IMPACT OF PARENTS' DEATH ON ORPHANS IN THE LIGHT OF AFRICAN AND CHRISTIAN PERCEPTION OF DEATH AND LIFE HEREAFTER: A CASE OF LITEIN TOWN, KERICHO COUNTY

BY

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this is my original Study and has not been submitted to any College or University for academic credit.

Information from other sources and my main respondents has been duly acknowledged.

Signed: ……………………….. Date……………………….

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This Study has been submitted for examination with our approval as University Supervisors.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER TWO:CAUSES OF PARENTS' DEATH AND ORPHANS' CATEGORIES IN LITEIN TOWN

CHAPTER THREE: IMPACT OF PARENTS' DEATH ON THE ORPHANS IN LITEIN TOWN

CHAPTER FIVE: THEOLOGIANS' REFLECTIONS AND CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTION ON DEATH AND LIFE HEREAFTER

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CUEA   - Catholic University of Eastern Africa.

DB   -   Dictionary of the Bible.

DBT   -   Dictionary of Biblical Theology.

DFT   - Dictionary of Fundamental Theology.

DNT   -   Dictionary of the New Testament.

EBT   -   Encyclopedia of Biblical Theology.

IDB   -   Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible.

JKML   -   Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library.

NJB   -   New Jerusalem Bible.

NJBC   - New Jerome Biblical Commentary.

NCE -   New Catholic Encyclopedia.

TKS-   Traditional Kipsigis Society

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my beloved late grandmother Martha Kosgei, Grandfather Daniel Kibii, uncle Ezekiel Bii and Cousin Geoffrey Rono (Jeff) and all departed family members whose deaths gave a total turnover in our lives. The attachment and bond lost with their departure came with a void in our hearts. Days have turned to emotional pain and loneliness.

The feeling of hopelessness that filled my heart with their loss motivated me to write this and try having a feel of how people cope with such losses in life. It is difficult but as is said time heals wounds and broken hearts. May God keep their souls in perfect peace as they live in the afterlife.

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ABSTRACT

Death is a rite of passage amongst the Africans and is accompanied by a number of rituals depending on the respective community. It is both celebrated and mourned depending on the situation at which it occurs. Christians believe that death has its cause from God's will and destiny and that living a righteous life could be the best way out of negative effects of death. The present study examines the impact of parents' death on orphans in the light of African and Christian perception of death and life hereafter in Litein Town, Kericho County. It looked at the challenges that are faced by the orphans as they try to live on and adjust to the new life after the death of their parents. The study also sought to find possible solutions to the challenges the orphans go through. More is emphasized on what happens after the transition from being physically available for the children and the positive and negative events after the change and absence of parents in the life of the descendants.

The main goal of the study was to examine the impact of parents' death on orphans in the light of African and Christian perception of death and life hereafter. It was guided by specific objectives which included: To investigate the causes of parents' death in Litein Town, Kericho County; to explore the impact of parents' death on orphans in Litein Town, Kericho County in view of contributing the way forward; to discuss African understanding of death and life hereafter in view of our subject and to examine selected theologians' reflections and Christian instructions on death and life hereafter with reference to the study. The main hypothesis of the study was that properly examined in light of African and Christian perception of death and life hereafter, parents' death has an impact on the lives of the orphans that has been taken for granted.

To achieve the above objectives, the study was guided by three interrelated theories namely: mediation theory propagated by Boff and Boff, redaction criticism theory propagated by Kasemann, Conzelmann among others and lastly theory of alienation propagated by several scholars like Weber, Durkheim, Luke's, Keniston and Seeman. The study used case study research design in its methodology focusing more on qualitative and less on quantitative approaches. Simple random sampling technique was used to select respondents. Data was analyzed qualitatively. Descriptive methods was used whereby the data collected was organized into themes and then reported via narrative approach.

The study found out that relationships amongst the Kipsigis community were greatly valued and it was insisted on that each person tries to live in peace with others. In case of conflicts, they had to solve and restore the peace. A community did not only include the living but also the living dead and the unborn. It therefore meant that people were to maintain peace with the three components of community to enjoy plenitude of life. Failure to do so, the community would be faced by serious problems. The study looked into the causes of death and it identified that the breaking of taboos by members of a family or community was one of the major causes of parents' death with specific effects on the descendants. Taboos were norms and regulations that guided people in a community, breaking them led to dire consequences, cleansing had to be done to break away from misfortunes.

Parents are the pillars of a home. They play so many important roles, like provision of basic needs, act as counselors to their children and also play a role in emotional growth of their families. When these stakeholders of a home leave, then a big gap is left in the lives of their dependents since they are expected to take up some of the roles they

are not conversant with. Aside from that they face so many problems which usually end up unattended to. The study identified emotional challenges which is noted to be an impact with more influence on the growth and future of the orphans. It also contributes majorly to the relationship of the orphan with others. Future successes and failures were found to mostly be attributed to emotional issues of the orphans since, as the study found out, parents' demise has both positive and negative impact on their children. Awareness was created that regret and self-blame were among the negative effects of the above opening up other difficulties like financial dependency and acquisition of moral values.

Following of Gods commands is seen to have a reward of long life. Whereas when a person goes against the will of God then death is seen to be a punishment from God. The study explored some of the theological arguments concerning death and afterlife. It also tackles Eternal life seen as the purpose of God in the life of the human being. It identifies that death is not only physical but also spiritual. This means that a person could be alive but dead at the same time. The study suggest guidance and counseling programs to be put in place for the orphans to ensure that emotional problems do not affect the productivity and growth of orphaned children. Focus on providing them with homes to stay in might not be an adequate solution to the challenges but a stepping stone to the long journey to the healing of the child. The Church and the community also have a major role to play in the life of these children.

