to claim a piece of land lying fallow, he only needed to erect some boundary around it in form of twigs. After a week or so, if no body protested that particular individual went on to possess the land (Wagner, 1956). It can therefore be concluded that the pre-colonial Maragoli society did not have the individualistic tendencies as anticipated by the missionaries. It was from such an ideological conflict that the missionaries encouraged their new converts to “use their hands to make bricks and to build with them a comfortable home that is suitably furnished or grow crops from which they can realize means to buy clothing and other necessities (Mutongi, 2007). Hard work would turn the Maragoli into self-sufficient, conscientious, and, above all, honest men and women “becoming a Christian does not mean merely learning to read and write and becoming a school teacher or a preacher, but it does mean to be a steady, industrious man or woman, living out in everyday life the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.” These were, in short, the tenets “practical Christianity” and, as one missionary put it, among “the many things the poor ignorant Maragoli” needed to learn.

The missionary principal objective in regard to Christianity was that the new religion was to bring about a total over-hall in the manner in which the Maragoli were doing their things. The new converts were to change their building design from the previous circular manner to a linear approach, with the new converts houses built in a straight line; locally called *ilini* to create the Christian villages. The coming of the Missionaries in Maragoli therefore greatly impacted on almost every aspect of Maragoli life. The new Christian villages became the centres of Christian civilization. From the Chavakali FGD oral submissions, through such residential boundaries between the converts and the heathens, the converts were able to retain their purity free from the Maragoli superstitions (Chavakali FGD). From these Christian villages, the Maragoli converts could easily spread the teachings to their new neighbours. These Christian villages, called *iliini* (line), were named so because the houses in them were laid out in two straight lines on either side of the road. The residents of the villages were expected to live in a morally upright and separated as per the Christian teachings. Such boundaries were aimed at distinguishing them from the pre-colonial Maragoli superstitious and uncultured life as per the Christian standards (D17, O.I: 2023). The creation of these villages led to social disintegration of the pre-colonial Maragoli family and lineage set up which had been previously the epicentres of Maragoli food production system. From the lineage kinships, communal labour groups (*uvufuva*) had been organized by the women to ease the labour demands during peak seasons.

However, due to the introduction of the Christian villages, such labour structures were disrupted since there were those who had failed to be converted but initially members of such labour groups (Wolfe, 2006). Conversely, the Christian village idea backed up by the Western education introduced agricultural reforms which positively impacted the planting pattern among the Maragoli. Key among these reforms included row planting and use of animal manure. Through these agricultural innovations, a distinct agricultural class among the converts emerged characterized with improved agricultural yields (D3, O.I: 2023). Members of these villages were instructed to plant their crops in lines unlike the other Maragoli who continued to broadcast their seeds. Such new rules continued to widen the gap between the Maragoli Christian converts and the rest (Mutongi, 2007).

In regard to social order and kinship systems, Christian missionary work greatly altered the Maragoli settlement. There were cases where the mission centres used the colonial structures such as the chiefs to effect eviction of non-converts in order to create the Christian village system. Mutongi in her writing notes the following;

... my parents left in the morning to go find out where they could go live. When they returned, they found all their belongings in the yard and their hut torn down. The chief and his Christian people had evicted them...they went and lived as *avamanya* [refugees] with people of other clans. And this is how my people became *masikini tu* (Swahili for just poor), paupers, just paupers.” Olovoga stared at me, signalling that the story was over.... evictions obviously bred ill will: the evicted felt their rights utterly violated, and those they went to live with felt infringed upon and, worse still, infringed upon by distant clan members to whom they felt they owed little. “The evicted families felt like beggars, just beggars,” Olovoga recalled.

The above statement serves to illustrate the manner in which Christianity impacted on the pre-colonial Maragoli social order which had defined the Maragoli food production mechanisms in regard to cultivation and also the gender relations. In the pre-colonial era, the Maragoli had settled based on their clans. The inter-clan relations such as marriage had been territorially defined. The evictions however caused a mix up of various clans leading to a dilution of the established Maragoli male female relations. From the oral submission, it was also noted that not all Christian village set up intentions and results were negative. The new villages also created a new sense of brotherhood among the new converts. The Christian families worked together cooperatively and built the new houses within a few days. The men put up the poles, thatched the roof, while the women were plastering the walls with mud, and the house was finished in a week. This was especially because the Christians had a full backing of the local chiefs (D5, O.I: 2023). The above discussion forms part of a demonstration to illustrate how the new colonial establishments built on certain aspects of the pre-colonial Maragoli such as gender relations at the household level and restructured the roles of the chiefs to help establish the colonial rule as per the articulation of the modes of production theory. The gender dimension of how the Maragoli men and women through their personal narrations in the present research enabled the research adequately illustrate the individual and collective perspectives and dynamics within the gender epistemology as a research philosophy.

