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REPUBLIC OF KENYA

MINISTRY OF STATE FOR NATIONAL HERITAGE AND CULTURE

**NATIONAL INVENTORY ON THE SAFEGUARDING OF THE INTANGIBLE
CULTURAL HERITAGE (ICH)**

INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE (ICH)

The “intangible cultural heritage” means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills- as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated therewith- that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage.

This intangible cultural heritage, transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.

For the purpose of this convention, consideration will be given solely to such intangible cultural heritage as is compatible with existing international human rights instruments, as well as with the requirements of mutual respect among communities, groups and individuals, and of sustainable development.

“Safeguarding” means measures aimed at ensuring the viability of the intangible cultural heritage, including the identification, documentation, research, preservation, protection, promotion, enhancement, transmission, particularly through formal and non-formal education, as well as the revitalization of the various aspects of such heritage.

Inventorying involves collecting and presenting information on ICH elements in a systematic way. An inventory can be disseminated as a paper list, a multimedia database or another type of publication.

The inventory must be done with widest possible participation of the communities, groups and, where appropriate, individuals that create, maintain and transmit such heritage, and to involve them actively in its management.

Inventorying should be done with the consent of the communities or groups concerned. It should be preceded by the identification and definition of the elements concerned- again, in close cooperation with the communities, groups and – if appropriate – individuals concerned.

The Convention requires inventories to contribute to the safeguarding of elements on them, which suggests that the state of viability of the inventoried elements should be indicated, its strength or endangerment of elements to guide future safeguarding efforts.

The inventory must also respect customary practices governing [access to] specific aspects of Intangible cultural heritage in collecting, archiving or disseminating information.

The inventory should cover living elements, currently practiced, rather than elements that are no longer practiced.

1.0 INVENTORY OF THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL ELEMENTS OF THE COMMUNITIES OF WESTERN PROVINCE OF KENYA

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Taking into account the Universal Declaration on Human rights of 1948,

The UNESCO Convention for the protection of World Cultural and natural Heritage of 1972,

The UNESCO Convention for safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage 2003 which Kenya ratified on 24th January 2008,

Considering the need to build greater awareness especially among the younger generations of the importance of the intangible cultural heritage and its safeguarding,

Considering that Intangible Cultural Heritage transmitted from one generation to the other is constantly recreated by the communities, groups and individuals in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity, thus promoting the respect for cultural diversity and human creativity for sustainable development,

Taking note of the fact that each state party shall take the necessary measures to ensure the safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage through identifying and defining the various elements of the Intangible Cultural Heritage present in its territory, with the participation of the communities, groups, individuals and the relevant non-governmental organizations,

Bearing in mind the important role culture plays in bringing about peace and uniting communities of the world,

Being representative of the communities of the people that live in Western Province and Provincial Administrators at the community level have identified the Intangible Cultural Heritage elements listed below to be presented to UNESCO for safeguarding.

1.2 ELEMENTS RELATED TO CHILDBIRTH

1.2.1 NAMING: KHUKULIKHA – LUHYIA

This ceremony marked a very significant role in the life of a child. Names were given in relation to nature, seasons, famous personalities, and living or dead paternal or maternal relatives of good character. Names among all the communities of Western Kenya were very significant. They propagated the lineage of the family, reminded the community of significant events in their history, like famine, war and, epidemics and honored certain personalities in the communities. Some names would also tell when and where a child was born from if not the

person the child is named after. Below are examples of names from the Isukha/Idakho communalities that illustrate the above:

- Mabilia Iron monger
- Shisundi Born at night
- Shimwenyi One who likes smiling
- Keya Born during the KAI 1914
- Shivachi Born during Chief Shivachi's Reign
- Asubila Trusted or one who trusts
- Masitsa Born on a Sunday

Among the Bukusu names were given according to the seasons, family lineage, historical events and some reflected the geographical features of where the mothers gave birth. Below are a few examples:

- Nekesa (girl) Wekesa (boy) born at harvest season
- Nafula (girl) Wafula (Boy) born during the rain season
- Ngila(girl) wangila (boy) born on the road
- Makokha left overs (this is a child who survives after the rest of the siblings have died)
- Naliaka (girl) born during the weeding season
- Simiyu(boy) Nasimiyu(girl) born during the drought

When names were given after a departed family or community member, the community intended to sustain the virtues, mannerism, and good morals of that person who had died. Among the Marachi, Bakhayo, Samia of Busia the naming ceremony involved several stages during which time different names would be given to the baby. After a woman gave birth, other women would visit her to share with the joy of the new born. This ceremony which is done three days after delivery was called Khurusia Omwana. For the first time the baby was taken outside the house carried by a person considered upright. An old woman would do it for girls and an honourable old man for boys. These are the people who introduce the babies to the next world after the one of the mother's womb. The essence is that when the babies

grew up they would emulate the good morals of the persons introducing them to the new world.

Names tell the history and the experience of individuals and groups in a community. We can for example tell how many years ago Chief Shivachi or Mumia ruled from the line of people who have been named after them. Names reminded the community of significant events and great men and women in their history and also told when these event(s) took place. Names also enabled the community trace its relations. This happens when there are common names in different sub-communities. In so doing names created and cemented relationships therefore enhanced peace. Names created harmony with nature and the community for they were only persons of virtue who were named. The communities of Western Kenya never gave a baby a name of someone who was considered evil or of bad omen.

Significance of the Naming Ceremonies

- The names had historical significance e.g. reminded the communities of certain phenomena like famine
- The names enhanced the continuity of the family.
- They created a connection between the living and the living dead.
- The sanctity of life was defined in the rituals, songs and dances that go with these ceremonies.
- The names bound the community in the ownership of the children
- They reminded the community of the special relationship it had with nature.
- Names cemented relationships between families particularly in cases where the baby was given a name by the paternal and maternal relatives.

Challenges

- Naming ceremonies no longer involve the extended families. The modern couple has closed itself from the extended family.
- Modern development has alienated the present parent from the cultural background which they think is now valueless and Stone Age. Coupled with this is the technological

advancement which has skewed the admiration of most of the younger people to adopt the Western culture.

1.2.2 SHAVING – OKHUBEKA

This ceremony involved the shaving of the first hair of the new born. This would be done by the paternal grandmother (kukhu), auntie (senje) or a woman respected in the community. It is during this ceremony that the father to the new born would express his doubts if he thought the baby was fathered elsewhere. In this case he would not accent to the baby being shaved by his people. If this occurred the women would closely examine the child for any birth marks and physiological resemblance in the family. If they found any they would convince the father that the baby is his. If none was found, the mother would be asked to clear the doubts. If she insisted that that is the rightful father, she would be asked not to blame anyone if any calamities befell the baby. The shaving ritual would then commence, followed by bathing of the baby. Afterwards, the child is given light wimbi porridge. Our informants reported that if the mother cheated about the true father, the baby would never survive after this ceremony. 94 year old Rasoha Alachila now a born again Christian confirmed she had indeed witness several of such cases.

Significance

- This ritual discouraged infidelity in marriage.
- It encouraged responsible parenthood.
- It bound the rest of the family and the community in up-bringing the baby.

Viability

- It would discourage casual sex and sex before marriage if younger men realized that they would be held responsible for their behaviour.
- Honesty amongst girls would be encouraged.

1.2.3 REWARDING THE BABY AND THE MOTHER - KHUTUHA OMWANA NA NYINA

A new born baby is considered as a reincarnation of the dead, and a visitor to the world, community and the family. When a woman delivers, one of the special expressions used to signify successful delivery is “Khunyoli mucheni” (we have a visitor). The delivery of the baby was therefore a very important occasion in all communities in Western Kenya. A few days after delivery, friends and relatives of the mother would visit her to congratulate with gifts of grains for it was not expected that she would go out to source for food since she was still too weak. This also gave an opportunity to the mother’s relatives to see the “visitor” It was during this moment that the Child was given a name from the mother’s side. During this visit Isukuti would be played and people dance to the joy of the new born particularly if it was a first born. The home would be in a festive mood. The relatives would stay for a day or two. As they left she got a maid from one of the young girls who would have come with her relatives to see the baby.

This ceremony strengthened the relationship between the relatives of the woman and the man. It also highlighted the sanctity of life. In the communities of Western Kenya a woman earned respect for delivering children. In the olden days the respect would be magnified if it was a baby boy. The relatives of the woman felt proud that their daughter had proved that she was a total woman. They would have been ashamed if she was barren for the dowry would not only be returned by the man would have the option of marrying another woman.

Significance

- The ceremony highlighted the sanctity of life and the important role played by mothers.
- It emphasized the ultimate fruits of marriage as the birth of children and the value that was placed on children.

Viability

- This ceremony is still being practiced today even by the present generation parent, though restricted to a few friends. There is therefore need to involve the family more intensely.

1.2.4 CHILD CARE – OKHULELA

Child care was an important component to the upbringing of a baby. Child care began from the moment the mother conceived the baby. She would be put on special diet to ensure that she and her baby did not develop any complications. If it was realized that she was not strong enough to handle some of the daily chores, she would be given someone to assist her. After she delivered, she was too weak to handle most assignments therefore had to be assisted. The care of the baby was given top priority. It was for this reason that the mother always took on someone she would absolutely trust for a maid – most times a younger girl from her home. This new responsibility would also teach the young adolescent her future roles when she herself became a mother.

It was expected that for the first few months the mother would adequately breastfeed the baby. She was therefore put on a diet that ensured sustainable production of milk. The caretaker would do the heavier duties. She was allowed to undertake light duties to enable her exercise. It was the role of her husband to ensure that food was available. These foods included wimbi(millet), Lihondo (pumpkins), vegetables like lihu, tsisaka, miro, linyolonyolo, lisebebe, tsimbande, liremwa, mioko and indelema, etc. During the first few weeks she was constantly given smoked bonny meat that was cooked with mushelekha. These foods are rich in calcium, iron and protein. The vegetables were also medicinal. These foods would not just help the mother heal faster, but enriched the milk given to the baby. This ensured that the baby grew up very healthy and faster. During this time, the husband would be required to stay away from his wife so that there was no danger of her conceiving before the baby was weaned.

Significance

This practice ensured that:

- Both the mother and the baby were not exposed to any risk of diseases.
- If the mother was well taken care of, this automatically translated to the baby.
- The father of the baby and the rest of the family members had an equally responsible in the upbringing of the baby.

Challenges today

- The modern mother is so inclined to junk food at pregnancy and after delivery. The result is that they have to undergo a caesarian operation to deliver. Even after delivery they cannot produce enough milk for the baby. They end up feeding the babies on commercial products. This is why most babies are so weak and susceptible to diseases.
- Family bonds have been broken and most modern parents detest staying with their relatives whom they see as a burden. They prefer to buy the services of an ayah who is not even a relative to take care of the baby. This however denies the baby the love and close attachment a caretaker from the family would have for the baby.

Viability

- Traditional foods are now available even in the towns and cities. With proper sensitization expectant mothers can readily access these foods.
- Relatives remain the best option in child care. There are many cases witnessed of ayahs who have tortured children because they have no emotional attachment to them. Worse still, cases of child trafficking have been on the rise because of engaging commercial ayahs.
- "Sensitization on the use of traditional foods amongst expectant mothers and those who have delivered can be enhanced through programmes in hospitals when these mothers attend clinics."

1.2.5 LULLABIES

These were songs for soothing the baby to sleep. They were sung by the caretakers. They encouraged hard work and developed a special relationship between the baby and the caretaker. Many a time they silently ridiculed the uncaring mothers and gave credit to the caretaker. They were songs that played round with nature at a child's level and the relationships in the family. As the baby grew up to learn the first words in speech, it would join in the tunes. These songs also helped the baby learn the mother tongue and language in general faster.

Significance

- Underneath the songs was the love of the care taker for the baby.

- The songs enabled the baby to learn her language faster.
- Since the songs drew the content from the environment, they connected the baby to its immediate surroundings.

Challenges today

- Lullabies are now almost extinct because of the disconnect between modern life and our cultural heritage. Lullabies were not merely sung so that the baby can sleep. There had to be a certain emotional attachment for the baby by the person singing this lullaby. This connection can never be bought by the money given to the ayahs.

Viability

- Lullabies are still very relevant today. Even if they cannot be sung for the babies throughout, modern parents can find time to occasionally visit their rural homes to allow their babies the joy of experiencing this great cultural practice.

1.2.6 ELEMENTS RELATED TO INITIATION – SHISHEBO

Initiation amongst the communities of Western Province is a cultural practice that was done to young people at the adolescent stage. Most communities circumcised young men at the age of between 16 and 19. The Marachi, Samia, Bakhayo, and Teso removed the front low teeth. Amongst the Isukha, Idakho and the Tiriki, there were three stages in the initiation.

a) The preparation stage involved psyching the initiates to build up the required courage to face the knife. During this period the initiates would be taken round the village singing songs to encourage them to be real men. This would take place weeks before the circumcision day.

1. [Woyi baboli ulimusatsa baba ihio. Musatsa niyatukha yasinjilanga watinya, yaseerenga mushebi].

2. Bamuhali baria khushebwa woyi bwambo bakwamumatsi.

b) The circumcision itself involved waking up naked at the wee hours of the morning and going to bath cold water in one of the sacred streams. In song and dance, the candidates

were then taken to the venue for the circumcision, usually in an open field next to one of the sacred trees like Shirembe or Lusiola. At around 7.00 am the circumciser and his team arrives. The initiate were supposed to stand upright, with legs apart and their hands holding a walking stick that lay across the shoulders. The cut took less than a minute. As a sign of courage, it was expected that the initiates do not cry or make a sound. The circumciser would then move to the next candidate as soon as the first was over. Meanwhile, the first candidate was being treated with Ingoi. When all the candidates were done and treated, the circumciser would sing to them one song (Banabanje Mafuokoye). A special ritual would be done by the circumciser on the ground where the initiation had taken place to curse anybody with bad intentions.