THE MAP OF LITEIN TOWN, KERICHO COUNTY

Source: Google Maps

DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

African Christian Theology: A systematic and scientific understanding, presentation and concrete authentic interpretation of the Christian Faith/Gospel/Good News in accordance with the needs, aspirations, thought forms and mentality of the Africans i.e., an ongoing evangelization process of confronting Christianity with the African cultures (Wachege, 2012: 26).

Ancestorship: It is a sacred kin-relationship which establishes right or title to regular sacred Communication with one's own kin through prayer and ritual offering (oblation) (Nyamiti, 2005: 4).

Death: It is when the immaterial part (soul) separates itself from the body and survives the experience (Opoku, 1987: 11). The study shall look at death from both the African and Christian perception with particular reference to parents' death.

Kipsigis: They are a subgroup of the Kalenjin speaking people of East Africa. They are the largest subgroup of the ten sub-groups that constitute the Kalenjin people of Kenya, a family of culturally and linguistically related people presumed to have a common ancestor referred to as Lote (Maritim, 2016: 1).

Living dead: Is a person who is physically dead but living in the memory of those who know him in his life as well as being alive in the world of spirits (Mbiti, 1986: 25).

Rites of passage: Ceremonies marking changes in status or social position of a Society. This stages which death is included gives understanding of community. (Maritim, 2016: 17).

Life Hereafter: When a person dies he does not come to a complete end, they retain most of their features and live on in the society (Mugambi, 1982, 101). The study will use the concept to life after this earthly one that incorporates the spiritual beings and the Supreme One who is the creator.

4

CHAPTER ONE
STUDY'S OVERVIEW

1.1 Introduction

The setting chapter introduces the study by exploring its background, statement of the research problem, goal and objectives of the study, justification for the study, scope and limitations, literature review, theoretical framework, research hypotheses and methodology.

1.2 Background to the Study

Human life is greatly valued both in the African and Christian societies. Africans did and still do anything they can to ensure wellbeing of the members of the community. Vitality is seen as a gift from the Supreme Being. That is why life is highly sacred and guarded from conception to death and even to the yonder life. Mbiti in his book, *Introduction to African Religion*,[1] discusses life amongst the African community, which include the Kipsigis as highly valued. When a woman conceived her news of conception was received with joy and much expectation. She was respected and great care was given to her. Life began at conception. This was evident with the high care for the pregnant woman.[2] The life of unborn child was cared for, there were rules observed by a pregnant woman. This included, the woman not handling sharp objects, because it was seen as putting the life of a child at risk. The pregnant woman would wear protective charm, to keep off evil eyes that would cause harm to the unborn. They were also not permitted to carry out tedious duties to ensure that the unborn child was not affected. The woman ate special food "*mursik*" mixed with blood (amongst the Kipsigis). It was seen to be healthy for the growth of the baby. Such practices showed that life was greatly valued and respected. Whoever endangered life was punished. Individuals in the family and community worked to ensure that life was well preserved. At birth, the whole community came together to celebrate the birth of the child and give gifts.

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[1] J. S Mbiti, *Introduction to African Religion, 2nd edition* (East Africa Educational Publishers, 1991), p 87.

[2] Ibid., p. 88.

Generally the five main elements in the African worldview[3], namely; vitality, sacrality, dynamism, communality and anthropocentrism are centred on life. Among the Kipsigis in particular, life began at the conception of a child and continued even after death. It was evident by the cultural and religious practices that were performed at death to ensure peaceful transition of the dead into the yonder life (ancestral realm). Ancestors were highly respected and venerated since they were considered part of the community and most importantly because they played an important role of mediating between the living and the Supreme Being due to their proximity to *Assis* (God).[4] In the case of the death of parents, the extended family and the community participated in the upbringing of the children. That is why the term orphans in its strict sense did not exist in the traditional Kipsigis community. In the contemporary Kipsigis society, orphans of whatever age, that is, young ones or those advanced in age, are well pronounced and can be easily identified in comparison to the traditional Kipsigis society. The situation worries and provokes such disturbing questions as: What does the death of one's parents mean in the contemporary Kipsigis society? Has the Kipsigis communal way of living been distorted?

Inheritance of property in the traditional society was more defined as the sons were required to share what was left by the parents. The issue in the contemporary society is that people struggle to take up the larger share. What happens when those children left behind are too young and did not know what steps to take? Relatives especially brothers of the father, that is the uncles claim ownership of the property. The aforementioned denies the children a chance to get what rightfully belongs to them when they grow up. This has led to questions like, has the contemporary society become so materialistic and led to family or kinship ties breaking down? And what then do orphans do to solve such kinds of changes in the society to ensure that they fit in?

In the Christian perspective, life is a gift from God. God Himself breathed life to man (both male and female) as is recorded in Genesis 1 and 2. He confirms the fullness of life by sending His only son Jesus Christ who came to give life in abundance (Jn. 10:10).

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[3] C. Nyamiti, *Studies in African Christian Theology, VOL 1, Jesus Christ, the ancestor of Humankind: Methodological and Trinitarian foundation*, (Nairobi: CUEA, 2005),pp.55-74.
[4] B.C. Fish and G.W. Fish, *The Kalenjin Heritage, Traditional Religious and Social Practices* (Kenya: African Gospel Church, 1986), p. 136.

Furthermore, God is seen as the one who gives and takes life. Death is thus viewed as the Will of God. At the death of parents therefore, the Community of God is called upon to care for the orphans. She is to "give justice to the weak and the fatherless, maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked." (Ps 82:3-4).