From the on-going discussion, it is evident that the introduction of Christianity into Maragoli brought conflict and contradictions in the established Maragoli norms and belief system associated with Maragoli marriage, a key ingredient in the pre-colonial Maragoli food production system and its related male- female gender relations. Christianity failed to accord dignity and respect to the pre-colonial communal aspects of marriage. Parents and relatives were by passed and assumed in the marriage preparations. All this was due to the individualistic tendencies introduced by Christianity which failed to acknowledge a Christian marriage within the traditional Maragoli framework (Kavulavu, 2020). In this regard, Christianity managed to change a number of key aspects of Maragoli belief system which had formed the support base for the food production sub sector. Due to introduction of Christianity, western laws and values, the pre-colonial Maragoli status of women was significantly weakened. Polygamy as a key feature of Maragoli marriage was replaced with monogamy. Consequently, the house property complex lost some of its logic and women’s status as heads of houses and the concept of house property were gradually replaced by the perception that men were heads of households and guardians of all household property (Mambai FGD).

Christianity and western education continued to walk hand in hand during the decolonization period just as it was the case in the inter-war era. The decolonization era witnessed a paradigm shift in the crusaders of the Western education. The youthful educated Maragoli began to replace the ageing pioneer Maragoli educationists. This newly educated elites pressurized for more Secondary school education access for an enhanced Maragoli bargain in the economic transformation (Wagner, 1939). According to this group, western education translated into accumulation of wealth through colonial employment in teaching and the general civil service together with catalysing the Maragoli entrepreneurial expansion.

Western education introduced the Maragoli to a new “world” and a different sense of self. Western education meant a paying job, better social status, and authority over those who could not write. Pupils were also engaged in a variety of training, which gave them manual skills. Such training included brick-making, building modern and improved houses, hygiene, and improved crop production. It was through such industrial training that the missionaries intended to introduce more than just the Bible to the Maragoli (Mutongi, 2007). Through such skills, the Maragoli youths were equipped with extra skills to expand their entrepreneurial engagements hence diversifying their food production endeavours from the initial on farm agricultural engagements. The missionaries also made a major contribution to the decolonization era Maragoli gender relations by insisting that boys and girls should have equal access to education. According to the Maragoli culture, women and children were considered as “objects and not subjects”. For instance, most of the Maragoli traditions stated that “Women and children shall be given care and protection” (Chavakali FGD). Consequently, when the male head was not at home, his wife would say “There is no one here except me and the children.” This traditional view is what was opposed by the missionaries. When they instituted education for women, missionaries thus viewed women as “subjects”. Accordingly, women were now supposed to be given access to more privileges previously denied to them, for example, the right to eat chicken and eggs (D16, O.I: 2023).

Christianity thus met:

Resistance on the part of Maragoli elders difficult to overcome, particularly regarding girl child education. Maragoli men believed that women were to perform domestic duties and not “waste” time in class. Missionaries, however, encouraged girls to go to schools where reading and writing, elementary arithmetic, cooking, knitting, laundry, and child-care were taught. However, changing the community’s perception towards girl education was not that easy. This was largely due to the fear that educated women might “question the privilege of elders to select husbands for them” (Odwako, 1975).

Initially, women seeking education were those who had convinced their fathers that education was necessary for a girl child or who had run away from home in order to pursue education at missionary centre. But during the decolonization period, fathers and even the widowed women who had converted to Christianity and seen the benefits of mission training began to push for the education of their daughters and sent them to school (Mambai FGD, Mutongi, 2007). Marginalized members of the society, e.g., witches and women escaping from forced marriage, converted to Christianity with the aim of gaining a new identity. To these people therefore, conversion constituted a therapeutic act of self-aggrandizement.