Irumbi

The initiates then moved into seclusion (Irumbi). This was a special place in the house of a reputable old person. They were from now called Basindi until they graduated. About five initiates would stay together under the care of one or two young male relative(s) knowledgeable in circumcision matters. The families whose children have been circumcised would be given duty rotas and a menu of which foods to bring every day. During this period, the initiates began their day very early in the morning at the river where they would go to bath and remove all the clotted blood from the wounds under the instructions of the caretaker. This was done at this time because nobody but the caretaker was to see them. After he had ensured that they had done a good job, ingoi (medicine from a special herb) was applied on the wound. The initiates then returned home where they would find porridge made from wimbi or millet ready for their breakfast. After breakfast, the initiates were allowed to bask in the sun behind the house. For the first few days, the initiates spend most of the time sleeping. Their wounds were still fresh. Their lunch was usually specially smoked meat with ugali made from millet, wimbi and mixed with cassava. Among the other foods the initiates were served with was shitieni, ingokho, munyobo, and tsimbande. They would also be given indigenous fruits. The essence of this kind of diet was that it would assist the initiates heal faster. Since they were going through a transition in life, it was expected that they graduate while strong and healthy. The families of the initiates had great expectations about their sons.

They expected to see them looking better. During this period, the only link between the initiates and their relatives was the caretaker.

In the evenings after supper the initiates went through informal lessons on adulthood. They were warned never to step in their parents' bedrooms and to frequent the kitchen. They were warned not to carelessly play with their sisters and other girls from the clan. They were taught their new roles as young adults.

When the initiates were able to walk, the caretaker made for each one of them a club which they would carry as they sing in the village for the next few days. From then they were allowed to go out on the village paths to sing *Imbwambo*. This dance performed in the evening, gathered all the initiates in the clan together with their caretakers. They sang about their experiences with the knife and warned the next candidates about the pain of circumcision. Among the songs were:

1. *Mbwambo mbochambo abanaberu mmbanu kwalula*

Bamwarikala muhende mwoyo.

To some degree the initiates were introduced to sexual language, with the aim of introducing some of the hard facts of life to them. While a child it was taboo and bad manners to use sexually inclined language. After the performances the initiate went back to their seclusions for supper. These performances were meant to help them exercise their bodies.

When the caretaker was convinced that the initiates were reasonably healed, lessons about the woman were introduced. This was done at this time because initiates could react to what was said about a woman and their wounds end up bursting. They were taught how to handle a woman up to including in bed. The initiates were told who they could and could not marry. They stayed in seclusion for about one month.

Significance

The initiates learnt:

- Family life education.
- The history of the community and their roles as future leaders.
- The different administrative and social systems in the community.

- Certain respects and morals, how to relate to individuals and certain groups in the community including the parents, the elderly, the young, their age group and the opposite sex.
- Their space and place in society was defined to them.
- How to handle women and marriage.
- Their social, economic and security responsibilities.
- This was a transition from childhood to adulthood.

Challenges today

- Children are circumcised at a very young age when they hardly understand and comprehend the essence of the ceremony they are going through. Many of them even after circumcision still sleep with their mother and still suckle.
- Circumcision has become more of a medical exercise than a passage rite from childhood to adulthood.
- All the work that used to be done by the care taker including the informal education on adulthood has been discarded and the whole exercise has been reduced to dressing the wound by a medical practitioner. In a nut shell, circumcision has lost its whole meaning and is now a mere cut for medical reason without a cultural agenda.
- Individual parents decide on when to circumcise their sons. It is no longer a community affair. **It is now circumcision and not an initiation.**
- The traditional cut is threatened by the HIV/AIDs epidemic.
- Family involvement and the honour that went with this ceremony have been demeaned.

Viability

- Modern families living in urban areas can still circumcise their children at the age of 12-15 when they start the adolescence stage so that they can understand the seriousness of the rite.
- Even while in towns, families can organize themselves in groups to have initiates stay in one house so that they can undergo the informal education on adult behavior that was part of

the initiation ceremony. The seclusion did not have to be in the villages. The concept is still the same for the essence was that the initiates had to get an enabling environment to learn.

- Even if the initiates are to be taken care of by a qualified medical practitioner, arrangements can be made to have them go through the informal lessons by someone knowledgeable in cultural matters during this period of seclusion.
- Because of the dangers posed by the HIV/AIDS epidemic, the young men can still go for the cut in hospital but undergo the training while in seclusion. This is because emphasis was not so much on the knife but the story behind the knife.
- There is greater need to involve relatives in the initiation process so that family bonds are strengthened.
- The initiates need not to actively participate in the ceremonies that went with the initiation rites such as singing the initiation songs in the evening. This is because they might be inhibited by the kind of places they live in. This is particularly true for most of those living in urban areas. However, these rituals can be documented on audio-visual gadgets so that even children circumcised in Europe and America can know what was required of them if they had been in the ancestral backgrounds.

1.2.7 KHUSABITSA

The next ceremony was Khusabitsa (Cleansing). This is the formal graduation from initiation and now the initiates come out as adults. All the initiates from the area gathered in one home where the circumciser would come to perform a special and final ritual on them. He would sprinkle special protective libation on them. At this ceremony the community would bring special foods where the circumciser would share it with his 'sons'. Isukuti would be played and the young and the old, women and men would dance and drink to their satisfaction. This ceremony bestowed honour to the initiates and to their parents. They identified their Bakochi. The initiates would be dressed in new attire each carrying his club. After this ceremony, each one of them moves to his home. The first ceremony he performed when he got home was to hit a hen with his club. This was symbolic of his bravery and future role in the family as a warrior. This is the hen that would be prepared for him to eat on the auspicious occasion. For the next few days in a ritual called Khusolola they would visit their relatives starting with the uncles, where they would be given a cock for a present

Significance

- The symbolism in this was that the young men have washed away childhood and now they are adults.
- The initiates are brought back to ordinary life after acquiring new knowledge in life. They have learnt what they merely imagined and expected to implement this in their behavior.
- The circumciser would correct any mistake made during the operation.
- It bonded all the young initiates from the clan and encouraged respect and responsibility for each other.
- The initiates were empowered materially and could now begin generating wealth in preparation for marriage.
- Strengthened family ties.
- It discouraged underage marriage for it is only after initiation that society would allow a young man to marry.

Challenges

- Modern developments and new demands in life have shifted life from the villages to urban centres denying these initiates a chance to go through this memorable ceremony.
- Christianity and modern beliefs view these ceremonies as satanic and archaic.

1.2.8 SHISIAHO

This is the ceremony when the relatives of the new initiate would come to visit him bringing him presents. This was a one family affair. On this occasion the uncles and the father to the initiate would each give him an animal as an honour now that he is an adult. The initiate could invite some of his bakochi with whom he shared seclusion during the healing period. While the young men were in seclusion, their fathers usually built Isimba for them. This small hut was where the young man would begin operating from and sleep. It was required that he keeps the hut clean and respectable. His mother was not allowed in the hut. Even his sisters and female cousins had limited access. Only the father would occasionally visit this hut to ensure that it was kept clean and that the young man did not misbehave while in the hut. From then the

young man would entertain his visitors from his hut until he marries and moves to his own home.

Significance

- This ceremony united the paternal and maternal relatives of the initiates
- The seriousness of the ceremony prepared the young man for his roles in society. He realized that he was now an adult capable of marrying a wife
- The ceremony prepared the man to start being independent. That is why the relatives came with gifts to help him establish this independence. He was supposed to take care of the animals he had been given as gifts so that they multiplied. He would use what he has raised for dowry.

Challenges

- The money economy that characterizes modern society has made it impossible for initiates to be rewarded with symbolic and meaningful gifts.
- Family bonds have been weakened to the extent that the modern children don't even know and recognize their relatives. Most parents are inclined towards their friends and workmates at the expense of building stronger family relationships.
- Socio-economic demands have made it impossible for relatives to get time to attend these ceremonies.

Viability

- There is greater need for family members and relatives to be involved in the upbringing of children

1.3.0 ELEMENTS RELATED TO MARRIAGE

1.3.1 CONCEPT OF MARRIAGE

The communities in Western Province define marriage as a covenant between a mature man and woman who are not related with the purpose of procreation.

1.3.2 KUBOLITSA - COURTSHIP

After a young man had identified a girl to marry, or a girl had met a young man to marry her, she would at some stage inform the parents and by extension the family about the affair. This would be the beginning of family involvement in the affairs of the two lovers. Both families would send people to secretly find out information about the other. No parent wanted his son to marry from, or the daughter to get married to a family that was associated with scandals. If the findings were positive the stage would be set for the next step – dowry. In another case the parents would choose for their children a partner. This would be communicated to the two young people involved later.

Significance

- It allowed the two lovers time to learn and understand each other.

Challenges

- There are loose social structures that have led to infatuation more than love.
- The youth hardly take time to learn and understand the other before they can make a decision to stay together. Even when an attempt is made at this, it is for a very short time.
- Abuse of the present freedom by the youth.

Viability

- It is very necessary and applicable if the social structures that support this practice are harnessed.
- The youth have more room and freedom now to exercise courtship unlike in the olden days when the freedom of girls was very restricted.

1.3.3 BUKHWI – DOWRY

This is the reward given to the family of the girl by the boy. Bukhwi was a prerequisite before the family of the girl could give her away. It was agreed on after a session of negotiations between men from the family of the girl and that of the boy. In the olden days, the price to be given was in terms of cows. Cows played a very significant role in the communities of Western Province. They are a symbol of wealth, health and continuity. The old men would

decide on how many cows the boy will give for the dowry. He did not have to bring all of them at a go. However before the marriage, it is agreed that he has to bring a certain number of animals to let the marriage process begin. The rest could be given later. Dowry was a male affair. In addition to the dowry the young man was required to give the girl's mother a special gift – Shihanwa shiu lubele. This gift was a special tribute to the mother for breastfeeding the baby girl and making her look beautiful the way she does.

Significance

- Dowry emphasizes the great appreciation the man and his people had for the girl and her family and should at any one time never be commercialized.
- It creates a special bond between the boy and the girl and their two families and communities
- It commits the two parties involved to the marriage
- It sealed the marriage

Challenges

- Dowry has been commercialized by the girls who see it as a way of accumulating wealth and the boys family who feel they now own the girl
- The essence of the dowry has been turned upside down. The brides now even help give their dowry.
- What there is, is bride price and not dowry
- Lack of family involvement in dowry related issues.

Viability

- It is still easy to give dowry now just as it was in the olden days. The money that is given now can still be translated into animals so that the cultural significance and value associated with the cow is retained. The cow has a greater meaning beyond its monetary value amongst these communities.

1.3.4 INVOLVEMENT OF THE FAMILY IN MARRIAGE – AUNTIES

Before the wedding day, aunties to the bride would stay with her for several days. They would psychologically prepare her for her new role as a wife. They would tell her what to do while performing her duties and the challenges she is likely to face while staying with her husband. They would teach her how to react when there were differences between her and her husband. They would train her on how to particularly handle her mother-in-law and other relatives. They would let her know the dos and don'ts in a marriage. After all it was pride and honour to her family if the community in which she got married spoke fondly of her. This pride will go to her parents for having brought her up well. The aunties would warn and alert her about certain specifics. After all they have secretly spied on the weaknesses and the strengths of the family to which she is getting married. If the girl failed the married tests, the shame will go back

Significance

- The bride faced marriage already armed
- Certain prejudices were removed from her thinking
- It gave her determination to hang on even when things were bad
- It armed her with life skills to handle delicate marital issues
- She was taught skills to cement the relationships other than breaking them
- The aunties of the girl ensured that the girl is well tutored for her new role as a wife
- Conflict resolution should follow certain procedure to ensure the relationship is sustained and that divorce will only come as a last option.
- The harmonious relationship between the boy and the girl's community ensures that mutual respect is maintained.
- The girl focused on how to sustain the marriage for it was an honour and pride to the parents if she did this successfully and a shame if the marriage collapsed.

Challenges

- The concept of an aunt has been corrupted and abused to mean any female relative.

- The role of aunts has been abdicated to friends, churches and parents. In addition families have become more self-centred and the social fabric associated with family has been ignored.
- The mania for social status has resulted in lack of recognition of some relatives because they do not belong to the class to be valued by the present youth.

Viability

- The persons and institution now entrusted with their cultural roles have failed to impart these values.
- These people and institutions are not as genuine, open and honest as the aunts were.

1.3.5 SHISELELO – WEDDING

On the wedding day the girl would be escorted to her husband's home accompanied by her friends, female cousins and sisters. She would be given symbolic gifts including; Mwikho (cooking stick) Shilibi (basket) iyamajera (pot). The party would sing marital and love songs to encourage the girl.

1. Yaka namauwa kanatola khunjila

2. Nubutinyu

If the girl turned out to be a virgin at the time of the consummation of the marriage, a special animal – Ingombe yu luhasi and the bedding she slept in that night would all be carried to her home including anything else she touched that had the mark of her virginity.

Significance

- An honour by the girl to the parents and by the parents to the girl.
- It brought the community together to participate in the union
- Shiselelo was a formal and public announcement that the new weds have quit the life of singles. No one was therefore allowed to interfere with them thereafter.
- A special animal for a bride who is still a virgin is a special tribute to the girl's parents for bringing her up in an upright manner encouraged good morals amongst other girls.
- The gifts define the new and significant roles to be played by them.

Challenges

- Modernizing of weddings so that they have not just become expensive but show offs.
- Christian beliefs and dogmas that condemn the traditional marriage as lacking blessings.
- Legislative structures that favor Christian and civil marriages.

Viability

- The cultural concept of weddings does not put so much pressure on the parties involved in the wedding.
- The simplicity and importance is what the contemporary society needs to value now.
- The traditional interpretation of a wedding makes it possible for almost all youths to wed. The honour and pride associated with the wedding is more worthy than the money spent on modern weddings.

1.3.6. KHURAKA SHISULI

After the couple is sure that they are prepared the boy can ask the father on where he can put up his new home. The father accompanied by his son will walk up to the venue where the old man will show him. In a symbolic ritual (Khusena shianyi) the father will break the ground with a jembe as he pronounces blessings on the new family and home to be built. The process of building the house can then commence. Just before the tip of the house is thatched a ritual called Khuraka shisuli is performed. The woman goes to her home and comes back with grains in baskets and a cock. This makes for the new family in the new home their very first meal. Khuraka shisuli ensures that both the man and his wife realize that ownership of the house and that it is not just they who are involved but also their families

Significance

- This ritual affirmed the joint responsibility in the ownership of the house by the husband and the wife.
- The role of a father does not begin with birth and end at marriage. His roles will live on even when the children are mature.