The situation in the contemporary society especially in Litein town, Kericho County however, has it differently. The Church seems to neglect the orphans. Does it mean that the above Christian teachings have lost meaning? How is the image of the Church as the Community of God reflected among the Christians? Does it in influence Christians' day-to-day living? How does the Church today address the challenges confronting the orphans? Such among other issues form crucial background to the Study.

Scholars have looked into related areas like Wachege has written a monograph on, Living to Die, Dying to Live: African Christian Insights.[5] Kayeli did a research on *The role and meaning of birth, naming, initiation, marriage and death rituals among the Logoli of Western Kenya in view of inculturating related sacraments in Roman Catholic Church*.[6] Rop, did a related research on *Kipsigis worldview items towards understanding the Catholic doctrine of salvation through Inculturation approach*.[7] Also a research was done by Kakulu on, *Challenges facing orphans and vulnerable children in accessing free primary education in Kenya, A case of Embakasi division in Nairobi*.[8] The above, however do not handle the issue the study does.

1.3 Statement of the Research Problem

Death is an indispensable stage of life both in Christianity and among the Africans. Generally, the Africans valued life especially human life and the community participated in preserving and protecting life. When the parents died therefore, the

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[5] P. N. Wachege, *Living to die dying to live, African Christian Insights*, (Nairobi: Signal Press Ltd, 2002).

[6] E. Chamwama, *The role and meaning of Birth, Naming, Initiation, Marriage and Death rituals among the Logoli of Western Kenya in view of inculturating related sacraments in Roman Catholic Church* (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Nairobi, 2012).

[7] N. Rop, *Investigation of Kipsigis worldview items towards understanding the Catholic doctrine of salvation through Inculturation Approach; A case of Kericho Sub-county* (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University 0f Nairobi, 2015).

[8] S. W, Kakulu, *Challenges Facing Orphans And Vulnerable Children In Accessing Free Primary Education In Kenya, A Case of Embakasi Division In Nairobi* (Unpublished M.A, University of Nairobi, 2008).

orphans were taken care of by the extended family and the community at large. These among other values are common in African communities. For practical purposes however, and due to the limitations imposed in the work, the study focuses on one African community namely: the Kipsigis particularly in Litein town, Kericho County for an in-depth research.

In the event of parents' death, children are left as orphans in a devastating state with some not knowing who and where to turn to for help. Contrary to the traditional Kipsigis society which insisted on communality that ensured the well-being of the orphans, the contemporary Kipsigis society seems to neglect the orphans. The society seems to curtail their growth and development by denying them love and moral support necessary for the actualization of their potentialities. The death of one's parents comes with its known and unknown challenges. Some of these challenges are positive while others are negative with some orphans being overwhelmed while trying to cope up with the situation. They need to be helped, guided and supported to come to terms with the reality of the loss of their parents. The contrary situation provokes such disturbing questions worthy of academic research as: What are the causes of parents' death in Litein town, Kericho County? What impact does it have on the orphans? How should the contemporary Kipsigis society address such unfortunate scenario? These among other crucial questions are the kernel of the study.

It was further disturbing that the orphans in the contemporary society especially in Litein town, Kericho County have to grapple with the challenges resulting from the loss of their parents, yet they belong to the Church which is the Community of God guided by Christian principles; the Church who should shepherd the lost, the needy and destitute like the orphans. They are to feel loved, find support and sense of belonging in the Community of God. The contrary scenario depicted in the Church today especially in Litein town , Kericho County prompts us to ask such questions as; What is the Church's understanding of death and yonder life? How does such understanding influence the day to day lives of the Christians? What is the Church's role in responding to the challenges facing the orphans? Such is the further problem the Study seeks to investigate with a view to contributing the invaluable way forward.

The study was guided by the following main research questions:

1. What are the major causes of parent's death in Litein town, Kericho County?
2. How does the death of parents affect the orphans?
3. What is the African understanding of death and yonder life?
4. What are the theological reflections and Christian instructions on death and yonder life?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The overall objective of the study was to examine the impact of parents' death on orphans in the light of African and Christian perception of death and life hereafter. The specific objectives that guided the study are:

1. To investigate the causes of parents' death in Litein Town, Kericho County.
2. To identify the impact of parents' death on orphans in Litein Town, Kericho County in view of contributing the way forward.
3. To discuss African understanding of death and life hereafter in view of our subject.
4. To examine selected theologians' reflections and Christian instructions on death and yonder life with reference to our subject.

1.5 Justification of the Study

Orphans of whatever age seem to be greatly hit by the loss of their parents as a result of death. Some are left with the burden of caring for themselves and their siblings. They face both developmental and social challenges that need to be investigated at erudition level. They look upon the Church and the society for support which seem to ignore them. For some, the society denies them opportunities for growth and development and instead curtails their actualization of their talents. There is need to examine how these two important institutions address unfortunate scenario hence the present study.

The study drew from the aspect that in as much as death is seen as a rite of passage and the life of the dead person is celebrated in different communities and is said to have entered into the realm of ancestors, the death of both parents is at times seen as either a curse or a misfortune to the family. What comes after the burial of the dead seems neglected in the contemporary society. People come to sympathize with the family for the loss of the loved ones, but little attention is paid on what would happen to the immediate family especially the children who are sometimes too young to fend for

themselves or sometimes too old to care for themselves. The practice has created a gap which the study intends to fill by exploring both the positive and negative impact encountered by the orphans based on the changing generations, economic times, hardship and increasing challenges in life.

Our study chose to limit itself to the Kipsigis of Litein town, Kericho County. The Kipsigis is widely spread in the southern region of the Rift Valley. However, Kericho County is known as the cradle land of the Kipsigis. It would be impractical to take the whole region. For a more detailed and in depth research, the study opts to take Litein. Litein was preferred by the study, because as indicated by Toweet in his book on Mogori massacre had many Kipsigis men killed especially those from Bureti, it means that there are orphans as a result of war cause, hence the research could find information from the locale.