Maragoli women who went to school were taught rudimentary methods of maternal and child care, nutrition, and home-making. One of the women teacher evangelists was Risper Avuya, who became a primary teacher at Kaimosi primary (D15, O.I:2023). In addition, women who went to school initiated the beginning of a wage-earning class of women among the Maragoli and it reflected the widening transformative impact of Christianity and its agencies. With the success of the pioneer working class women, parents began to take their daughters to schools in increasing numbers both within and outside Maragoli mainly to Bunyore Girls in Kima, Girls Boarding School (GBS) at Kaimosi, and Butere Girls. Subsequently, girl child education just like that of boys, was seen as a future investment. Parents, therefore, were willing to pay school fees for their daughters (D20, O.I:2023, Mutongi, 2007). The newly educated Maragoli girls created a new class characterized with western modern mannerisms such as professional training and government employment. This class became commonly known as the GBS girls- *avakana va jibiesi* (D18, O.I: 2023). Kenda Mutongi while writing on the worries of the heart, noted that such a classy attitude could easily be observed in the interaction with such girls as the following statement illustrates;

Mary Jendeka, a GBS alumna, displayed no timidity in boasting of her admission to the GBS, saying that it was not a place “for ordinary girls.” She happily cataloged the ways in which the GBS girls were exceptional: “We were wastaarabu, really good girls, we respected our teachers and parents, and we married civilized husbands.” Stella Mbecha, another proud alumna, gloated, “I was one of the pioneers in civilization. You see, I went to the GBS. And that is where ustaarabu [modernity] started. No one, no one in North Maragoli had a house full of *ustaarabu* like mine (Mutongi, 2007).”

Quality education for such girls not only prepared them for a better marriage and family but also gave them an enhanced chance of managing their agricultural fields better to the admiration of the villagers. These women upon marriage did their best to modernize their agricultural endeavours by growing modern crop varieties and rearing exotic livestock breeds.

In the period between 1950s and 1963, the most notable development in Maragoli just like her neighbouring Idakho was the changing status of women, as reflected in the interest in girl child education (Kavulavu: 2015). The Maragoli emphasized that education for their daughters was not only an investment, but also an investment in the family’s social security. This was from the evidence found, which indicated that a high proportion of girls who had gone to school tended to use their education to help siblings and were more concerned with contributing to siblings’ school fees than boys who tended to emphasize acquiring capital to buy land. The decolonization era also witnessed a paradigm shift in the gender relations between the widows and her deceased husband’s relatives in relation to girl child education. The widowed mothers who had their bright daughters felt encouraged to solicit for help from their husband’s brothers. Such relatives easily obliged knowing that they would receive a fair return of their investment upon such girls being married off (D4, O.I:2023).

The success of this female education made more parents begin to view girl child education equally important as that of boys. Indeed, educated women attracted a higher bride price (KNA: DC/NN.1/30). This position was also confirmed by archival sources. This was because like men, educated women were employed in various sectors where they earned salaries and attained the status of the elite in their own right. Moreover, educated girls upon marriage became village idols. They acted as community mobilizers and centres of consultations on almost all village unfoldings (Mutongi, 2007). These women used their influence to access loans and invest in the newly introduced cash crops especially coffee hence boosting their agricultural returns. Even upon being widowed, unlike the pre-colonial Maragoli women, the decolonization era Maragoli widows seemed to have more stamina and were never looked at as weaklings soliciting for patriarchal donations and favours. This attitude clearly reflected the new contrasting roles of Christian women and men in the new economic situation of the 1960s. However, the development of girls’ schools was never established in Maragoli.

Many Maragoli girls who passed the intermediate examination were forced to find secondary education either at Bunyore Girls and other mission schools, like Butere Girls' Secondary School, Kaimosi Girls Boarding School at Kaimosi, or African Girls High School, Kikuyu. A few joined either teacher training or nursing colleges, which were then ranked lower than secondary education. Through formal education, Maragoli educated Maragoli girls became exceptional, it made them civilized-*wastaarabu*, real good girls, full of respect to the elders and married civilized husbands. However, these outstanding qualities a times worked against them as one of the respondents observed quoting Daudi kabaka's song;(D7, O.I: 2023)

*Msichana wa sura nzuri,
Nini inakufanya usioleke,
Masomo unayo ya Kutosha,
Hata ng'ambo ukaenda ukarudi.*

The song pauses like a wonder on why such a beautiful girl, cannot get married, despite having an outstanding education, in addition to a wide global travel. According to the oral submissions, through education, a new class of Maragoli women had emerged which was beyond the pre-colonial Maragoli set definition of a submissive, obedient and home confined wife. This was due to the new assertive and independent nature of the newly educated class of Maragoli women. These new independent minded women outsmarted the pre-colonial Maragoli men mindset making some of such women being rendered unmanageable within the Maragoli marriage setup.