Challenges

- A case where a married couple buys a house in town makes it difficult for this ritual to be preformed.
- Cross cultural marriages have posed a challenge to this ritual in cases where the woman might not be from any of the communities from Western Province.

Viability

- This ritual is equivalent to the house warming. In cases where it is not possible to strictly follow the cultural requirements, it is possible to adapt this practice to the present conditions. A father can be invited to come and bless the house and chicken slaughtered as a symbolic blessing of the new home.

1.3.7 RELATIONSHIPS AND GREETINGS RELATING TO THE IN-LAWS

All communities in Western Kenya hold with respect the new relationships born out of marriage. The parents of the couple develop a new bond where they always recognize each other and in functions they will sit together. They will now refer to each other as Basanji. They will invite each other in times of celebration and support each other in times of trouble. The father of the girl will never call their son in-law by his real name but Kuka while her mother will call him Mwikhula wanje. The father of the boy will never call their daughter-in-law by her real name but Kukhu. While the mother 'mukhana wanje'. The siblings and cousins of either party will refer to the other as Mukhwasi.

The brothers and sisters of the man and the woman developed a mutual bond of friendship and respect for each other. This could turn sour in cases where the marriage had problems. Each would blame the in-laws for being responsible for the troubles in the family. The man and his brothers-in-law developed a bond of brotherhood. The woman on the other hand developed a bond of sisterhood with her sisters-in-law and many times they would be her confidants if the marriage was in trouble. A son-in law and a mother-in-law had to keep their social distance. In the olden days they would not even greet by shaking hands. They had to maintain total respect for each other. Similarly the father-in-law and a daughter-in-law maintained quite some social distance. This ensured that they sustained the respect they have for each other.

Significance

- Families and by extension communities developed respect and peaceful co-existence born out of marriage
- There were certain systems in the family through which conflicts were resolved
- A family did not have to carry a burden alone for there was always support from the in-laws.
- The older generation made up of parents felt secure. While a mother lost the services of her daughters through marriage these ones were replaced by the wives of the sons. Parents always appreciate

Challenges

- Prejudices between daughters in-law and mothers-in-law
- Emphasis on the nucleus family that has alienated the extended family.
- Economic hardships and high cost of living

Viability

- There is need to strengthen family relationships as they are the basis for social networks and security.
- The relationships can be maintained even better because of the many modes of communication now at the disposal of the modern society.

1.4 ELEMENTS RELATED TO DEATH

1.4.1 *MALINDWA NA MAKUNDA*

These were burial sites for the ancestors who died many years ago and now their graveyards have overgrown with sacred trees including Mikumu, tsiola and misutsu. The communities in Western Province revere the burial sites of their ancestors as sacred places. The belief is that there is a connection between life and death and the living and the dead. Once someone dies it is believed he has gone to the land of the living dead. These trees that grow on the graves cannot be cut unless special rites are preformed.

Significance

- From the age of the trees it is easy to tell when these people died.
- The trees that grow on these graves are a symbol of the life those under have left and a sign that though they are dead life still blooms
- Makunda have special significances. They are sacred and are used to appease the spirit in the event of any bad omen. They are sites for research for educational institutions and the younger generation.
- They were sources for herbal medicine.
- They were landmarks.

Challenges

- Population explosion has put pressure on land resulting in the destruction of these sacred sites.
- Land tenure systems favouring individual ownership has ignored the preservation of these sacred sites.
- Modern burial practices are not in tandem with the development of these sacred burial sites.

Viability

- This is part of the tangible cultural heritage sites with intangible cultural elements.

1.4.2 TSINSIKULU – TRADITIONAL LAMENTATION SONGS

These are the dirges that were composed spontaneously by old women at the death of their husbands or a member of the community. Khwikhula is to mourn the dead. There many ways in which the many communities mourned their dead. Among the Luhya communities old women would compose heroic songs about their husbands and sons when they died. The men chanted when one of the members of the community died. The younger generation would not only keep vigil but sang dirges throughout the night.

Significance

- The dirges told the story and history of the deceased, therefore educated the mourners about him.

- They expressed the community's

Challenges

The last of the generations that composed dirges is almost being wiped out because of age. Their compositions were never recorded for they were spontaneous.

- Modern approach to funerals has given little room for the traditional methods of mourning.
- Deaths are nowadays taken very casually. This is because they are too common occurrences.

Viability

The dirge can never lose relevance in a funeral for it is an expression of sorrow that emanates from the heart to express sentiments about a loved one.

1.4.3 BUSHUMA BWAMALIKA

When a member of the community died, relatives and friends came to mourn. In the communities of Western Kenya the mourning period was at least three days. Neighbours to the deceased would therefore come in to support feed the many mourners who had come to console the members of the bereaved family. This food brought in by the neighbours was called bushumama bwamalika. They made the sacrifice of preparing breakfast, and lunch. They would not just bring the ordinary day to day food. Usually lunch would comprise ugali with meat, shitiini or chicken. Lunch was given priority because most visitors would come to console during the day. This food was meant for only relatives and mourners who had travelled from far. In addition the community volunteered to accommodate these relatives and friends. The community was keen to see to it that everybody actively participated to give the deceased a decent send off.

Significance

- This practice strengthened cordial co-existence amongst neighbours and encouraged good neighbourliness.

- It united the community at a time of calamity
- It encouraged respect for visitors
- It saved the bereaved family the heavy cost of taking care of the mourners and covered their shame.

Challenges

- The social fabric that united the community has been torn apart and as a result families have become so self centred making it difficult for them to support each other.
- Economic constraints coupled with the high rising costs of living has limited the ability of families to offer the support they initially did.

Viability

- There is greater need for families living in the same locality to support each other given the frequency of deaths nowadays.
- Families can support each other during calamities through the community cultural groups.

1.4.4 INGOMBE YISHISAYI

It was a ritual among the communities that when an adult died, honour be shown him or her and the ancestors who have already passed on by killing an animal. Such an animal could be taken from the stock of the animals in the homestead, be brought by any of the sons, or if the family could not afford, any of the sons- in law, particularly the one who had married the first born daughter would be requested to provide the animal. Blood from the animal in these communities was meant to appease the dead. When a man died, a bull would be slaughtered while a heifer would be slaughtered if a woman died. Though other animals could be slaughtered during the funeral, these specific animals would be slaughtered the night before burial. This was meant to feed the mourners on the burial day.

Significance

- The deceased, his ancestors and the mourners were all appeased

- This strengthened the relationship between the deceased's family and the in-laws especially if the animal came from the in-laws.
- The slaughtering of an animal, the shading of blood and the planting of the trees on the grave signified and ensured continuity of the generation of the dead

Challenges

- Christian beliefs that look at such rituals as satanic
- Economic constraints and the high cost of living that has put so much pressure on the limited resources of most families make it impossible for them perform this ritual.

Viability

- This ceremony is so relevant and practicable if family bonds are harnessed and if the community through the community cultural groups came in to support the programme. If networks among relatives are strengthened then this heritage of bestowing honour to the dead through the slaughtering of an animal would never be lost.

1.4.5 BURIAL IN THE ANCESTRAL HOME

The communities in Western Provinces bury the dead in their ancestral homes even if the member died far away from home. Every effort would be made to ensure that the remains are brought back home. This is because they value the dead for they believe that there will always be a special connection between the spirit of dead and the living. It is for this reason that the communities do not consent to their dead being buried elsewhere. The dead too have to rest at home with their ancestors irrespective of age and gender.

Significance

- This practice makes it easy for the family ancestry and genealogy to be easily traced.
- It is an honour for the dead to be laid in his /her ancestral home with other relatives who have also died.
- It is the belief that family bonds are not lost in death.

- To appease the spirit of the dead so that he/she does not feel abandoned in the wilderness.

Challenges

- Economic constraints coupled with the high costs of transporting dead bodies and later meeting the funeral expenses has been one of the major challenges.

Viability

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1.4.6 NIGHT VIGILS

This is a common practice amongst all the communities visited. The vigils began from the time a member died but on a small scale. This would intensify as the burial day closed in. The vigils began with the immediate neighbours. Meanwhile the rest of the relatives would be informed about the death. With time, relatives start streaming in, beginning with the daughters of the home and their children. The day before burial almost all the relatives and friends would have come to spend the night in the home. During the night vigils there would be all manners of activities including singing of dirges, dancing, and preparation meetings. It is during such vigils that relatives who did not know each other were introduced to each other while others reunited after a long time.

Significance

- This practice strengthened the family relationships and friendships
- Lamentation songs and dances that took place during the night vigils, were a way of consoling the bereaved and helping them come to terms with the reality of death.
- The vigils saved the family the expense of looking for accommodation for the mourners.

Challenges

- Modern methods of preserving bodies in mortuaries have strained the families' abilities to sustain the night vigils.
- A lot of destruction of facilities in the home including theft of items has been experienced during the night vigils.

Viability

The bereaved will always need to be consoled and accorded company considering the fact that the dead have to be honoured by lying in their ancestral homes before burial. Enhanced participation of the provincial administration has checked most of the vices that have been experienced during the night vigils, making the practice a lot more viable.

1.4.7 KHWIFUALA LIKOTI NENDE INDOBOSHI YUMUSAKHULU

When a man died, during the morning period, the wife put on his coat and took his walking staff. In the case of a polygamous family it was always the first wife bestowed this honour. This was very significant. This practice needs urgent protection as it symbolizes that the woman is now the head of the family. She became an important component in the decision making on matters in the home and no other person could come to lay claim on the property of the man. She had also to give her consent before any action was taken on the estate of her late husband.

Significance

- The role of a wife as a companion to the husband was here emphasized.

Challenges

- The younger generation looks at this practice as backward.

Viability

- This practice is more relevant now as it puts to a stop any disputes arising from outside the family on any claims from concubines of the late. The ritual confers all powers to the legal widow.

1.4.8 SHILEMBE

This was a special ceremony performed for heroes in the community. Not every man would be honoured by this ceremony. One was supposed to have made a significant mark during his life time. Among the attributes that the communities considered to honour about such a man were if he:

- 1) fought in any war(s) and made a mark
- 2) killed a fierce animal like a leopard
- 3) was a leader of exemplary character

Immediately after burial, the community would stream to the home of the deceased dancing isukuti and dressed in the war regalia with spears clubs and shields. A special huge drum would be resounding in the background. This was drum that was only played on special occasions alerted the community then there was a strange occurrence. The participants would be accompanied with animals particularly bulls. The bulls by instinct moved to the mound of soil on the grave. Using their fore legs and horns, the bulls would move away the soil from the grave. These bulls would engage in a spontaneous fight. It is believed that this was the beginning of the bull fighting culture. The crowds would urge on the bulls. Meanwhile the people accompanying the animals would move around the home cutting down branches of trees, bananas and some of the crops. The essence of the ritual was that the family and the community had been left bare from the death of the fallen hero. This destruction was also an honour to the dead hero whose worth could not be compared to what he had left behind. The participants would then go away. After such destruction, it was believed that the family would realize a bumper harvest and all that was destroyed sprouted much healthier.

Significance

The ceremony:

- Honoured and celebrated the heroic deeds of the dead and inculcated courage amongst the youth. It is also a cleansing ceremony
- Created harmony between the dead hero and the living due to the fact that the community had recognized, appreciated and honoured his life.

Challenges

Christian faiths that view these ceremonies as non Christian

Viability

- The ceremony is costless apart from the few crops that are destroyed in the home.
- It does not need any preparations.
- It makes the family feel honoured and leaves them feeling that the deceased has also been honoured.

1.4.9 PLANTING OF MUKUMU OR LUSIOLA TREES ON THE GRAVE

After the shilembe an elder person would plant one of the sacred trees on the grave. Sometimes the grave would be left bare and after the rainy season trees would sprout on the grave. Among these trees would be a musutsu or lusiola. What sprouted on the mould of the grave was never uprooted or cut down. Musutsu, lusiola or mukumu trees planted on the grave indicate that the grave belongs to a prominent member of the community. The site is sacred. These trees would be trimmed only by an old man. The branches cut from the tree are given to an old person.

Significance

- The trees symbolize the continuity of life of the living and that of the dead.

Challenges

- Modern styles of burials that prefer cementing the graves and leaving the site all clean.
- The Christian faiths that hold such practices as non Christian

Viability

These sites will always remain the tangible cultural heritage sites for the intangible cultural heritage

1.4.10 SHAVING CEREMONY –LUBEKO

Amongst most of the communities, there was a shaving ceremony three days after burial. At this time most of the friends and distant relatives had already left. The only people remaining in the home were close family members. Initially this ceremony involved shaving all the hair from the head. With time it became very symbolic where a little hair was trimmed from the head. After this, those relatives who had urgent matters to attend to were allowed to leave the home. All the hair was collected and placed on the grave.

Significance

- The ritual was to show honour to the person who had died.
- It was a symbol of a new beginning after the mourning period
- This ceremony also symbolized that the family had shed off part of itself and now they had to begin anew.

Challenges

- A number of people look at this as an unchristian practice
- The younger generation has neglected the practice

Viability

- The ritual has no costs to be incurred and does not involved in any rites need not participate

1.4.11 MUKULUKHA

This was a symbolic token given by the children of the deceased to their uncles before they left the home after the burial of their mother so that they could pray for the children to remain strong and withstand the shock of lose. If it was their father who had died the children would be required to give this token to the uncles to the father. Unfortunately this important practice has been abused and commercialized and needs urgent protection. The place of an uncle in the life of an individual among the communities of Western Province is very significant. The curse of an uncle or an aunt is believed to be stronger than that of a father or

a mother. Alongside this is the very important role played by the aunts and sisters of the wife. Whereas the uncles to the deceased and the uncles of the children to the deceased will leave immediately after burial, sisters and sisters-in-law always remained behind for a few days to play the mother figure role to the children if it was the woman of the home who had died. If it was the man who had died they again stayed for a few days to help the widow and her children. Many times they only went away when life began to normalize for the bereaved family.