1.6 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The study was limited to orphans of different social parameters like age, status and gender. It focused on ages ten years to thirty five years. This is because the death of one's parents has an impact on the children regardless of their age which can deter their growth and development if not well handled.

Africans have a common perception of death and yonder life though there are divergences in their accentuations. To handle the above subject therefore from the African point of view would be impractical for the study due to its vast nature. For practical purpose therefore, the study shall limit itself to the Kipsigis community for in-depth research. More specifically, the study shall limit itself to the Kipsigis of Litein Town, Kericho County. This is based on the fact that the Kipsigis community is widely spread in the southern region of the Rift Valley; therefore to study the entire region will be too broad for the study. So to narrow down on an accessible area and an area, Litein has not opened up so much for integration with neighbouring communities and so not much assimilation has happened, unlike Kericho which has opened up to so many visitors and hence difficult to find informants in a small area. The study therefore chose to limit itself to Litein.

The study was also limited by challenges encountered like finding informants and the Kipsigis dialect (original words used have been influenced by interactions with other communities) hence new detailed names for specific items, rituals and traditional practices. The inability to communicate well with the respondents (especially the old) was addressed by getting a research assistant from the same locality, age group and same dialect. The study also encountered orphans with painful memories who did not want to discuss their experiences. The challenge was addressed by taking up questions that did not directly remind the person of the experiences but at the same time got the respondent to give the expected responses.

1.7 Literature Review

Rutto and Maritim, in their book titled *Kipsigis Heritage and Origin of Clans*, [9]contribute to the study with insights on the Kipsigis belief on death. Death is a rite of passage and was accompanied by few or no ritual. The authors claim that at times the dead person could be buried by just an individual and life moves on, though it was rare. Mourning for the death was common amongst the Kipsigis. Following the death of a person, all activities in the community would come to a hold in the *kokwet (*community*)*; showing that loss was felt by the entire community. It affected everyone and all participated in the mourning and ritual of death like *iset-abkot* (cleansing of the house to chase away any evil spirits).Neighbors and relatives would be seen playing major roles in solidarity, for example preparing rituals, digging a grave and women would help prepare meals and also serve visitors who came to mourn with the family. The study though identifies a gap in this as the authors' only focuses on the death rites and mourning and does not mention on some of the effects death has on the community and the immediate family. Mention of the activities coming to a hold in the *kokwet* does not cater much on what specific reasons are there behind that act. Is the effect only felt through emotional feelings or is it also experienced in the economy and social aspect? Such questions are the cause for the research to try figure out some answers for them.

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[9] B. Ruto, and Maritim, *Kipsigis Heritage and origin of clans* (Nairobi, Spotlight publishers Ltd, 2016), pp63.

Rop,[10] has also contributed to the study, by pointing out on the Kipsigis worldview. He examines the understanding and the relation amongst the Kipsigis. The study has so much insight in understanding the society. He does not, however, look into the impact of death and hence the importance of the study to try and examine impact of death in the Kipsigis community. Kayeli[11] in her study explores into the meaning and roles of rites of passage but does not give effects of some of the rites, hence need for our study. Barret,[12] in his study on death amongst the Turkana notes that death demanded intense ceremonies and rituals than other initiation rites. He observes that kinship effects, rituals or inheritance could only be understood fully except relating it to death. His study benefits the current study with the importance of rite of death amongst the Turkana, but that does not explain why so much importance is instilled on death, yet those widows or orphans affected are not paid attention to. There is need therefore to study on the impact of death on orphans which is not discussed by the author.

Scholars as Magesa, [13]Shorter[14] and Mbiti [15]examined death as a preparation to the afterlife. They discuss death in African communities as not an end of life but rather the beginning of another life in the spiritual realm and a precursor to ancestor hood, a desired status in African communities. They point out on the African perception and the celebrated aspect of life, but have not addressed some of the challenges faced by those left behind as the dead enter into the realm of ancestors, hence the need for the study. Magesa associates death with the transmission of ancestral vital power. He points out that mortuary rites in Africa indicates the belief of afterlife. The author does not talk about those who are left behind after these rites, so gives the study a gap to look into.

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[10]N. Rop, *Investigation of Kipsigis worldview items towards understanding the Catholic doctrine of salvation through Inculturation Approach; A case of Kericho Sub-county* (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University 0f Nairobi, 2015).

[11]E. Chamwama, *The role and meaning of Birth, Naming, Initiation, Marriage and Death rituals among the Logoli of Western Kenya in view of inculturating related sacraments in Roman Catholic Church*
   (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Nairobi, 2012).

[12] A. Barret, *Dying and Death amongst the Turkana* (Eldoret, Gaba Publication, 1987).

[13] L.C Magesa, *The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life*. (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1997).

[14] A.Shorter, *African Culture, An Overview: Socio-cultural anthropology* (Nairobi: Paulines publication Africa, 1988).

[15] J.S Mbiti, *African Religion and Philosophy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969).

Muriuki in his book entitled: *A History of the Kikuyu 1500-1900*[16]enriches the Study with anthropological literature on the Agikuyu, which is also shared amongst the Kipsigis. From the author, the Study extracts the social structure of the traditional Agikuyu (shared amongst Kipsigis) society which insisted on communal existence. This was fostered by the initiation rites of passage (*ndemengo*) known as *tumweek* amongst the Kipsigis and the family kinship ties. The Agikuyu had close family kinship ties, and the family cared for the needs of each person. The initiates were put in age-groups (*riika*) *ibendo* amongst the Kipsigis, which propagated unity and cooperation in the society.[17] There were laws and customs that ensured that the people of the same clan coexisted peacefully. The guidelines in the society were clearly set on how people were expected to relate and for the smooth running of activities. The social system insisted on communality for the welfare of everyone including even the orphans. Such profits the study as it examines the element of communality in the contemporary Kipsigis society with particular reference to the impact of parents' death on orphans.