The high demand for western education made many girls who missed GBS admission go for elementary education in domesticity. This was with the hope of learning the basics (Mutongi, 2007). The enthusiasm among the Maragoli families to acquire western education for their girls and women in general made C.H Williams, the DC of North Kavirondo complement the Maragoli for the increased girls in the learning institutions. He further observed that female education gained popularity even in the local LNC meetings (KNA: DC/NN.1/30). The positive attitude towards girls' education had been prompted by the change in preference for educated men to go for a hand in marriage for the educated women.

During the 1940s and 1950s, there was a remarkable increase in demand for domestic science. In regard to Maragoli, the domestic science received a boost from Maendeleo ya Wanawake (Advancement of women). The main aim of this movement was to train women in home science (Wipper, 1975). Through this movement, women were educated on a number of topics ranging from feeding of infants, family budgeting, home maintenance and modern methods of farming. This emphasis on women education during the decolonization period was not only limited to Maragoli. Writing on this topic, M.W. Musalia observes that Jeanes school in Kabete emphasized on community development. To further this, the college tailored its curriculum to be gender sensitive and responsive to the decolonization gender demands (Musalia, 2010). The men section of the college had a school farm with farming courses together with other courses including citizenship, and a hygiene department under medical training School. The women on their part had the craft school under Miss Hollinshead who taught needle work, cookery, laundry and child care. Once the trainees were done with the course, they were expected to join the women clubs in the rural areas and share what they had acquired.

The educated elites played an important role in bringing about the process of change in Maragoli. For the educated elites, the church had provided a vehicle for economic development. Church membership, therefore, not only provided the elites and their children access to higher education, but also practical experience in administrative procedures and behaviour according to new social norms. The Christian church had therefore effectively succeeded in articulating and integrating the Maragoli both socially and economically into the colonial capitalism ideals as per the articulation of modes of production theory. These were important skills for holding responsible positions in local government. In many locations in Maragoli, administrative officers were men who had attended schools (D9, O.I:2023).

As these new economic patterns developed, women and children increasingly dominated church membership among the Maragoli converts. Yet, the male educated elites still controlled the most influential positions in the churches and directed its attention to the needs of the educated. For instance, although there were qualified women teachers in the 1960s, none of them was a headteacher. Although women could preach or lead prayers and hymns in the churches at the local level, they rarely sat on the important finance or nominating committees. One major limit to the power of women though was the dissent especially in their views about women exercising leadership over men. In this conflict, the church did little to serve the needs of women whose roles were seen by the African leadership as one of performing a supportive role in the church development (Kavulavu, 2015).

In one way or another, missionaries were great innovators in Maragoli society. Becoming a Christian brought considerable material advantages; "progressive" sector with paid jobs, such as teachers and the pursuit of wealth or wider knowledge. The gradual shifting from economic self-sufficiency within the family to increasing dependence on outside markets and a money income from wage labour affected both division of labour and social cohesion of the family. With regard to division of labour, where increasing demand for a cash income was met by a more intense

cultivation of the soil for the production of commercial crops, the female members of the household often had to bear the brunt of extra work while men were out on wage labour (Amisi, 2020).

The economic part played by the wife in the household economy became quite different from that in then traditional family. She was no longer tied down to so many daily duties of the family, provided her husband was wealthy enough to afford hired labour. Women gained a new freedom. They were relieved to most of field work and hence devoted more time to bringing up their children and to a more elaborate housekeeping, with the demand for a higher material standard of living (Wagner, 1956). In many ways, this weakened the economic case of polygamy. At the same time, many young men were accustomed to looking after themselves through the life of urban towns or as wage labourers on Europeans plantation led to a bachelor life and postponed marriage until the late 1920s. Moreover, widowers, who formerly were forced for economic reason to remarry, often stayed single.

Apart from Christianity, the establishment of colonial rule in Kenya provided some insights to some women in Maragoli who came to know their rights within the new social environment. During the pre-colonial era, women were totally submissive to their husbands. But with the establishment of colonial rule, new social and economic development occurred which drastically changed the position of women in Maragoli. Missionaries preached against some cultural practices, such as polygamy and other related anti-Christian practices. Women converts therefore demanded that they should not be bound by such customs that were contrary to Christianity.