Significance

- The practice ensured that the relationship between the families continued even after the deceased had gone.
- The uncles and aunts were a great inspiration and hope for the family of the deceased and assisted it to move on with life.
- This practice highlighted the collective responsibility of the relatives in supporting each other particularly in times of trouble.

Challenges

- This practice has been commercialized

Viability

Put in the correct context, the practice has a lot more to achieve for the benefit of cementing relationships and for the continuity of the family.

1.4.12 MAKUMBUSHO

This was a ceremony performed to commemorate a departed member of a family. Among the Isukha and Idakho the commemoration is usually held a year after burial. Relatives and friends were invited to the home. Busaa was brewed and if the family was able, an animal was slaughtered next to the grave of the departed the evening before the commemoration. This ceremony was meant to celebrate the life of the one who had died. It was full of dance. Generally the visitors merely came to eat and dance and left the home thereafter. In modern

days most families use the occasion to cement the grave of the departed if this was not done immediately after burial.

Significance

- This ceremony emphasized the important relationship between the dead and the living.
- It commemorated the virtues of the person who had died.
- The community came back to visit the family of the deceased to ensure that all was well.
- The family of the deceased reunited to encourage each other.

Challenges

- The ceremony has been commercialized and abused by some families who use the event to raise money from unsuspecting friends and relatives.
- The initial concept has been hijacked by other institutions like the church.
- This ceremony has become too expensive for most people out of their inability to raise funds to hold it.
- It is discriminative for it is only those who have done such a ceremony for their dead who can partake in a similar ceremony.

Viability

- The concept in this ceremony is not so much the ability to entertain the visitors. Emphasis is on the inherent value of commemorating. This can be done with basic resources therefore making it possible for all members of the community to honour their departed with this ceremony.

1.4.13 KHUKALUSHITSA

Literally translated this means “returning a wife”. This practice was only applied when a man died in his prime age. This meant that he left behind a young widow and young children. The widow was therefore a target for many opportunistic men who would easily take advantage of her present sorrowful and lonely state. Given this situation, the communities adapted the practice of returning a widow. After the burial of the husband, respectful members of the

family would seek the widow's opinion on whether she wished to stay in the family or remarry elsewhere. If she agreed to stay in the family she would be asked to choose one of the brothers to the deceased to support her. His role was to ensure that he protected the family against harassment, took good care of the property left by the deceased, and saw to the family's up-keep especially the healthy growth of the children, without a romantic agenda. Even in cases where romance came in, this practice ensured that the children born of the woman were of the same lineage. In case it was the woman who had died, her people would offer the widower a bride from among the sisters or cousins of the deceased to take care of the children.

Significance

- This practice protected the family's lineage and promoted continuity in the family.
- It enabled the family of the deceased to move on with minimal problems.
- It guarded against opportunists who would otherwise squander a family's hard earned wealth.

Challenges

- This practice has been blamed for the rampant spread of HIV/ AIDS.
- It has been abused by some men who have turned it into a romantic affair. The widows too have their share of blame for they have easily fallen prey to men who do not have the blessings of the family and interest of the children at heart.
- The practice is facing extinction because of opposition from many other institutions including the church and some civil societies.

Viability

If the original intention would be sustained, then there is greater need for the practice to be revitalized and protected for there is no doubt that the widow needs support in decision making on many weighty matters in the family since she is stepping into bigger shoes than she can fit in.

1.4.14 KHWISINGA – CLEANSING

After the burial of a spouse, the partner was required to wake up at the wee hours of the morning to bathe cold water for seven days. In the olden days the partner was supposed to go to bath in the river. This is a symbolic cleansing that ensured that the widow/widower came to terms with reality after losing someone who was very close.

Significance

- This ritual de-characterized the victim from the old bond with the partner who had died. This was to prepare him/her stay life anew.
- The ritual brought the spouse to the reality that the partner had gone and now it was time to move on.

Challenges

- Some institutions see the practice as out of place in the present generation.

Viability

The ritual supports the surviving partner who needs the mental and psychological support to move on with life. Cleansing rituals are not anything strange in most institutions.

1.5 ELEMENTS RELATED TO FOODS AND BEVERAGES

The communities of Western Province have a variety of foods and beverages. Of significance is the fact that these foods are nutritious and play a very important role in the lives of the people who use them. Unfortunately most of them are in danger of extinction because most communities have turned to planting cash crops. It is for this very reason that adequate programmes are put in place to protect these important cultural elements.

1.5.1 BUSAA

This is the main traditional beer that was prepared from maize, millet, or sorghum. The flour from any of these cereals is fermented for several days before it is baked on some fire to make

'tsimbale'. It is from 'tsimbale' that busaa is made from. In addition tsimbale, in them, is food that was dried and could be eaten many days, months, or years after. All that was needed was to soak the baked flour in water for some time and it would be ready.

When the baked flour is ready, it is mixed with water and fermented sorghum and stored in a special sealed pot to allow the fermentation process to take place. This process could take as long as seven days. The longer the fermentation, the stronger the beer. The first stage was referred to as malwa matoro. After two or three days, mature busaa was ready. This drink was taken by old men on special occasions including peaceful celebrations, in peace making sessions, and during relaxation time after work. It was therefore never a commercial drink. Busaa was served by women in a special pot (Lulemo). Several old men would gather around the pot to take the drink using traditional siphones (tsiseshe). The dregs would be used to feed domestic animal and birds.

Significance

The need to protect this drink comes from the fact that:

- Now it has been commercialized and has lost the original intention it served.
- It is a drink that brought together the elders as they discussed matters that affected the community.
- It is a drink that was used to create peace by uniting warring parties
- It is a food drink and medicine
- It harnessed the wisdom of the elderly
- It is an aphrodisiac as it improves men's virility and sexual functioning
- The drinking ethos defines the roles of the different people involved. It encouraged respect for the elderly and the married from the sitting positions
- The forum was a learning experience for the young
- It is a libation used to appease the dead.
- It is the only traditional drink that cuts across all the ceremonies among the communities in Western Province and is used for the same purpose.

Challenges

- Faces threat due to irresponsible drinking
- Unscrupulous traders are adding poisonous elements into it thereby making its consumption harmful.
- Busaa has lost its social dimension as children and people of unqualified repute take it anytime anywhere

Viability

- This drink can be used to complement other modern alcoholic drinks if its consumption can be explained alongside the cultural significance embedded in it.
- The preparation of the drink and its use within the proper cultural context can easily be regulated through councils of community elders.

1.5.2 TRADITIONAL FOODS

- 1) Legumes: Makanda – beans, tsimbande – monkey nuts, tsimbindi, , ttsinjuku - groundnuts
- 2) Grains:- mabele - millet, bule - sorgum, tsinuni – simsim,
- 3) Tubers: Mioko – cassava, mabwoni kishimwa- sweet potatoes, Tsinduma – arrow roots
- 4) Vegetables:- tsisaka, libokoyi, murele, bwoba, shitieni, matere. Linyolonyolo, shirietso, lisebebe, indelema, miro, lisutsa.
- 5) Traditional ways of storing the foods
- 6) Meats:- tsisindu, shihango – smoked meat, ingokho - chicken, isindu- quails
Ingredients- mushelekha, munyu musumi.
- 7) Traditional ways of preparing foods:- Khuhembela - Smoking, boiling.

Significance

- Other than the nutritional value of the foods, they are easy to plant and do not need any commercial fertilizer. Most of the crops can be grown twice a year
- The foods are easy to cook for all they require is boiling or roasting.
- The traditional storage methods could preserve the foods for years without the use of chemical preservatives yet retain the original taste.

- Most of the foods would be eaten in their raw form
- Traditional vegetables do not just have the medicinal value but have the nutritional value too. Some of them have the ability to enhance the blood quantity and improve digestion.
- Ingredients like Mushelekha softened the food and enable it to cook faster. It is also medicinal.
- The ability of the foods to withstand the test of times for years in their stored form is an aspect that is fast losing value.

Challenges

- Human activities threaten some of the traditional foods, for example, natural habitat for tsisindu a delicious bird has for years been destroyed. The bird stays in some special grass that is used for thatching houses. This grass is almost extinct. The protection of this delicious bird will also go a long way in protecting the environment
- Most communities have turned to growing cash crops than food crops. The foods are now very rare to get on the local markets. Yet, they form a big percentage of the foods recommended for patients with diabetes, high blood pressure and other diseases.
- Genetically modified foods are a big threat to indigenous foods yet the traditional one had both cultural and nutritive value.

Viability

- Traditional foods are readily available, cheap, easy to cook, nutritious, have medicinal value besides the cultural aspect. Their use in contemporary society alongside the modern ones should be enhanced.

1.6 ELEMENTS RELATED TO PERFORMING ARTS

1.6.1 *THE ISUKUTI DANCE AND SONGS*

This is a famous dance among the Isukha and Idakho communities. There are usually three drums. The big drum is called Isukuti the medium Mutiti mukhali, while the small drum is mutiti musatsa. Other accompaniments are: Bikhule (jingles), Bisili (metal gongs), Lutulelo

[trumpet made from bamboo (mwele), Imbati (trumpet made from the horn of a cow or an antelope), Shisiliba (trumpet made from the horn of a waterbuck). These instruments are played in harmony.

Viability

- The dance in fact seems to be having a growing appeal amongst other communities in Kenya.
- Since it is a peace dance, coupled with its ability to attract the masses, all efforts should be harnessed to safeguard it.
- It is the symbol unity for the communities in Western Province.
- It can be used as a channel to call for peace amongst other communities in Kenya.

1.6.2 SHILILI

This one stringed instrument plays an important role in dances involving old men and women. Shilili can be played alongside isukuti but in most cases the artists who play the instrument have their own compositions. Usually the songs that go along with the instrument are slower and more graceful. Like Isukuti, shilili can be played on any occasion. In Western province not very many people can now play the instrument. It is important that the art of playing this instrument be preserved lest the communities loose the rich cultural heritage associated with shilili.

Significance

- It was a rich form of recreational performance.
- It was an essential instrument used in lamentations. The mood of the ceremony could easily be read from the tone of the instrument.

Challenges

- The art of making and playing the instrument is fading at an alarming rate.

- Western culture has brain washed most young men to believe traditional music is primitive. In the process many of them have lost interest in traditional music and the art associated with it.

Viability

- Like the violin, shilili still has a lot of appeal to many music lovers.
- The art of playing this instrument can easily be taught and hence be transmitted to subsequent generations.

1.6.3 BULL - FIGHTING

The concept of bull fighting among Isukha and Idakho started with the shilembe ceremony. The community went to honour a departed hero with their bulls. They were therefore a symbol of the strength and mighty of the community. Bull fights were initially spontaneous. The bull had its own admirers for the strength it exhibited. Bulls were kept for their commercial worth and the community benefited from it when it would serve their heifers so that they too could have healthy looking animals. With time the concept of having the bulls fight as a form of recreation developed. The fights would unite the two clans from which the bulls came. The community decided on when and where the bulls would fight. During such fights preparations would be made. The representatives of the two communities would bet and agree on a price to pay if their bull was defeated. This particular price did not end up with the owner of the bull but was shared by the community. The bull would be blessed by the grandmother before it leaves the home. She would seek and invoke the blessings of the ancestors. The bull would then be allowed to leave the home under the caretaker. The minute the bull leaves the home it becomes community property. The isukuti drum beats would psyche the crowd and the animal. The bulls will then fight. If it wins it would be crowned in lesos and be given a lap of honour around the area where the fight took place. It will then go back home where the owner of the bull will give those accompanying him some busaa. By the time the bull gets home food and water has been prepared for it. Bulls by nature are very humble animals if properly handled. They hardly attack a woman or a child. However the present crop of bulls in most communities is different. This is because they are not being raised in the natural environment. When a bull respected in the community is sold, part of the

proceeds goes to the community. The skull of the animal even if it was slaughtered elsewhere is usually brought back and hanged on one of the sacred trees in the home as a sign of honour.

Significance

- Bull- fighting is generally a uniting game that brings two or several diverse clans together
- The significance of the cow as a symbol of wealth and strength amongst the Isukha and Idakho is brought out in the concept of the bull-fight

Challenges

- This concept needs urgent protection for some unscrupulous bull owners are misusing this cultural practice to make quick money which has turned the practice into a dangerous affair. The bulls are no longer tendered in the natural environment; instead they are given dangerous drugs to enable them win the contests.

Viability

- Practiced in the cultural context, the practice is very viable for it promote local and international tourism.
- The cultural practice can easily be regulated through the community council of elders

1.6.4 MINYIKHA (KHUCHINGANA)-WRESTLING MATCHES

This was a game common among all the communities of western Province. The contests involved the different age sets. They were meant to showcase their might and skill in outwitting the opponent. These contests would be held at clan and community levels. Though it is only the young men who participated, this recreational activity was enjoyed by all the members of the communities.

Significance

- The game encouraged respect, courage and achievement among the young men. It also defined age groups.
- It encouraged sportsmanship.
- The game united the community in entertainment.

Challenges

- This game is threatened by the many modern games on the internet.
- Western ideologies have brainwashed the younger generation to believe this game is primitive.

Viability

- The game still has a lot of appeal amongst the male children since it has international equivalent for example the WWF contests in United States. The cultural contest only needs to be retained.

1.6.5 CHILDREN GAMES

Amongst the communities here were many games played. Some were meant for the boys, others for girls, while some were unisex. Many of these games have disappeared with the new developments in society. Among the games for the children were:

BOYS

1. Khuhitsa manyonyi – hunting for birds

This game taught the young boys the art of hunting. The boys would hunt using catapults. This game familiarized the young men with the natural environment around their homes. In the process they learnt about the plants and the names of the birds in the environment around them. There were only certain which could be killed. It was against tradition to hunt certain birds.

2. Khuba indibendebe

Young boys learnt the art of playing music

3. Khuba itiolo

This game involved hitting a con made from wood so that it rotated round. This game developed friendship among young boys and sharpened their art of calculation

GIRLS

1. Makola

This is an acrobatic game that developed the art of judgment for the girls

2. Khuruma mukoye

This was a game that merely exercised the body. It is also an acrobatic game.