Borrowing from Kenyatta, the author also enriches the study with African insights of the yonder life, where he talks of the belief in life after death and the relation between the dead, the living and the unborn. [18]According to his views, the above relation is a fundamental aspect to the society and it gave a sense of history, coherence and tradition. It also influenced their religious, social and political life. Ancestors established a basic pattern of life which was modified with time but could not be changed since they were in control of the activities in the society. However, there is a gap in his contribution whereby he does not tell us how one entered into Ancestorship and how the ancestors influenced the day to day life of the living such as the orphans as the Study intends to do for a more meaningful life and living.[19] The Study shall as well fill the above gap by taking into account the characteristics of an ancestor from an African point of view as profoundly discussed by Nyamiti.

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[16]G. Muriuki, *A History of the Kikuyu 1500-1900* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1974), p.115.
[17] Ibid., pp.117-119.
[18] Ibid.
[19]Ibid., p.134.

Bottignole, in her book titled, *Kikuyu Traditional Culture and Christianity*[20] profits our study with the insights of death and yonder life from the Agikuyu Christian perspective just as in Kipsigis. The author talks of the acceptance of death and the belief in life after death. The Agikuyu community sees death as a beginning of eternal life with God. In this regard, the author gives an example from *Wathiomo Mukinyu*, in which a Christian of Mugoiri insisted on purgatory and talks of his initiation- mates having died but to the living they had entered into another realm of life after the earthly life and even celebrating their new lives.[21] Nevertheless there is a gap in that the author does not give us perception of death and yonder life before Christianity.

In addition, the author further discusses family ties which were characterized by strict and strong links and responsibility towards one another in times of need. The author uses general reciprocity mechanism to show the cooperation that existed not only at the family level in times of need but also at clan level where if one member of the clan had a problem then all clan members participated in helping the person. [22] This shows the social relations and how much the element of communality was insisted on. The shortcoming is that the author does not look at this aspect in the African contemporary society particularly in Litein Town as this study intends to do.

Magesa, in his book titled, *What is not Sacred: African Spirituality*[23] contributes to the study with insights on death and the yonder life. The author talks about death as an intensely personal but also immensely communal and communitarian concern to the extent that the consciousness of death has informed and shaped the way humans live, love and generally behave in the society. He further argues that death has influenced economic planning, political organization and cultural outlook on world view and aesthetics. Awareness and experience of death evokes the necessity for relationship between human beings and the invisible world that is God, ancestors and those spirits. Death emphasizes the role of invisible world within the human community and highlights human dependence on the land and experiences of death[24].

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[20] S. Bottignole, *Kikuyu Traditional Culture and Christianity* (Nairobi: Heinemann Educational Books, 1984), p.77.
[21] Ibid. p.77.
[22] Ibid., p.34.
[23] L Magesa, *What is not Sacred African Spirituality* (New York: Maryknoll, Orbis books, 2013), p81.
[24]Ibid., p81.

In addition, the author posits that death is perceived as mysterious and ambiguous, its origin and reasons for its happening is not known, it's feared though it leads people to ancestor ship which is sought and desired[25]. Citing examples from the Luo community in Kenya where death is viewed as a rite of passage just as among most African communities, one moves from physical life to ancestral world.[26] Death is accompanied by rituals. Referring to Kirwen's study, Magesa argues that honorable death is the way God provides for the living more ancestors who become intermediaries between God and the living members of the community and lineage. Although death is not welcomed, it is not a loss hence a reason to celebrate, therefore rituals at death, mourning and burial contains a message of loss and gain. These rituals were to chase away death and welcome new life to the family as the dead person enters into another realm of life[27]. The study, however, finds a gap where the author does not look at the impact of death on those left behind by the dead person, that is, truly they enter into another realm of life but how about their family? If death is not a loss, does it imply that the family of one who enters the realm of Ancestorship benefits from it and how?

Toynbee, in his book titled *Life After Death*[28], contributes to our study with the insight of death the author looks at the causes of death like terminal diseases and the dissatisfaction of man with the inability to control nature and the effort man make to delay the death of a person. The author goes ahead to look at how a dying person may be affected psychologically, biologically, emotionally and even spiritually as there is no sign of death so that a person who is about to die prepares themselves for it. He looks at the changes and problems associated with the process of dying, the effect of near death experience on a survivor and the death and re-birth experiences. The author goes ahead to offer scientific approach towards preparation of the dead**,** to emphasize on the preparation process to death.[29] The study finds a gap where the author concentrates on the dying of a person and the suffering they undergo as they are about to die, while ignoring the effect on those around them and leaves us with questions like; does the preparation process have to be only on the dying person or both the dying and the family? Does the suffering of the dying person and eventually their death have any

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[26] Ibid., p. 81 -82.
[27] Ibid., p.82-85.
[28] J. Toynbee*, Life after Death* (Great Britain: Redwood Burn, 1977), p.182.
[29] Ibid., p. 183.

impact on the family? Does the suffering of a person as they prepare for death on experienced by the dying person or also on the community that observes?

Hywels, in his book titled, *Persons and Life After Death*[30], contributes to our study with Christian insights on death and life after. The author talks about beliefs and practices showing existence of life after death citing example like worship and veneration of ancestors, which is a practice by people especially family with the thought of ancestors being around them. This implies that life continues after death, and the dead have to be remembered. The author goes on to argue that there are two approaches to argue if there is life after death which is parapsychology this is just imagination by the people of an existence of a dead person and mediumistic approaches. Mediumistic approach is where there is real evidence of a buried person being still in link and communication with the family. Although the author tries to challenge the existence of life after death[31], the study finds a gap where the author ignores such important issues as, if people die and veneration is done, what role do ancestors play in the lives of their families and if there is life after death, how does it impact on the living? The study aims to look at the impact of death of a person to those close to them particularly to the orphans.