At the same time, women were able to generate their own cash income as wage labourers and some became teachers, matrons, and evangelists in the area. All these opportunities allowed women to acquire some degree of independence.

For example, Dorothy Pitman, one of the teachers at the GBS, was happy “to watch some of the Normal Training School boys scrutinizing the girls’ sewing and other school work, which has been on display at different times in the year.” She went on to proudly claim that “many of the boys have already realized that they can have happier homes if they can secure wives who have learned some hygiene, childcare, sewing, cooking (Mutongi, 2007).”

This enthusiasm spread across all the missionary apologists especially the GBS teachers. This was often when the teachers saw their girls moving up the civilization ladder after the GBS education. Such upward civilization mobility attained its climax in occasions when their girls got married through the Christian wedding especially to another civilized boy across the road in the Kaimosi boys’ school. Such Christian couples were expected to entertain their visitors during the wedding in a modern way characterized by modern foods such as rice, Irish potatoes, carrots among other modern foods. All these being followed by bread and tea. All these foods were to be served by local girls neatly dressed in modern uniforms (Mambai FGD). These missionary apologists believed that such acts were indicators of their sprouting seeds of westernization. The missionaries were made to believe that such a couple would go and establish homes where Christ is known and revered, homes in the words of Kenda Mutongi, were so “spic and span” that they were emulated by other women (Mutongi, 2007).

Social Transformation In the period between 1950s and 1963

The most conspicuous transformation among the Maragoli in regard to western education and Christianity was the changing gender relations. The girl child position was improved tremendously courtesy of the new colonial education dynamics. The colonial Maragoli attitude towards the girl child education was that such a decision was not only an investment, but also an investment in the family’s social security. This was from the evidence found, which indicated that a high proportion of girls who had gone to school tended to use their education to aid their brothers and sisters through the new colonial demands. Key among these demands included contributing or concerned with contributing to siblings’ school fees than boys who tended to emphasize acquiring capital to buy land (Mambai FGD, Kavulavu, 2015). The success of this female education made more parents begin to view girl child education equally important as that of boys. Indeed, educated women attracted a higher bride price. This was because like men, educated women were employed in various sectors where they earned salaries and attained the status of the elite in their own right. This attitude clearly reflected the new contrasting roles of Christian women and men in the new economic situation of the 1960s. Many Maragoli girls who passed the intermediate examination were forced to find secondary education either at Bunyore Girls and other mission schools, like Butere Girls’ Secondary School, Kaimosi Girls Boarding School at Kaimosi, or African Girls High School, Kikuyu. A few joined either teacher training or nursing colleges, which were then ranked lower than secondary education. The educated elites played an important role in bringing about the process of change in Maragoli. For the educated elites, the church had provided a vehicle for economic development. Church membership, therefore, not only provided the elites and their children access to higher education, but also practical experience in administrative procedures and behaviour according to new social norms. These were important skills for holding responsible positions in local government. In a majority of Maragoli, administrative units, officers were men who had attended schools. As these new economic patterns developed, women and children increasingly dominated church membership among the Maragoli converts. Yet, the male educated elites still controlled the most influential

positions in the churches and directed its attention to the needs of the educated. For instance, although there were qualified women teachers in the 1960s, none of them was a headteacher. Although women could preach or lead prayers and hymns in the churches at the local level, they rarely sat on the important finance or nominating committees. One major limit to the power of women though was the dissent especially in their views about women exercising leadership over men. In this conflict, the church did little to serve the needs of women whose roles were seen by the African leadership as one of performing a supportive role in the church development (D15, O.I:2023). In one way or another, missionaries were great innovators in Maragoli society. Becoming a Christian brought considerable material advantages; “progressive” sector with paid jobs, such as teachers and the pursuit of wealth or wider knowledge. The gradual shifting from economic self-sufficiency within the family to increasing dependence on outside markets and a money income from wage labour affected both division of labour and social cohesion of the family.