UNISEX

Khwibisa nende khubulana

This is a hide and seek game that was played during moonlight.

Significance

- The games entertained the children and kept them busy.
- Their mental judgment to make quick decisions was sharpened.
- The games developed confidence among the children particularly when they excelled.
- The games encourage friendship networks amongst the children.

Challenges

- The current responsibilities on the children, including longer hours of school continues to deny the children time to play.
- Modern electronic media gadgets have skewed the minds of many children for they can access many western oriented games on internet, on mobile phones, play stations and T.V.
- The children have become passive participants in the games.

Viability

- Many children would still love to play these games if they had the time.
- The games will offer the children a great variety after the long hours of receiving instructions
- The games will not just help them exercise; they will have a human touch since they are interactive. The children will also cement the friendships between themselves.

1.6.6 TSINGANO – NARRATIVES

Narratives were told to the young children by their grandmothers in the evening. Among the communities, there was a special relationship between the grandchildren with their grandmother. These narratives were mainly told in the evening after the children had had their supper. They would gather around the fire place in the grandma's house. The grandma, many a time had something special like a banana to give to the children. The children would in turn tell their peers the stories they had learnt elsewhere, thus strengthening the concept of the oral tradition as a viable tool of transmission of tradition. The narratives were child centred and talked about ogres, the big and small animals like the hare and how the animals outwitted each other. These narratives had specific moral lessons other than carrying the history of the people and communities that told and listened to these stories. The Children easily related the narratives to the society and the environment around them. Alongside the narratives were riddles, tongue-twisters, puns, and proverbs.

Significance

- These narratives other than teaching the young children morals that the community wanted upheld, reconciled them to the environment around them and developed a special forum for the transmission of such information, knowledge, morals and values from the grandmothers to the grandchildren.
- The special bond that existed between the children and the grandmothers strengthened family relationships.
- The children felt loved and learnt how to love through the strong relationship developed through story telling.
- The story telling sessions refreshed the children after a busy day of work.

Challenges

- The rapport and bonds that existed between grandmas and their grandchildren seems extinct and needs urgent protection.
- Rural – Urban migration has created a barrier between the child and the story teller.

- The many duties that start from early morning till late evening have occupied a lot of the child's time until there is hardly any free time left for them to listen to stories. In addition these myriad duties leave them too exhausted.

Viability

- Children need the narratives now more than ever. The soap operas that they now watch have nothing positive for them to emulate.
- The school holidays offers a perfect time for them to sit with their grandmothers.
- Children have shown a lot of interest in story telling sessions at cultural festival such as the annual Schools' Drama Festival a prove that they have never lost interest in this strong cultural practice that has made so much knowledge be transmitted for across many generations.

1.7. KHUKHUBA BISELO

This is a ritual performed at the close of the year to send away all the evils and problems of the previous year and usher in the New Year. All the members of the communities in Western Province participated. As the year came to the close, houses were usually prepared for the festive season. On 31st evening a wave like one word song began from the east towards the west— 'Mumbo mumbo mumbo Lukhutsu mumbo'. As they sung the people hit all kinds of instruments including cooking implements, drums, and anything that could produce noise. The underlying concept was that all diseases and problems should go to Mumbo (into the lake). It is believed that all evil should go to the lake. They prayed for inner peace and peace in the family and the community and hoped that the New Year would bring with it good tidings. They cleaned their houses and threw the rubbish on the roads and paths so that the New Year found their hearts, houses and community clean. This ritual is meant for peace building. It is however now almost extinct.

Significance

- The need to protect and sustain this ritual stems from the facts that:
 - a. It builds peace within the inner self, family and the community.
 - b. It carries with it the aspect of forgiveness

- c. It breached many broken walls amongst individuals, groups and communities for it had the component of forgiveness.

Challenges

- The ritual has been taken for granted as if it is a child's affair
- Certain unforeseen events in history for example the 2007 general elections interfered with the ritual.
- Many other activities of ending the year have come up. These include disco, Christian night vigils and sitting with family members and friends in social places.

Viability

- This ceremony can be performed anywhere for it does not require special instruments.
- It is a strong cultural tool for building peace amongst the communities of western Province and between these communities and their neighbours.
- Since it happens just once a year it is something most people will look forward to.

Reasons for Protection

1.8 ELEMENTS RELATED TO GOVERNANCE

1. Royal regalia
2. Installation of the leader
3. Council of elders
4. Traditional courts
5. Mulukoba – security
6. Omukasa – traditional royal ring
7. The three legged stool, the spear and other staffs as symbols of leadership

Reasons for the Preservation

- The royal regalia normally made from the leopard and Columbus monkey skin to be patented as an official Luhya regalia
- The council of elders to be recognized as an institution that should help with the governance of the community and instrumental in decision making.
- The traditional courts to help in conflict resolution
- The instruments named above to be symbols of leadership

1.9. ELEMENTS RELATED TO ARCHITECTURE AND RITUALS

1. Luchina nende isio - Grinding stone
2. Traditional pots
3. Bilibi – traditional baskets
4. Shinu – pestle and the mortar
5. Oluteru – winnowing tray
6. Shiteru – traditional plate
7. Olububa – traditional rake
8. Shiachi – granary
9. Chinjeshe – siphoning straw
10. Traditional stool
11. Structuring of the houses in a homestead

Reasons for Protection

The traditional have a unique way of cooking the foodstuffs, storing liquids and had their own significance in the way they were used

- The storage systems were chemical free yet so effective in storing the grains for as long as five years without the grain being infested with weevils.
- The straw was the symbol of age and was handed from one generation to the other. It was used by people of certain status in society and was one of the instruments held dear by the elders of any clan.

- The granary design depended on the kind of foodstuff to be stored. Modern and traditional technology needs to be merged to suit the modern demands of storage
- The traditional rake was such an important implement that can be made to suit the present demands. It was a symbol of the cleanliness standards that were by the traditional community.
- The structuring of the homestead told the history of the community

1.10. ELEMENTS RELATED TO TRADITIONAL PLANTS AND SPRINGS

The communities of Western Province valued the environment around them for they understood so well that this was their means of livelihood. They treasured the trees and plants around the homesteads for they served many purposes; sources of food, medicine and firewood. These trees and plants formed a catchment area for rain and the water in the streams. They also used the trees and plants for the construction of the various structures in the home. Certain trees and plants were considered sacred and had certain historical and cultural significances. Below are some of the trees and plants that were found and used by these communities.

1.10.1 *Sacred trees*

- 1) **Mukumu** – This huge ever green tree was planted on lilindwa (grave). The tree was therefore sacred and associated with the ancestors and cleansing ceremonies. This tree was also used for harvesting water. It is home to many types of bird. It is however also known for harbouring snakes.
- 2) **Tsisiola** – This is hard wood that was common in most homes. The tree is a symbol of strength and a homestead. This tree was also one of those that would be planted on lilindwa. It is sacred and was used for ceremonies like circumcision.
- 3) **Misutsu** – This is yet another sacred tree that was found in every homestead. It is also a symbol of a home. The tree was used for firewood and is home to many species of birds.

Circumcision ceremonies could also be held under his tree. When an adult died in the home this is the tree that made the bonfire.

- 4) **Murembe** - This tree is not only sacred but is also medicinal. It cures mumps. It is the tree from where the Bisukha and Bidakho carried out the ritual of swearing for cases that were very serious like incest. The stem is used for making the isukuti drums.
- 5) **Shikhuma** – This is another tree that is in the group of those trees that produce hardwood. It is sacred and was also used for rituals involving swearing. Its wood was used in the making of the three/four legged royal stools.
- 6) **Shikangania** – hardwood tree that has medicinal value. It cures allergies.
- 7) **Mukomari** – Soft wood tree that is used for making isukuti drums.
- 8) **Munyenyene, Musila, Musembe** – These trees were use in the treatment of common allergies and helped control worms.
- 9) **Musenzeli** – used to treat common cold and flu, stomach problem and missiles.
- 10) **Shikhalikhanga** – used to cure hemorrhage and related bleeding diseases
- 11) **Mukhuyu, Lukhulumuru, Shipela**, - these trees were valued for their fruits and were a source of firewood.

1.10.2 Other plants and herbs

- 1) **Mionyi** – cures flu and fever
- 2) **Indelema** – cures worms and enhance the production of milk
- 3) **Lilibiri** – used on cuts and enables blood to clot around the wound
- 4) **Alukhaba** – cures fever and stomach problems
- 5) **Libinganyi** – used to control stomachache
- 6) **Shituti** – a small plant used in the treatment of common colds
- 7) **Busese bwango** – this grass species is for back aches and for massages.
- 8) **Mukombelo** – a root used for teeth problems, fresh breath and to enhance libido
- 9) **Imbuli yumutakha** – used to cure common colds
- 10) **Ingoi** – used on wounds during circumcision

1.10.3 Tsisiebeye – traditional streams

These streams were the main sources of water that was used in the homes. The streams were demarcated in such a way that the upper section was for fetching water for domestic use. Lower downstream was a section from where cows and other animals would drink water, yet farther downstream was the section where the men and other male members of the community bathed. This order in the use of the streams was always respected. It was expected that women would bath from home. These streams were the sacred places where cleansing was done. The community respected the streams and made every effort of protecting them by planting indigenous trees around them. In addition, through the organization of the village elders, all members would once in a while be called upon to come and clean the stream if it had become too bushy, therefore dangerous for use by children, girls and women.

Significance

- The trees depending on where they had grown told a lot history about the community. For example old graveyards would be easily identified.
- The trees formed the site at which certain ceremonies would be performed
- Other than the spiritual value associated with these trees, they formed a catchment area for rain and sustaining the flow of water in the streams. It is for the reason that the springs never dried throughout the year
- The springs were sacred places with pure water where initiates, widows and widowers, went for cleansing ceremonies.

Challenges

- Rampant destruction of the trees for economic interests and land pressure have left these places bare and defiled of their cultural significance. In fact most of the species of trees now face extinction. The streams are now seasonal.
- Modern methods of treatment have downplayed the important role the trees offered and can still in treating most of the common diseases.

Viability

- Many people including medical practitioners are reverting to the use of herbal medicine as a more effective treatment for many diseases.
- A lot of irregularities in the rain cycle are being experienced due to the destruction of the indigenous trees. In addition, spring water has been found to be very pure and healthy and is what is now being sold as mineral water.

1.11.0 ELEMENTS RELATED TO ORAL TRADITION AND LANGUAGES

Through oral tradition, intangible cultural heritage - knowledge and wisdom and community values were transmitted from one generation to the other. Language was the vehicle that enabled this. Children were told narratives by their grandmothers and young people particularly boys learnt the skills of life by sitting in sessions with old men who spoke in proverbs. Amongst themselves, young boys and girls shared the experiences and stories they had been told at home. In the end everybody learnt what had been told to one person. Language in all the communities of Western Province had the extrinsic value of merely identifying elements in nature and the intrinsic value that these elements held. The intrinsic value of these elements was perhaps best expressed in the wise sayings by the old men. Modern development has to a very large extent affected this important cultural practice. Below are some of the elements that seem to lose their initial functions and meaning because of this development.

1.11.1 PROVERBS/SAYINGS

Proverbs and sayings amongst the communities of Western Province were mainly used by the old men in their drinking sessions and meetings. The use of this artistic language was to express a strong point that needed the thought of those in attendance or to cut off the rest of the people and communicate to the limit few. This would be applied in incident like resolving a conflict and in community meetings where a serious case was being handled. It was a secret or corded language. However during drinking sessions of busaa the old men would play around with proverbs and sayings to tutor the young generation in the use of the same.

1.11.2 RIDDLES, TONGUE-TWISTERS

Riddles formed part of the language basically for the younger generation among themselves or with the guidance of an adult. It was meant to sharpen their wits and familiarize them to the environment around them. The children challenged each other with puzzles that were drawn from their immediate surroundings and all that was needed by the respondent was to be sharp in drawing similarity between what was asked and the environment in which he/she stayed. Tongue twisters on the other hand enabled the younger generation to have a perfect grip on the intonation and stress in the use of the language. Words with the same pronunciation but different tones and stresses would be put together to test the ability of the younger generation on their grip on the meaning and use of language. This kind of training was done in a very relaxed environment. It was more of a game than a training session. With time the children learnt how to twist the words round.

1.11.3 POEMS/SONGS

In the olden days there were court poets who composed poems for the rulers. Among the communities of Western Province poems were similar to the songs. They used the same stylistic devices i.e. imagery. In the dirges (tsitsikhulu) there is a lot of the use of images. In most of the songs, if not all use of imagery, repetition and symbolism is prevalent. In the lullabies there is a systematic structural development that follows the same trend as that used in the development of poem. Composers of songs were therefore very poetic in their structuring of the songs. In most of the songs involving children, most of the songs follow the basic structure of poems meant for children putting weight on repetition, rhyme and rhythm, stylistic effects that are basic in even modern poems meant for children.

1.11.4 NAMES OF RELATIVES [Common names]

- **Kuka** - This is a name used to refer to a grandfather or used by a father when referring to a son-in-law.
- **Kukhu** – a grandmother referring to the grandchildren and vice versa or a father referring to the daughter-in-law
- **Senje** – an aunt. A child to your brother or a sister to your father

- **Mama** – your biological mother or any of her sisters/her cousins, a daughter-in-law referring to her mother-law
- **Mama mutii** – a stepmother or any of the sisters to your mother
- **Tata** – a father, a daughter/son- in-law referring to the father-in law
- **Khotsa** – a brother to your mother
- **Basanji** – parents of the boy and those of the girl referring to each other
- **Basakwa** – men married from the same home referring to each other
- **Bakochi** – someone in the same initiation age group
- **Mufiala**.- (cousin) children of your aunt(s) or Uncle(s)
- **Amwabo/amwiru** – man referring to his brother(s) or sons of your father’s brothers or a girl referring to her sister or daughters to the father’s brother(s)
- **Mbotso** – a man referring to his sister(s)
- **Mwiwa** – an uncle referring to the children of the sister(s)
- **Mwitsukhulu** – a great grandparent referring to a great grand child.
- **Mukulu** – one who has bought land / one who sold the land

1.11.5 COMMUNITIES

The names of the different communities too had a lot of significance. Some names were drawn from the ancestors from whom the clan originated. For example Bamusali came from a man called Khamusali and Bimalia came from Khimalia. Other clans were named after the places where they stay e.g. Bashikulu means the people who stay on the hill; Imachina means the place of rocks. Yet some other names came from one phenomena or the other. For example Bashimuli came from the word shimuli meaning a flower because they had many beautiful girls.