Aldwinckle in his book, *Death in a secular city*[32], profits our study by looking at the destiny of an individual beyond death. The author looks at the Christian perception of death and trying to overcome it. The author discusses what happens after death in the contemporary society and the arguments of scholars who have tried to explain why people die and Gods purpose on the future of men .There is emphasis on dying and what comes after death as being in the hands of God. There is a spirit of hope of eternity by Christians.[33] As the author addresses the issue of death and life after, there is a gap in his work as he only concentrates in dying and the perception of scholars on death and life after, ignoring the impact of death on those left behind. Our focus is on identifying both positive and negative impacts of death of a person on the living such as orphans.

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[30] L. Hywel, *Persons and Life after Death* (Great Britain: Redwood Burn, 1973), P.148.
[31] Ibid., pp.148-150.
[32] F. Aldwinckle, *Death in a secular City* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1972), p.17.
[33] Ibid., pp. 17-23.

Hywel in his book, *The self and Immortality*[34], benefits our study on the attitude toward death. He talks of death as a dread and a terrible eventuality. He talks about the scary thought and feeling of knowing that one is about to die from either a death punishment or attack, and hence man coming up with and engaging in services to ensure that life is saved in case of a disaster. People console with the bereaved because of the fate of the person who died**.** He insists on the acceptance of death as beyond man and remaining in religious faith and at times facing death with calmness and courage in no religious faith and also accepting death and moving on.[35] The study finds a gap in this argument and leaves the following questions unanswered which the study seeks to address such as: Does the attitudes affect the family in anyway? With consoling of the family, is it only the emotional challenges that are addressed? With the acceptance of death and moving on, are we assuming that there are no problems that might crop up later? Does accepting and moving on by the orphans, become a solution to some of the challenges they experiences? Does it fill the void left behind by the dead person? And with the lack of any religious faith does a person stand a chance of a good yonder life or ancestral life?

Opoku in his book, *Death and Immortality in African Religious Heritage,*[36] contributes to the study, he says life and death is given by the creator and once life is given death must inevitably follow. Africans have myths to explain the origin of death. The author looks at the causes of death as physical, non- physical, physiological and psychological. These causes could include diseases, famine, accidents, a curse, breaking of taboos, and dishonoring the ancestors amongst others. Additionally, the author says that death is when the immaterial part which is the soul, separates itself from the body and survives the experience of death.[37] The deceased is believed to continue to live and interact with others, but ceases to be a physical being and separates from the community. The physical separation which interrupts normal life and robs the families and society of its member is what accounts for the negative sentiments and attitudes towards death, and hence the community sees death as a wicked destroyer and drives people to sorrow and despair. The study finds a gap in the perception of being separated physically, and

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[34]L. Hywel, *The Self and Immortality* (Great Britain: Redwood Burn Ltd, 1973), p42.
[35] Ibid., pp. 42-46.
[36] O. Kofi, *Death and Immortality in African Religious Heritage* (New York; Paragon House Publishers, 1987), p6.
[37] Ibid., pp24.

leaves questions like; does this separation come with some problems to the family or does the sorrow it brings to the society have any impact on the people?

The author further explains that life does not end after death and is evident in practices by immediate family during funerals such as shaving off hair to show separation of the a member of the family, but the hair grows back indicating the profound belief that death does not destroy life. The growth of new hair shows that life continues to spring up. He goes ahead to say that death is entering into the corporal life and continuing to live hence communication can be maintained between the living and the dead through libations and offerings.[38] Death does not stop ones' obligation to the society, that is, the community and family. They protect, intervene and mediate on behalf of the living.[39]The study finds a gap in Opuku's views in that, if the dead person does continue with their obligation to the society; does it mean that those bereaved do not find any challenges now that their member is still providing for them? And how do these dead people influence the lives of their family as they live on? This continued taking up of obligation, is it the physical, social or emotional obligation?

Wachege[40]in his book *Living to Die Dying to Live: African Christian Insights* has contributed to the study with African invaluable insights and talks of terrestrial and celestial aspects of living being interfered by death. He talks of death as a disturbing shift to the realm of the spirit and spiritual beingness in fullness. Although death is feared and Africans mourn their dead, it is also celebrated as a way of yearning to die after old age. He also contributes to the study with Christian and biblical insights of death and gives four presupposition about life which helps us to understand death, these are; psychological, which the centre of human beings is vitality while the break of this centre is death, secondly is sociological where human life is membership to the community and the loss of it is death. Thirdly is theological, where life is relational and the loss of relation is death. Lastly is historical where life is understood on social, secular, political and communal terms while death is the inability to participate in such relations[41]. The study though finds a gap in his work where the author only dwells on

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[38] Ibid., pp. 9-16.

[39] Ibid., p 12.

[40] P.N Wachege, *Living to Die Dying to Live, African Christian Insights* (Nairobi: Media Options, 2002), p225.

[41] Ibid., p 42.

the death of a person but not on the impact left by the person on the family and society at large hence it creates an importance for our study to analyse and find out the challenges faced by the people left behind by the dead.

The study will hopefully contribute to policy making by the government and even the Church. Through the findings of the study, the government would be able to understand better the challenges faced by orphans hence develop and improve existing policies relating to orphans' welfare such as allocation of bursaries among other opportunities and resources.