Apart from introduction of manual skills through industrial training, the missionary phase in Maragoli brought in a number of dynamics on the pre-colonial Maragoli gender relations. With regard to division of labour, where increasing demand for a cash income was met by a more intense cultivation of the soil for the production of commercial crops, the female members of the household often had to bear the brunt of extra work while men were out on wage labour (Chavakali FGD). The economic part played by the wife in the household economy became quite different from that in the traditional family. She was no longer tied down to so many daily duties of the family, provided her husband was wealthy enough to afford hired labour. Women gained a new freedom. They were relieved to most of field work and hence devoted more time to bringing up their children and to a more elaborate housekeeping, with the demand for a higher material standard of living (Wagner, 1939). In many ways, this weakened the economic case of polygamy. At the same time, many young men were accustomed to looking after themselves through the life of urban towns or as wage labourers on Europeans plantation led to a bachelor life and postponed marriage until the late 1920s. Moreover, widowers, who formerly were forced for economic reason to remarry, often stayed single.

Moreover, Christianity upon infusion with other colonial establishments in Kenya provided an enhanced platform to some women in Maragoli who came to know their rights within the new social environment. Such awakening further brought in new gender relations complexities in the Maragoli social endeavors including but not limited to the family institution. During the pre-colonial era for example, women were totally submissive to their husbands. But with the establishment of colonial rule, new social and economic development occurred which drastically changed the manner and form in which the Maragoli men and women as social groups interacted. Missionaries preached against some cultural practices, such as polygamy and other related anti-Christian practices (Wu Mulalu, FGD). Women converts therefore demanded that they should not be bound by such customs that were contrary to Christianity. At the same time, women were able to generate their own cash income as wage labourers and some became teachers, matrons, and evangelists in the area. All these opportunities allowed women to acquire some degree of independence.

Equality for both men and women was one of the key pillars of Missionary education. This was contrary to the pre-colonial Maragoli patriarchal establishments which had placed Maragoli women and children at a lower social scale. Such attitudes had been clearly reflected in the Maragoli aphisms. In the absence of a male head in a household, the wife would be heard acknowledging that ...there is nobody here a part from me and children. This was because, the gender division of labour and the male dominance in the society had been fully integrated and accommodated in to the Maragoli way of life. Such stand points were vehemently opposed by missionaries. The mission education thus eroded such Maragoli gender relations leading to dissolution of the male gender as the authoritative figures. Such equality mindsets have led to gender role confusion, with an upsurge in single mother headed families and male neglect of their families due to their displacement from their traditional authoritative father figure roles (Mambai FGD).

In search for identity and need to assert their influence, the boy child went out and engaged in anti- social activities including drug abuse. This colonial equality further increased misery in the Maragoli society as evidenced by increased gender-based violence, family break-ups, and more recently same sex marriages. The boy -girl mutual relations and complementary relations have been adversely impacted by the colonial western education and Christian equality emphasis. All these were done in the newly established colonial urban centres. Such urbanized men also got a chance to get into illicit sexual relations with the newly freed-equality minded women who had moved to such towns in search for employment as their male counterparts. On missing employment, a number of these women joined prostitution to settle the increasing bills in the colonial set up. The sexual relations that had been sacred and institutionalized in the pre-colonial Maragoli setup was now turned into a casual street entertainment business among the newly urbanized men and women. The freed Maragoli men from the authority and provisioning for their family.

V. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

This article has demonstrated how colonialism through Christianity and Western education impacted on Maragoli gender relations. It is worth noting that scholarship on gender remains scanty not only in Maragoli but Kenya

and even Africa as a whole. It is however important to document through research the gender dynamics within time and space. Through such scholarly endeavors, the present gender dysfunctions can be addressed appropriately before humanity sinks into oblivion on gender grounds. In order to achieve this, this study delved into the pre-colonial Maragoli education system and thereafter illustrated how colonialism through Christianity and Western education impacted on the set pre-colonial Maragoli social establishments. The pre-colonial Maragoli gender assignment on males to protect and care for their women and children. This increased the men responsibility and commitment at family level. The colonial dynamics that came about made men shift such responsibilities to their empowered women and even children through colonial employment. It is such tendencies that have led to more men neglecting their responsibilities and engaging in drug abuse and irresponsible sexual relations. Such men are assured that their empowered and hence responsible women and children will fend for themselves and even cover up the men's irresponsibility. Most of the educated children took over from their fathers to educate, feed and even establish shelters for their mothers and siblings.

5.2 Recommendations

The study recommends that policy makers should come up with strategies to ensure that the progressive Pre-colonial Maragoli ideals on gender roles that have been neglected curtesy of Christianity and Western education are revisited and integrated into the post-independence Christian and Educational policies for the common good of the Maragoli society and humanity as a whole.