Significance

- The names of the relatives ensured that the respects and social distances that are associated with these relationships were maintained.
- Every relative was treated differently depending on the relationship. It was important therefore to know who was who.
- The relationship defined the place and space from which a person could operate and the privileges he/she was entitled to.

Challenges

- The modern society has corrupted the honour that was associated with relatives. For example any male person coming to the house is referred to as 'uncle' and any female as 'auntie'. The children therefore grow never to know the meanings
- The mania for status and association with the famous has destroyed true family relationships.

Viability

- Children by nature are very receptive and impartial in judgment. It is what the parents feed them on that they take. The window of hope is still very open if parents tell them the right things.
- Human relations are not like dirt that can be washed away. They permanently exist and can never be altered.
- There are many occasions when such relationships can be recognized including weddings and funeral.

1.12 BIRDS

Western Province and specifically Kakamega forest is famous for the many species of birds found in the forest. Most of these birds have taken shelter in the forest after their natural habitat with and around the communities was destroyed by modern development. Before, they stayed in the bushes next to the homesteads of communities. Birds to most of the communities of Western Province were not just birds. They were part of their day to day lives. There were birds that told of good tidings, yet there were others that signified bad omen, there were birds that communicated time. Early in the morning the sounds of the birds were so distinct. It was easy to tell the time from the different sounds of the birds because they did this only at a certain time in the morning. Below are a few examples of the birds that lived side by side with the communities.

- **Ingokho**
- **Lipata**
- **Shituti**

- likhanga
- Bichonjoli –
- Litsalia –
- Imbilikintsi
- Isindu
- Litutu
- Mahachio
- Isenjelo
- Likhule
- Shichonjionjio
- Iseru
- Inamande
- Ininga
- Likholobe
- Inyembele
- Mutsuni
- Inangobia
- Lirololesi
- Shiyundi
- Shilitsa
- Likhokho
- Iminyi

Significance

- The birds connected man to nature in a unique way. For example wherever you saw a bird called shichonjonjio you were sure to find a toilet there. Certain birds for example were pointers to a harvest. Likhongotsa would only be found where there were homesteads. There was danger of something stranger than human whenever a hen ran for shelter.

Challenges

- Human development has destroyed most of the natural habitat for these species of birds. Now communities have to adapt new methods of reading nature.

Viability

- Human effort resolve to revert to the initial harmonious co-existence with nature is not a new concept at the moment. Most conservatists and institutions concerned with the environment will strongly support this idea as they are now advocating for the planting of indigenous trees and the conservation of our natural environment.

1.13 GREETING PATTERNS

Greetings among the Luyha communities of western Province had a lot of significance. All forms of greetings were actually questions to find out if all was well. The common greeting among all the Luhya communities is Mulembe, meaning peace. This greeting in itself carries a lot of weight. It means:

- As I greet you I have no hatred and all I wish for between you and I is peace.
- Is there peace wherever you are coming from?
- Wherever I am coming from there is peace
- I belong to the Luhya community and all we stand for is peace. [the greeting identifies the person as belonging to the Luhya community]

The normal response is “mulembe” meaning there is peace. Any other response will definitely be a pointer to the fact that all is not well. For example ‘khuli numulembe vava’ means we have no peace. This is a pointer to a calamity like death, or war or arrests by the police. The Luhya communities do not just offer a hand for a greeting. They must pronounce the word ‘mulembe’.

Other forms of greetings include ‘Bushiele’ meaning the day has broken in the morning. Within this greeting there are rhetoric questions: ‘Has the day broken well?’ Again if everything is alright the respondent answers the same. If the respondent answers otherwise, it

means there is trouble. If the answer was 'Bushiele busatsa' (it has woken up the man's way) it meant there is trouble. If it was 'Bushiele bukhalo' (It has woken up the woman's way) it meant everything is peaceful. This is because men were associated with trouble shooting.

'Kishitele/ku mbasu' is a greeting used during the day. Again it is a rhetoric question 'how is the day?'

'Bwakhila/bwilanga' is a greeting used in the evening as the sun is setting.

Another form of greeting is 'Kabwolwa' meaning 'What is being said?' This is a greeting that basically aims at knowing if there is something strange that you are not aware of.

Significance

- The communities in Western province did not greet people as a formality but as a genuine expression to pass a message of peace, to create peace, and find out about peace.

1.14 OTHER PARALINGUISTIC FEATURES

In the communities in this region language went beyond what is verbal. Certain gestures and postures communicated. Elders were therefore keen to let the younger generation do certain things in a particular way. It was taboo to gesticulate in certain ways, or make certain sounds. For example sitting with your hands on your cheeks meant you were mourning. When eating for example one was not supposed to stare at the other members on the table. Clicking at an elder or even an age mate was a sign of great disrespect. Children would be judged from their responses to call. When a child was called by an adult he/she was supposed to go running. If one went walking it was a sign of rudeness. When a child was called by a parent or a grandparent he/she was not just to respond. The positive response was to be 'I am coming', as the child moved there running. Answering elders by gesticulating the head was a sign of disrespect.

1.15 REASONS FOR PROTECTION

- Language is the vehicle through which the intangible cultural heritage is handed from one generation to the other
- The expressions were not just for communication but drew a lot of analogy from the surrounding environment

- The languages expressed the values and morals the community wanted upheld
- The language in itself had the aesthetic composition
- The intrinsic values in the expression cannot be expressed in any other manner
- Language gives the community a sense of unity and identity. “Luhya” mean people of the same clan.
- The modes of greetings carry within themselves a bigger meaning beyond what I actually said
- The different levels of communication amongst people of different ages enable language to do a lot more than just communicate. This is particularly true when proverbs were used.
- The names the tangible cultural heritage has a hidden story that goes with the name of the sites.

1.16 MEANS THROUGH WHICH THESE ELEMENTS CAN BE PROTECTED

Among the methods proposed for the implementation of the intangible cultural practices were:

1. Creating awareness about responsible implementation and the dangers that threaten the heritage of the identified elements in Chief’s barazas
2. The inclusion of the identified elements in the schools’ syllabus
3. Documentation of the said elements in books and film documentaries
4. Demonstration of the practices in cultural festivals
5. Capacity building workshops and activities with members of the community
6. The print and electronic media, posters and banners
7. Research
8. Funding to protect and promote the identified elements
9. Special training programmes
10. Patenting of some of the identified elements
11. Involving the communities, groups and individual in the management, and implementation programmes that are geared towards the safeguarding of such elements
12. Legislation of some of the practices

1.17. CHALLENGES FACING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ICH ELEMENTS IDENTIFIED

1. Christian practices that are not in tandem with the elements identified
2. Certain cultural practices that look extremist in nature and touch on the human rights of the persons, groups, or communities involved e.g. FGM
3. Danger posed by the present health risks like H.I.V Aids and traditional forms of initiation
4. Legislative that might be against some of the practices -

2.0 IDENTIFYING AND INVENTORYING OF THE TRADITIONS AND PRACTICES OF THE MIJIKENDA COMMUNITY

The communities concerned consists of the Mijikenda groups of the coastal region that nurture relations with the sacred Kaya forests and they include; the Chonyi, Duruma, Digo, Giriama, Jibana, Kambe, Kauma, Rabai and Ribe. These communities speak closely related Bantu dialects which are used and preserved through the cultural practices associated to the Kayas.

The traditions and practices of the Mijikenda community are still viable and constitute an important basis for their identity and ultimate survival of the community. The Kaya council of elders continues to have, alongside their traditional knowledge in managing Kaya forests and performing rituals, an important function of traditional governance. This involves rendering of social justice, maintain peace and harmony within and between the communities and coordination the use of natural resources of the Kaya forests.

- The Traditions and practices of the Mijikenda are closely related i.e. Chonyi, Giriama, Digo,
- We need to list these traditions and practices
- Interested with the Safeguarding of these traditions and practices
- Music related elements
- Challenges- Lack of instruments and resources used for conducting the ceremonies and practices.

2.1 DOMAIN: CULTURAL PRACTICE

Naming Ceremonies: Vyalusa, Komboza konze Mwana/ Vyarusa/ Komboza nze

According to the Mijikenda traditions, naming played a significant role since it gave the identity of a child. Names were given based on the clan lineage, place of birth and the occasion in which the child was born such as Mwanzala is a child born during times of famine,

Kanze is a baby girl born out of the house, munyazi is a baby girl born during planting season, Nyavula during rainy season, Charo is a baby boy born when the mother was on a journey, Ndoko is a name to a child born at a time of desperation, etc. Names were also given after clan members such as uncles, aunts grandparents etc.

Importance of Names

- Giving the child some identity.
- Continuity of the family/clan lineage
- Reminded the community about certain events in history such as famine, floods, times of plenty, independence, and even certain great personalities such as Jommo, Ngala, Odinga, Obama, Osama etc.

Associated Tangible and Intangible Heritage

The naming ceremony begins early morning before sunrise where the baby is laid at the doorway where prayers are made to God and the ancestors to bless the child and for long life and prosperity. Objects associated with prosperity are placed on the doorway before the child is laid there. These include a bow and arrow, signifying courage and virility, books to signify endless education pursuit, a key signifying success or opportunity to open all doors of fortune and success etc.

Songs and dances filled with ululations accompany the ceremony. Feasting then follows where chicken and goats are slaughtered to feed the people. Ordinarily neighbors and relatives are all invited to share in these happy moments and to welcome the child in its new world.

Persons and Institutions involved with the element

All persons of all ages and gender are involved. The family as an institution is the most important institution involved and in recent times religious institution have been involved.

Customary Practices Governing Access to the element or aspect of it

- Kuhasa koma – Prayers to God and Ancestors
- Kulunga tovu – Taking care of the umbilical cord as it disconnects from the child. This is so important as it is believed that it determines the potency of the baby– done by women

- Killing of two chickens, one male and a female – Done by anyone who underwent circumcision.
- Mboko ya Mwandamiro ya Dzina- Drinking of traditional wine. This is to be started by the father of the newborn and then invites the others in attendance to join him in the drinking.

Singing and Dancing

It signifies the climax of the ceremony. The father of the new born starts the singing and dancing then he invites those in attendance to join him in the singing and dancing. This continues for hours until the invited guests start leaving at their pleasure.

According to the Rabai, the new born has to be made to taste the water from young (madafu/Madanga) coconuts as a sign of welcoming the newborn to its new world – a ritual referred to by the Rabai as Mulungula .

State of the element: Viability

The element is viable as its still being practiced by all Mijikendas either learned or not. Though religion has had an effect on its practice, traditional practices associated with the element have been blended with either Christian or Islamic practices to give the element continued viability. Town dwellers have still been going back to their rural homes to have their children given tribal names in total conformity with the demands of their tradition no matter how late it is performed.

Threats to Transmission

- Declining importance of the kinship ties
- Western Education
- Religion (Christianity and Islam)
- Modernization/Rural – Urban Migration
- Decline in the socialist lifestyles of the Mijikenda
- Legal regimes regulating certain practices
- Modernization – Most children are born in hospital

Safeguarding measures

2.2. DOMAIN: CULTURAL PRACTICE

Initiation: Kudeka/ Kuhinya/ Kutahiriwa/ Kungizwa Lwembeni/Kwenjizwa Tsatsani/ Kupashwa Tohara

Initiation or circumcision for boys was done at the age of fifteen years but nowadays it has changed and one can be circumcised even at birth. The Mijikenda do not circumcise their girls and other traditional forms of initiation such as counseling (Kwarwa) are used in place of girls' circumcision. The practice is done to boys between the ages of 15 – 18 years and is undertaken by all the Mijikenda

Importance of the practice

- To instill courage and confidence in men
- A sign of respect for the Mijikenda traditions
- Recognition of the transition of the child from childhood to adulthood
- A symbol of respect for the circumcised young men
- Enables the initiates to assume positions of leadership and responsibility
- To prepare the child for marriage and enhancement of conjugal responsibilities

Persons and institutions involved with the element

The practice applies to the male gender in all professions of all social standing and status. The clan and the family are the most important institutions involved in the practice of the element.

Customary Practice Governing access to the element or to aspect of it

A special ritual was conducted where the fore skin removed was taken to the kaya for burial at specific places. Those to take the fore skin to the Kaya were four people – two from the paternal side and two from the maternal side.

State of the element: Viability

Though the element is still viable, it is highly threatened by religious practices, modernization, and western education. Cross-cultural marriages have also worked to threaten the element.

Safeguarding Measures Proposed

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2.3. DOMAIN: CULTURAL PRACTICE

Ulozi/kulola na kuriha mali/Hunda: Engagement and Dowry payment

Characteristics of the element

It involves the process of scouting for a wife and payment of dowry. In many Mijikenda communities, this was done by Aunts with instruction from the parents of the groom. This is done in consideration of special aspects such as perceived respect of the family of the bride, fertility, hard work, social perceptions etc. This element is practiced by all the Mijikenda.

Persons and Institutions Involved with the elements

The practice involves young adults who have undergone initiation and are about 16 – 18 years, elderly men and women and children.

Customary Practice Governing Access to the element or to aspect of it.

Introduction of the Bride to parents of the groom.

Culturally, the bride to be was put in a hut by her aunt at her home and the groom would visit her in the hut for a first encounter. During this encounter, the two would discuss the possibility of them marrying and if they agreed, a day would be set when the groom will be introduced to the parents of the bride. At this point, the groom is not supposed to take any meal at the brides place. This meeting is held during late evening.

From this stage on, the bride can visit the groom at his home more often though she cannot take any meals here or spend a night at the grooms place. A messenger is then sent to the brides' home by the grooms' father to set a date for negotiation of the bride price.