In addition, Wachege[42] contributes to the study with African insights on death especially from the Agikuyu (shared amongst most African communities) point of view where death is feared but acknowledged as an inevitable event which marks the entrance into the realm of ancestors depending on how one lived. The author goes ahead to explain how the community refrains from speaking and discussing the language of death, people do not say *ngania niarakuire (*so and so is dead*),*[43] which is a negative statement which shows finality instead they say *niarathire gukora maaguka(*has gone to join the ancestors*).*[44] This shows they believe in the continuity of life even after death. The dead are remembered and lived amongst the people, just as amongst Kipsigis and it is evident in the naming of children after the ancestors and even the rituals where blood is poured on the ground and names of the departed called out. The study identifies a gap where the author only concentrates on the re-incarnation of a person and the living on of the dead in the community, but does not talk about the communities take on the vacuum left behind by this dead person and if the void has any effect on the family and the community in general.

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[42]P.N Wachege, *Living to die dying to live, African Christian Insights* (Nairobi: Signal Press Ltd, 2002), pp230.
[43] Ibid., pp230.
[44] Ibid., pp230.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

The study is guided by the following three interrelated theories: mediation theory, redaction criticism theory and theory of alienation.

Mediation theory is propagated by Leonardo Boff and his brother Clodovis Boff in their co-authored book titled, *Introducing Liberation Theology.*[45] The authors give three basic methodological approaches to Liberation called mediations namely: socio-analytical mediation, hermeneutical mediation and practical mediation. The first mediation is titled "socio-analytical mediation."[46] This involves one going to the ground to find out the actual situation of the people being researched on; hence get the ability to draw out social analysis from the emerging data. Through social analytical mediation, one will acquire firsthand information on the topic being researched on. The researcher is also able to one acquires experiential knowledge and related social analysis from the primary sources on the issue being researched on. The researcher applied this aspect in collecting data from orphans in Litein town, Kericho County. It is useful in collecting data on factors like the types of orphans they are , striking challenges they encounter, why their state of being orphans acquire them a new phase of life and how respective Christian Churches' help them and their requests to the various religious movements and how they can help them deal with their challenges.

The second mediation is "hermeneutical mediation" which is also referred to the moment of theological reflection or Biblical interpretation.[47] This involves relating the outcome of the first mediation to the Will of God. After understanding the real situation on the ground through the analyzed data from the first mediation, the researcher has applied the second aspect to find out what the Will of God for the orphans in Litein town, Kericho County found in the Bible and Christian Tradition by asking questions like: Is the situation of being orphans a will of God? What does the Word of God teach us concerning the orphans? How did Jesus in His time relate to the needy? If Jesus was here today, how would He respond to the issues of being orphans and vulnerable? From the Christian teachings', what should people do to change the treatment and attitude;

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[45] L. Boff and C. Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1987), pp.24-39.
[46] Ibid., pp. 24-32.
[47] Ibid, pp. 32-39.

people have towards the orphans in the community? In following what the sacred scriptures on how to relate with the helpless?

The last mediation is practical mediation also called the "moment of pastoral action or Praxis."[48] It involves doing something in order to liberate people as well conscientizing them to liberate themselves from various oppressive and exploitative factors thus transforming themselves and the society for better. The researcher has applied this mediation in coming up with implications of the Study and bringing transforming way forward as to how the orphans in Litein town, Kericho county, and elsewhere, can be empowered to improve their live to better people, and come out of the emotional challenges and to be able to see themselves with a Father who is God as indicated in the Bible, He is the Father of the fatherless.

The second theory is "redaction criticism theory." Although the theory of mediation is so useful in the Study, however, it does not show how one should extract from the main sources of Christianity i.e., the Bible and Christian Tradition so as to objectively get the Will of God as propagated in the second mediation. That is why redaction criticism theory comes in to fill up this lacuna by Boffs'. As such, the above theory is complemented with "redaction criticism theory" as a critical method of Biblical Study propagated by scholars mentioned below. This theory enables a scholarly sourcing from the Bible and Christian Tradition in view of the Study's topic.

This second theory i.e., "redaction criticism theory" is a modern scientific critical approach to Biblical Study within the realm of historical critical method. Raymond F. Collins in his book titled, *Introduction to the New Testament*[49]profoundly discusses this theory which has been propagated by exponents such as Kasemann, Conzelmann, Marxsen, Fuchs and Bornkamm among others. It is a scholarly method of Biblical Study which takes each whole respective Bible Document as a literally composition taking into account each author, his target beneficiaries, his peculiar preferential purpose, his emphasis, his approach, creativity and his theological perspective and contribution. The study has used the theory to source scientifically and critically from

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[48] Ibid.

[49]R. F. Collins, *Introduction to the New Testament*, Second Edition (London: SCM Press, 1992).

the Bible and Christian Tradition in view of the subject opted for. Through this theory, the Study was able to do proper exegesis drawing from relevant Biblical passages which directly or indirectly inspire with regard to the orphans in Litein, Kericho County as it endeavors to explore and ensure Liberation of orphans. Since there are many Bible versions, the Study has sourced from NJB. The reason is that the revised version is reader friendly and, above all, it has very useful commentaries of the text in the footnotes. For the in-depth explanation and elaboration of Bible passages some outstanding Biblical commentaries were used. Among these are: DNT; DB; DBT; EBT; IDB; NJBC; and DFT.

Lastly is the theory of alienation which is propagated by several scholars like Marx Weber, Emile Durkheim, Steven Luke's, Kenneth Keniston and Melvin Seeman. Marx defines alienation as a condition of losing control over individual's deeds and work. Seeman defines alienation as a social condition that has behavioral consequences[50]. He categorizes these consequences into five sections which include; powerlessness, self-estrangement, normlessness, meaninglessness and isolation.