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APPENDICES

PRIMARY SOURCES

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

a). FGD, Maragoli Women Farmers (Busali East)

S.NO.	Code	Age	Village of Residence	Venue	Interview Date
1.	A1	65Years	Govoga	GOVOGA CHIEF'S OFFICE GROUNDS	2 nd October 2023
2.	A2	57Years	Busweta		2 nd October 2023
3.	A3	53Years	Ikobero		2 nd October 2023
4.	A4	64 Years	Butiti		2 nd October 2023
5.	A5	54 Years	Mago		2 nd October 2023
6.	A6	60 Years	Chavugami		2 nd October 2023
7.	A7	48 Years	Mukiguru		2 nd October 2023
8.	A8	58 Years	Chavogere		2 nd October 2023

b). FGD 2, Maragoli Women Farmers (Mambai)

S.NO.	Code	Age	Village of Residence	Venue	Interview Date
1.	B1	68 Years	Mambai	MAMBAI PRIMARY SCHOOL ASSEMBLY GROUND	30 th /September/2023
2.	B2	70 Years	Chanderema		30 th /September/2023
3.	B3	63 Years	Wandefa		30 th /September/2023
4.	B4	50 Years	Wagevi		30 th /September/2023
5.	B5	53 Years	Nabwani		30 th /September/2023
6.	B6	54 Years	Viyalo		30 th /September/2023
7.	B7	65 Years	Vibwoni		30 th /September/2023
8.	B8	69 Years	Jemovo		30 th /September/2023
9.	B9	63 Years	Matenga		30 th /September/2023

c). FGD3, Chavakali Men and Women Farmers (Walodeya Primary School)

S.NO.	Name	Sex	Age	Village of Residence	Venue	Interview Date
1.	C1	F	60 Years	Walodeya	WALODEYA PRIMARY SCHOOL ASSEMBLY GROUND	10 th /October/2023
2.	C2	F	62 Years	Wasundi		10 th /October /2023
3.	C3	F	63 Years	Igunga		10 th /October /2023
4.	C4	M	65 Years	Imonyero		10 th /October /2023
5.	C5	M	59 Years	Igunga		10 th /October /2023
6.	C6	F	51 Years	Keveye		10 th /October /2023
7.	C7	F	52 Years	Chavugami		10 th /October /2023
8.	C8	M	58 Years	Imonyero		10 th /October /2023
9.	C9	F	61 Years	Bukulunya		10 th /October /2023
10.	C10	M	65 Years	igunga		10 th /October /2023

ORAL INTERVIEWS

S.No.	Code	Gender	Age	Date Interviewed
1.	D1	M	65 Years	3 rd /10/2023.
2.	D2	F	44 Years	15/02/2024
3.	D3	M	68 Years	3 rd /10/ 2023
4.	D4	F	52 Years	13/01/2024
5.	D5	M	68 years	5 th /08/ 2023
6.	D6	M	63 Years	23 RD /10/2023
7.	D7	M	70 Years	3 rd /08/2023
.8	D8	F	65 Years	23 rd /10/2023
9.	D9	M	76 Years	13 Th /10/ 2023
10.	D10	M	67 Years	2 nd /07/2023.
11.	D11	M	71 Years	25 th /10/2023
12.	D12	M	65 Years	3 rd /10/2023
13.	D13	M	75 Years	20 th /09/2023
14.	D14	M	65 Years	15 th /09/2023
15.	D15	M	80 Years	20 th /06/ /2022
16	D16	F	43 Years	01/02/2024
17	D17	M	56 Years	23 RD /10/2023
18	D18	M	73 Years	12 th /10/ 2023.
19	D19	M	70 Years	13 th /07/2023.
20	D20	F	56 Years	20 th /09/ 2023.
21.	D21	F	40 Years	2 nd /02/2024
22.	D22	M	56Years	20 th /09/2023

ARCHIVAL SOURCES

KNA, DC /NN1/4.- KNA, D.C./NN1/4- North Kavirondo District Annual Report 1923

KNA: DC/NN/1/17; Annual Report North Nyanza, 1935.

KNA: DC/NN.1/20- North Kavirondo District Annual Report 1938

KNA: D.C./NN/1/31- North Kavirondo District Annual Report 1949

KNA/AGRI/1/42- Role of chiefs.

KNA: PC/NZA/3/13/15; Registrar of Natives to Labour Commissioner, 1945.