The parents of the groom in holding walking sticks go to negotiate the bride price on the agreed date. During this occasion not so much money is required. During the negotiation process, the grooms' parent should be able to identify the daughter in-law to be.

The two parties then agree on the bride price and any other expenses and requirements needed by the brides' parents. This meeting also agrees on the exact day and date the bride price will be paid. The lunar calendar was to be followed in arriving at the day and time.

Palm wine is a very crucial requirement in all this ceremonies as none could proceed without there being wine. In most cases all the wine to be taken was provided by the grooms' parents. At the occasion of the payment of bride price, the amount of wine to be taken to the in-laws was put in terms of [kadzama]. One Kadzama is equivalent to 6 litres of the wine or eight 750ml bottles of the wine. This wine was carried in gourds by women to the brides' place and

the number of Kadzamas' to be taken to the brides must correspond to the number of women to ferry it, each woman carrying one Kadzama. Ordinarily 12 Kadzamas would be taken to the in-laws meaning 12 women had to carry it.

Bride price was carried by the grooms' father while the grand father would carry about three litres (Kithethe)of the wine. This was the wine that would initially be given out requesting the brides' party to allow the grooms' party to start the discussion of the day.

Once the dowry has been received by the brides' father (not biological) the bride would be asked to consent to the fact that she agrees to be married by the groom whose father has paid the dowry. If indeed she agrees to this, she would be given a goblet full of palm wine and asked to allow the father to drink it without using a straw. The date of the wedding would then be set after which the 12 Kadzamas' would then be presented to the brides' party and feasting begins, again with song and dance.

Modes of Transmission

Transmission of the cultural practice has been from older members of the family to the young members of the family. After initiation, boys and girls were given informal lessons of what was expected of them as they enter the next stage of life. Girls were given the lessons by their aunts while boys were given the lessons by grand fathers.

State of the element: Viability

The practice of this element is highly threatened. Though most people still do courtship leading to marriage, the role of the aunts, parents, grandparents and other significant people have been totally ignored. Western education and foreign religions, urbanization, Technological advancement and modern lifestyles, have dealt a big blow to the cultural practice. Teen–age pregnancies, street families, and children whose fathers are not known have been on the increase.

Threats to the enactment

- Technological Advancement
- Western Education
- Foreign religions
- Urbanization
- Modern lifestyles
- Cross-cultural marriages

Threats to its Transmission

- Under valuing the role of grandparents, parents, aunts, and significant others in the search of prospective spouses.
- Condemning grandparents, aunts and significant others in rural areas while rest of family stay in urban areas reduces the contact time children can have with them for guidance and counseling on such matters.

Safeguarding Measures

2.4. DOMAIN: SOCIAL PRACTICE

Kutsuha Mburuga/ Divination

Is the process of foretelling of misfortunes and seeking advice from a diviner on how to mitigate against them should they be real.

Description of the element

The practice involves the diviner burning incense (Ubani) to raise her spirits in readiness for divination. Once the spirits have been lifted, the diviner then get a winnowing mat normally placed upside down with ashes sprinkled on it with some drawings made on it.

The diviner then uses a small special guard with 12 seeds inside it which she shakes while singing or whistling. She then hesitantly removes the seeds. In every shaking, the number of seeds coming out of the small guard has a meaning. Three seeds mean the person whose divination is sort is a woman and when five seeds come out it means the person whose divination is being sort for is a man.

In every shaking, the diviner gives a story interpreting the misfortune of the person whose divination is done. After telling the story, the diviner asks the client to confirm whether the diviner is on course or not.

Once the divination is over, the diviner then puts water mixed with tobacco snuff and the seeds that came out of the small guard in a Chinese bowl and stirs the mixture using the spikes of a porcupine. As the stirring goes on, the arrangement of the seeds in the solution tells the diviner which part of the body or organ of the patient whose divination is being done for is affected.

Giving the cause as well as the solution to it and even the prescription and the person to treat the illness/misfortune is part of the process of divination. Knowing the problem and its cause and the part of the body affected, it's time the diviner gives the prescription and remedy. Doing this has the diviner back to the winnowing mat where she consults the spirits to tell the remedy. Should the diviner feel that there is no remedy and that the patient in whose divination is being sort for is likely not to survive, the diviner returns all monies (pishi) meant for the divination back to the client.

Once the cause of the misfortune and the remedy is rightly established, the diviner directs the client to the most able healer who will perform the required healing rituals. This he does using certain number of small sticks in selecting the best healer. The diviner may also prescribe what the client should take to the healer items required for the healing ritual.

Persons and institutions involved with the element

All people with misfortunes young and old, male or female undertake this cultural practice. The educated and the rich are also not spared. Though most of them seek conventional medicines, they resort to traditional healers after they fail to get solutions to their problems/cure from conventional health practitioners. Many traditional healers are however elderly people though at times young adults can be initiated into the practice though apprenticeship (Atege).

State of the element: Viability

Threat to the enactment

The element is quite viable though its practice is threatened especially by technological advancement that predicts causes of illnesses more accurately and in a way easily explainable than divination.

Threats to the transmission

Transmission to the young generation has been threatened by western education, religion, modern lifestyles and technological advancements. The youth have not embraced divination as many of them have gone to school. The influence of religion and the advancement in conventional medicine backed by precise scientific testing and accurate diagnosis of some

diseases and ailments have convinced many than the use of divination to arrive at solutions to diseases and ailments.

However, with situations that cannot be scientifically tested such as curses, and unrelenting occurrence of disasters; the practice still survives.

Availability of associated tangible elements and resources

The practice is rich in the use of tangible elements. The use of the guads (Vidonga – plural, Chidonga – singular), tobacco snuff (tumbaku), ash (ivu) chicken of different colors, various herbs, roots of different trees, incense (Ubani), Certain types of clothes, money (in form of coins) etc is a manifestation of how rich the element is in tangible resources.

Viability of associated tangible and intangible elements.

Most of the tangible elements associated with the practice are viable. However, certain indigenous trees have started getting extinct and some measures need to be put in place to protect them. The intangible elements associated with the element are still viable though its transmission is seriously threatened.

Safeguarding Measures in Place

2.5. DOMAIN: RITUAL

2.5.1 Uganga/Penduzi

Is a ritual that is meant to reverse a misfortune or a disease so as to have the affected person live normal life. Uganga is done after divination is complete and prescription done on how the misfortune/disease is reversed/cured.

Characteristics of the element

The client takes all the tangible elements associated with the ritual to the healer (mganga) as prescribed during divination. This is normally done during early morning or late evening just after sun set as darkness sets in.

The healer ordinarily has a specific place (Ndalani) where he/she performs all the rituals. In preparation for the ritual, the healer (Mganga) sweeps the (ndala) clean and then draws on the

ground traps (Mihambo) using cold ash and tobacco snuff and powdered charcoal. The *ndala* is a sacred place and therefore is not accessible to anybody and getting into it demands that one removes his shoes. As one approaches *ndalani*, a special greeting is to be said especially when one finds the healer in the process of performing the ritual.

Once the traps (mihambo) have been prepared, the healer asks the patient/client to do seven rounds of the traps at times blindfolded with a black cotton cloth. As the patient/client crosses the traps, the healer sprinkles onto him a concoction of herbs and water (Vuo) on his body while appeasing the spirits and asking to them for healing.

After the seven rounds are done, the healer asks the patient/client to sit down where he places on top of the clients' head an old small pot with the concoction in it mixed with chicken blood and more appeasement (kukokotera) continues. This process is mostly done with the help of an apprentice (mtege). The healer then puts the pot down and picks one of the chickens prescribed during divination and starts plucking out feathers from the live chicken while going round the patient/client as more appeasement continues. The process is repeated seven times after which a white live chicken is put on the head of the client with the healer appeasing even more. The white chicken is the one used to ask the ancestors and the spirits to reverse any misfortunes or provide some healing to the patient. The chickens are then slaughtered and their blood is put in the guals containing medicinal syrup/concoction.

To end the ritual, small cuttings/incisions are made on the patient's body at specific parts such as the chest, on the back, on the ribs on the tongue, on the forehead etc and as traces of blood are spotted, a black medicinal powder is rubbed strongly on the spot incision has been done. The patient is also given some medicines to carry back home which he/she will be taking at specific times. Some of the medicines are to be orally taken while others are smeared on the body.

The client then asks the charges for the ritual, pays and then allowed to go home. The healer then pours the remaining concoctions on the trap to make them ineffective (kuzimnya/kuzizinya) and then sweeps the *ndala* clean once more. The process of kuzizinya is mostly done by the apprentice as is part of his/her learning process.

Some rituals have strict prohibitions that have to be strictly followed. Such prohibitions may involve not eating certain foods, not doing certain things like sitting on chairs etc. The healer then monitors the progress of the patient and may at times change the medicines or stop others. If no healing takes place, the process goes back to divination, this time using totally different people. The healing ritual is highly determined by the quality and accuracy of the divination done.

Persons and institutions involved with the element

The Mijikenda community believes so much in traditional healing processes and its associated rituals. All people old and young, male and female, rich and the poor are all involved in the practice. Though most people start the healing process at hospitals using conventional medicine, they end up with the traditional rituals after realizing that they cannot be healed the conventional way.

Customary practices governing access to the element or to aspect of it

The element has a lot of customary practices such as singing and dancing, and at times the use of drums of different sizes and makes. There is also so much praying/appeasement and offering of sacrifices to the spirits and ancestors.

Modes of Transmission

The most common mode of transmission is through apprentice where the youth learn from the old. At times spirits appear to people in their sleep in form of dreams and are commanded to go to the forests or kayas to collect certain herbs which they can then use in the treatment and cure of certain diseases and ailments. Other people get to become healers by paying money to established healers who then teach them the act of healing given diseases or ailments.

State of the element: Viability

The element is quite viable as it is practiced on a daily basis and is part of the lifestyle of the Mijikenda. The element is mostly practiced at a greater scale in the remote areas where conventional medicine is not accessible to most people because of the cost element or the physical distances involved to reach a health care centre or practitioner.

Threats to its enactment

The most noticeable threat of its enactment is the wide use of the conventional medicine which has received a modest acceptance due to its efficacy and availability. The lack of a policy instrument to regulate the usage of traditional healing mechanism and the lack of a legal framework to back its usage are threats to its enactment.

Threats to the transmission

Transmission of the element is seriously threatened by the influence of western education that portrays conventional medicine as the best medicine. The youth having been educated are reluctant to learn the art and skills of traditional healing and its associated rituals. Most of those with the knowledge and skill are older people who are dying at a faster rate owing to their age in the lifecycle.

Due to the fact that traditional healing processes have not been documented anywhere because they are heavily laden with intangible elements makes its transmission very difficult.

Safeguarding Measures in place

Continued performance of the ritual by the old persons gives the young an opportunity to see and appreciate the role of traditional medicine and associated rituals in the treatment and cure of disease and ailments. It also makes them appreciate its role in the keeping at bay misfortunes which befall the community.

National associations of traditional healers and practitioners have been established to give visibility of the element. This is not only to the Mijikenda but to all communities in Kenya.

2.6. DOMAIN: RITUAL

2.6.1 Chilarira/ Oath of Faithfulness

Brief Description of the element

Is an oath taken by spouses to live a life of faithfulness to each other. It is a lifelong bond and irreversible in nature.

Characteristics of the element

The ritual involves the couple cleaning their private parts with water in a pot that was used for preparing a meal the previous day but is yet to be cleaned. In essence water should have been put in this pot to make the leftovers (ukoko) loosen up for ease of cleaning. This is the water to be used for cleaning of the private parts immediately after an act of sex have been performed.

The couple is then supposed to each drink this water while taking an oath before ancestors and spirits that they have decided to live together a life of mutual faithfulness. Then holding the pot together while taking the oath and in standing position, smash the pot on the ground with the rest of the contents as a final confirmation that they will ever be inseparable and faithful to each other.

From this stage on the two will have vowed to be together and if they have to undo the vow, they should collect all the pieces of the broken pot and join them together for a complete pot. The vow then cannot be broken and should any of the two stray out and makes love out of wedlock, the consequences are that he/she dies immediately after the act.

The surviving spouse is then supposed to say what killed the spouse so that certain rituals of appeasement can be made to cleanse the community against other misfortunes.

2.6.2 *Wedding (Harusi) Munyenze*

- Harusi ni furaha
- To announce officially that you want to establish a family
- Wedding goes with blessings from parents

2.7. Traditions [Curses]-Kitio-incest, Makoso, Mafito, Mavingane, Mafitio]

- Stomach pains
- Barrenness
- Endless plagues

2.8. Death (Kifo)

Death is the end of life. Death in traditional Mijikenda community is regarded as evil and always have a causative many a times believed to have risen out of being bewitched more so when an explanation to it is missing.

- In case of child's death, before naming ceremony, the dead child is buried in the house.
- Death ceremonies are accorded special consideration depending on the status of the deceased.
- The death ceremony of a Kaya elder for example is expensive than of an ordinary member of the community.
- The dead Kaya elder for example has to be attended by colleagues included being shaven clear in all areas before the death can be pronounced to the rest of the community.
- The Giriama also has those stages. Those who die before 10 days are not accorded any burial ceremony.
- In cases of death of a senior member of the community private parts and the head are removed and have the body buried within the Kaya.
- Kaumas who die out of the Kaya have their bodies buried out of the Kaya though no body parts removed. Those who die within the Kaya have their bodies buried in the Kaya.

2.8.1 CEREMONIES ASSOCIATED WITH BURIAL OF THE DEAD:

- Deaths arising from accidents have the bodies buried the same day and out of the homestead. Those who die out of an infectious disease such as leprosy is buried out of the homestead and has no burial ceremonies performed.
- Ordinary death has the body buried after a day or two and have their bodies buried with within the homestead. The number of days of mourning is related to the number of days one stayed indoors after birth. E.g. Men 5 days while women 4 days.
- Among the Duruma a big drum is used to announce the death of a community member. The drum is always kept in that homestead until death occurs in another homestead where the drum will be played there to announce that death and also be kept there.
- Burial of the dead amongst the Mijikenda have the grave partitioned at the centre to create (mji) where the body or casket is laid. Ceremonies will depend on the social status of the deceased, but on a general scale the ceremonies are more or less the same. The direction where the body is made to face depends on communities involved.
- After burial, traditional practices including songs and dances such as Kihoma, chifudu, juba, mwanzele, goda, chiringongo, msego, Kilale, Kuzuma hatsore, Zombe (Viza) etc. Normally, goats and cattle are slaughtered during such ceremonies. Fowl is prohibited from being killed in such ceremonies.
- In case the deceased was a traditional healer, a healing dance is played (Ngoma za pepo) until the burial ceremony is over.
- After the burial ceremonies are over, a ceremony is performed to 'throw the death'. This involves getting a man or woman to have sex ONCE with the deceased partner. The ceremony has a cultural significant of the ceremony is to make sure that such uncertainties do not recur in that homestead. It's a way of cleansing the family. Other traditions have it that before the cleansing ceremony no one in the household is allowed to have such sexual encounters.

2.8.2 MABULU, HANGA RIVU, NYERE ZA MWEZI, LUSINGA

- Comes after one year after the conclusion of the burial ceremonies. It can also be done any time after one year depending on the social status of the family members of the deceased. Its more over a shaving ceremony in memory and honour of the deceased. Involves feasting where bulls and goats are killed. Songs and dances such as Kiringongo, Mavunyo, chela, sengenya, bungo' are also played.

2.9 Other Traditions and practices of the Mijikenda

1. The installation of a talisman (Fingo) among in homesteads of protecting community members against adversaries and witchcraft. It is usually a way of protection of the homesteads.
2. Mnga'ro are the life stages of a child. These are the rites of passage among the Mijikenda which govern how a child ascends to positions of responsibility in the community. This life practice is totally eroded and the value and significance of the Kaya diminishing. Being a traditional institution of governance, the value attached to it will totally get lost if its transmission will not be enhanced.
3. Inheritance (Ufa) Urithi, Is one way through which the estate of the deceased is passed on to those left behind for purposes of care and further recreation of wealth. In case of widows left behind, they are re-married to brothers who will ensure continuity of the lineage and take care of the estate. The challenges associated to this cultural practice is unfair distribution of the deceased estate, sexual transmitted disease such as HIV/AIDS and the heavy economic burden that comes with increased responsibilities and increased cost of living.

Due to these challenges, children of a deceased person have been given exclusive rights to inherit the estate of their father. However, widows are not entitled to inherit the estate of their dead husbands.

2.10 Traditions associated to the Kayas of the Mijikenda.

Stages in the governance hierarchy of Kaya elders of the Rabai

- Mverye/ Vaya – Most senior of all
- Mverye wa hiri / Enyedzi– Deputizes Mverye
- Bora – VeryJunio/ Gohu – Puts tallismen (vigango) on graves
- Nyere – acts like flying squad –(Giriama)
- Kaumba – Protection of the rules and regulations surrounding the governance of the kaya (Giriama)
- Kambi – Acts like the army. (Giriama)

- Mianza ya Ache- Mostly women who are controlled by the senior most member of the community. Puts tallismen in places deemed fit by the senior member. (Kauma).

Kaya Mudzi Muvya (precisely for harvesting)

- Hut- Placed just after the main gate for guards who protect the Kaya
- At the gate the elders leave their sticks which are symbols of power and rank
- The hut serves as the armory
- Kaya mudzi muvya is the settlement area of the Mwezi sub-clan of the Rabai people
- The Mwezi perform their rituals

2.11 AGRICULTURAL RITUALS

2.11.1 Kwaluka Munda (Before cultivation)

Before cultivation or planting, the parents go to a medicine man for a concoction to spray the garden in order to cleanse it (To remove Chira)

When cultivating (preparing the ground) the old man starts breaking the ground with some marks and then followed by the first wife then the rest follows

After cultivation or sowing, the parents engage in sex followed by the first son and the rest in that order of seniority.

2.11.2 Thanks giving Ritual after harvest

This is a ritual undertaken to give thanks to God and the ancestors for a good harvest or to ask for forgiveness in case of a bad harvest or misfortunes that befall the community.

Every household married male adult contributes Ksh. 10/= towards the purchase of a black bull

Married women on the ritual day take to the kayas the harvest such as maize, cowpeas, rice, cassava that must have been grown in their land

On the eve of the ritual, all Kaya elders spend in the Kaya and as from 10.00Pm they dance to the “Ngoma ya Chikaya” dance.

At round 4pm, the senior most Kaya elders visit the alter to pray on behalf of the whole community.

They take to the alter ash bread (4) or (4) coconut shells filled with ash. The ash must be collected from all sides of the three cooking stones and mixed together. The ceremony at the alter goes on up to about 8.00a.m

They then take the breakfast-roasted cassava and water. During this time women gather outside the Kaya with the harvest in basket full. These the women take into the Kaya at a designated place and the elders come to bless the harvest here.

After blessing of the harvest, women then start preparing food from the harvest such as winnowing, pounding, etc.

As the women do the preparation, the Kaya elders walk the bull around the kaya seven times/ropunds. It is mandatory that the bull should have spent the night in the kaya. As the bull is taken round, the kaya elders say prayer in turn each elder saying a prayer in each round.

The bull leads the elders in all the seven rounds. This is a sign that the bull has been accepted by the ancestors.

After the seventh round, the bull is led to the sacrificial hill (Katsulu) where the bull is slaughtered and the blood is collected in four coconut shells and the rest of the blood is allowed to drain into a grave in seven strips.

Before the bull reaches the slaughtering spot, about 20 meters away, it is not allowed to walk by itself but carried to the slaughtering point.

Junior Kaya elders skin the bull and cut it into sizeable pieces.

The four blood filled coconut shell are taken to the alter by 4 Kaya elders where they offer it to the ancestors while appeasing/praying.

After skinning, special parts of the bull such as the liver, chest, hump, fillet is half roasted (rare) i.e. with some flow of blood still in it. These will then be picked by the senior most Kaya elders back to the alter for more prayers.

On return, the remaining special roasted pieces are then shared by the senior Kaya elders and eaten.

Then the rest of the bull is given to the women to prepare. The president of the Kaya elders has powers however, to pick any part of the bull of any size for consumption by the elders.

After cooking, the food is the brought at the dining area where all the food must be finished and if not it should not be carried but left in the Kaya.

Songs and dances then follow up to about 5pm where the community members must leave the Kaya while the elders leave at night.

3.0 MAASAI ELEMENTS



3.1 Olkitupukunet – Olkitupukunet

'the first offering' – This an event that signify the offering of sacrifice for birth of a Maasai Child. A sheep is usually is slaughtered and eaten by the community as sign of a new life in the village. The mother of the child is not allowed eat the meat from the slaughtered sheep and only allowed to drink the fat from the slaughtered. In the evening, the elders are called to offer blessing to the new born which later preceded by the naming ceremony. A child is usually a first 'nickname' which can later be confirmed or give a new one altogether. A mother hair usually remained unshaven at list for 3 or more months and is not allowed to sleep with a man until a child is at least two years old. This custom is rather diminishing as the Maasai community embraces other cultures.

3.2 Emowuo Olkiteng'

Is usually the beginning of the age group and is a part of the larger Enkipaata Ceremony. This is particularly carried out by some of the Maasai Section 'Iloshon'. The Maasai section 'Iloshon'(pl) which practice this ceremony are Ilpurko, Ilkeekonyokie, Ilwuasi-nkishu, Ildamat and Ilootai. Each of the 'Olosho'(sing') has a role to play in this ceremony. The Ilootai holds the ox, ilkeekonyokie and Ilpurko hold the horns of the ox, the Iwuasi-inkishu holds the middle while the Ildamat holds the ox hump. While the ox is being held, the leader of the ceremony is identified, who will be responsible for the sacrificial ox and is rewarded by;

- Nine castrated billies who are white in colour and grayish head and neck
- The blue ceremonial clothing
- A blameless heifer as price to allow the delegates of the ceremony to enter the 'manyata'

Two manyattas are usually are constructed one for ilkeekonyokie and one for the Ilpurko. The Manyatta usually consist of 49 huts and that is where the ox is sacrificed. Nine black heifers are usually taken to this manyatta. The uncircumcised boys arrive at the manyatta for the ceremony. Boys come to the manyatta with honey in the bags. The ceremony involves the making of fire, sacrifice of the ox and blessing.

3.3 Olkiteng lobaa

[The ox with arrows]. When young elders children are grown up, and his daughter are ready to be married, the elder has an obligation to offer a bull for slaughter that acts as ticket to perform the 'marriage ceremony' and engage in the marriage negotiation for his children. This usually signified by slaughtering of olkiteng' Lobaa ('ox with arrows' The slaughter of signifies 'readiness to be a father or son in law'. This will allow the performer of this act be authorized to accept an individual as an elder as well as to empowers to receive dowry payments. This is one of the most joyous event in which 'women are allowed to play a mock fight with men and women must defeat the men in this mock fight using slender canes from leaves. It is a very interesting game and most exciting events of the maasai elements where you both women and men are interactive without fear.

3.4 Olasarr – to pray for rains / sacrifice to end calamities.

Olasarr means an altar for sacrifice. When there is a serious drought, the community and agree for a time offer sacrifice to please God and pray for rains. Usually elder, good and men without blemish are chosen to undertake this exercise. A sacrificial sheep or ox is slaughtered, prayers made for this occasion mainly under the fig tree ' oreteti' (Maasai). The raised altar is where meat is roasted, prayers are made to God and meat eaten and nothing is left. No bones shall be broken in the event and nothing is left. Any left-overs are all burned to ashes. The community usually belief after the prayers they expect rains.

3.5 Olkiteng le Ntomono

Killing of steer in preparation for initiation and introducing the adolescent to initiation or circumcision. These are preparatory stages to prepare for circumcision.

3.6 Entomononi

Un-shaving of hair by women – signify the lactating period of a mother. The mother remained un-shaven for at least not less than three month. The un-shaven hair is signed she has a baby and still lactating. No man including her husband can sleep with her until the baby child is grown up. The aim of this tenets was to ensure babies have enough time for breastfeeding and birth control planning process.

3.7 Enkipataa

Preparation ceremony for introduction into moranhood: Enkipaata is the induction ceremony performed when boys attain the age for initiation/circumcision, when an age set for morans is open. A new age set, incorporating adolescent boys is formed only after every eight to twelve years. After undergoing a vigorous mentorship exercise with selected elders in the bush, is now time for the boys to return home. On the D-day, the boys, referred to in Maasai language as 'llyiok' are awoken by the elders very early in the morning and smeared with a white substance 'Enturoto' on several parts of their bodies to enhance their outlook. The boys then strides in lines chanting and singing war songs as they head towards the Manyatta where they are to be met by singing men and women. At the entry of the Manyatta, they are blessed by the elders by sprinkling with milk from calabashes whose lids are of green grass. The 'Enkipaata' starts immediately after the 'closing' of the preceding age set and the 'opening' age

set by new patron elders. These new patrons first bring new age-set to life by kindling a fire; whence the term 'fire-stick' (olpiron). Enkipaata involve the surge towards moran-hood by boys through dancing festivals in which fire-stick patrons formally kindle fire to bring the new age set to life and lift the ban on circumcision. The new age-set converge on this village and continue their incessant dancing, while their patrons supervise the arrangements. The climax of the festival occurs when their sponsors lift their curse on further circumcision and kindle the fire that brings the age-set to life. The boys then perform a special dance (aipak) after which the festival is named Enkipaata. Infertile women are encouraged to attend this final blessing squatting ceremony as is the only period where special prayers are made for fertility of women and their livestock.

3.8 Eunoto

Moran dreadlock shaving of the moran hair and end of moranism: Eunoto ceremony is celebrated 8 years after the first initiation and is popularly regarded as a spectacular climax of moranhood. It is a huge ceremony that lasts for more than one month at a ceremonial Manyatta which hosts people from far and wide. The 'Ilkisonko' Maasai of Oloitoktok, for example share this ceremony with their kin from interior Tanzania. During Eunoto, a sacrificial ox is held by the morans by the horns and the one who holds it first receive most blessings. The ox is consecrated by anointing with medicine in maasai language 'emasho' from tail to head. The following day the ox is sacrificed at the centre of the kraal once the group leader, known as 'Olotuno' has been identified. The meat is roasted while the morans are made to sit in a wide circle, surrounded by nominal enclosures of green branches. Elders then offer the morans four cuts of the meat, each cut is smeared from the morans forehead down to the bridge of his nose four times then held for him to bite off the morsel. The climax of Eunoto is the shaving of the moran dreadlocks - all the morans must have shaven within four days. At the Eunoto ceremony, a ceremonial 'Manyatta' is constructed consisting of between 29 to 49 huts selected from a representation of the age set. This part of the ceremony is only performed by graduating morans and their fire-stick alliance as well as preparation to disband the Manyatta. Eunoto ceremony is a symbol of the moran graduating to young elders and taking a significant role in decision making and slowly shading off the moran responsibility to family and community responsibility and transitioning power to the upcoming age-set. These

Maasai ceremonies are designed in such a way that there is a symbiotic relationship between people and cattle

3.9 OIngherr

Meat eating ceremony – introducing to young elders: OIngherr is the final festival in the series of promotions from initiation to senior eldership. It is performed in one Manyatta for the whole age-set. At this stage, the morans are now mature and married. Each participant should have his wooden stool, a thick bamboo tube for tobacco, a walking stick cut from 'esiteti tree tipped' with green leaves. The fire-stick patron blesses the stool in the evening. The next day the ox is sacrificed at the center of the kraal, and the celebrants accompanied with their wives are served with meat as an oath to test their moral integrity. If either have stooped below their age set in adultery, it has to be confessed here or else the consequences emerge in the open. It is then followed by blessing that unites the age-set and this is pronounced by the fire-stick patron after the test. This then transforms the morans of the forest into established elders of the village. They have to leave for their homes immediately before the freshly cut walking stick dries up. The morans are then bestowed the authority of elderhood and from then onwards they display certain privilege symbol of elderhood and signifies a symbolic sign of respect. With OIngherr, the fire-stick patrons transfer their responsibilities and authority to their wards who are now full elders, a practice referred to by the Maasai as 'lying down'.