Self-estrangement[51] is the mode of which a person experiences himself as an alien. To be self-alienated means to be something less than one might ideally be, if circumstances in the society were otherwise or to be insecure. The study applied this where orphans feel separated from those who should be their shield and provider. The situation makes them feel helpless and with no one to support them in their life. The feeling of not belonging leads to frustration as the person tries to take up the challenges that they encounter.

Powerlessness is a situation where a person lacks power to make own decisions about life. This inability to take control over an individual's life and their surroundings leads to frustrations.[52] The situation makes a person to be subjected to the thinking of others and is reduced to a slave. It benefited the study in the sense that orphans tend to be left with responsibilities to carry out in their lives, these includes finding basic needs and also trying to satisfy human needs. The lack of parents to support them makes a person

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[50] F. Ada, *Alienation and The Social System*, (New York, Wiley, 1972), pp. 46-54.
[51] Ibid., pp. 52-54.

feel hopeless in life. The situations they may end up in lead them to engaging in activities which do not benefits them as they try to fit in the society.

Meaninglessness where an individual has lost the sense of understanding events they are engaged in, when the individual is unclear as to what he ought to believe.[53] Minimum standards of clarity in decision making are not met and, therefore, a person is left feeling not confident about the decisions they make. Orphans do encounter new states in which they are expected to solve and deal with. New encounters make people desperate and the desire to solve their issues is intense and so the inability of a person to deal with the problems makes them feel meaningless.

 Isolation where a person is separated from the society, it could be because of social dynamics which in turn lead to social isolation of an individual.[54] It could be assigning low reward value to goals and beliefs that are typically highly valued in the society. The is a situation where the orphaned child feels separated from what belongs to them and try to find alternatives to ensure to fit in to the expected ways of the society.

Normlessness, according to Durkheim a likens it to a person trying to pursue a goal which is which is by definition unattainable hence condemning oneself to a state of perpetual unhappiness[55] .It applies to our study where the individual losses track of what the society expects from them and tries to find a new understanding of themselves. When an individual tries to find new ways, they end up getting false expectations and repeated disappointments and hence despair.

1.9 Research Hypotheses

The main hypothesis was that properly examined in light of African and Christian perception of death and yonder life, parents' death has an impact on the lives of the orphans.

The following are specific hypotheses for the Study:

1. Various factors have contributed to the death of parents in Litein town, Kericho County.

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[53] Ibid., pp. 48-49.

[55]Ibid., pp. 49-50.

2. The death of parents in Litein Town, Kericho County has positive and negative impact on the orphans that need to be investigated.

3. Properly elaborated, African understanding of death and life hereafter is necessary for the subject.

4. There are important Church's teachings and theologians' reflections on death and yonder life relevant for the subject.

1.10 Research Methodology

The study utilized case study research design in its methodology focusing more on qualitative and less on quantitative approaches. Case study is a broader and descriptive analysis of a single entity, which basing on this study was the impact of parents' death on orphans. This strategy facilitated and enabled an in-depth understanding of the context of the research finding. The design was selected for the study because it enabled the researcher to meet the set objective and it also used smaller sample and also a broad analysis of the main aim of the study[56].

1.10.1 Locale of the Study

Geographically, the study was carried out in Litein town, Kericho County in Kenya. It is situated on the Kericho -Sotik highway, 32 kilometers from Kericho town. It was the capital of the previous Buret District. It has a total population of approximately 2500 according to1999 *(*census www.information-guide.com*)*

1.10.2 Target Population

The study was conducted among the residents of Litein town, Kericho County. It targeted people who had lost both parents, with different social parameters like age, gender and socio-economic status. The study targeted the varying population in order to get broad impact of parents' death on children at different age levels thus enabling the study to identify and recommend possible solutions for the varying groups of the orphans.

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[56] W. Oso, D. Onen, *A Guide to writing research proposal and report* (Nairobi; JKF, 2009), pp77.

1.10.3 Sampling Procedures and Design

In order to achieve the objective of the study, and ensure at least representation from the target population, the researcher used simple random sampling, stratified sampling and purposive sampling method to select the sample. The simple random sampling selected a sample without bias from the accessible population. This technique was chosen because it aimed to capture information from all diverse groups of people, different age groups, level of education, gender and the state of living. Stratified sampling,[57] identified sub-groups in the population, the researcher used this to choose people from different age groups as show in table below, this was to ensure an accountability of the differences in each sub-group and also to ensure equal representation which will later help during giving possible solutions. It was also effective because it ensured that each person from the target group got an equal and independent chance of being included in the sample[58].

The research used purposive sampling which was used in making a decision on which to include as respondents, this was to select typical and useful cases[59]. It was used to identify the Church elders both women and men who were to provide insights on the study. It included three women and three men, who were identified by snow balling, this is introduction to other members by the elders.

Table showing target population to be selected by stratified sampling.

AGE	TARGET NUMBER
5 to 15	25
16-30	25
30 and Above	25

1.10.4 Data Collection Procedures

Both primary and secondary data was used in this study. Secondary data was collected from monographs, books, journals, articles, theses and internet sources from JKML, CUEA, Hekima and Tangaza libraries. Primary data was collected through questionnaires, interviews and Focus Group Discussions.

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[57] Ibid., p. 84.
[58] Ibid., p. 84.
[59] Ibid., p. 85.

1.10.4.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires included open ended and closed ended questions. It ensured that much information was collected from the target population. This method gave respondents a chance to express their views and feelings which could not be directly expressed. The questions were written and structured simply to cater for both the literate and semi-literate respondents in the target population. The researcher used drop and pick way to ensure the collection of a lot of data, saved time and also met the target size.

1.10.4.2 Interviews

Face to face structured interviews was used with the target group. It involved in-depth interviews, using simply structured questions allowed for a broad response and giving of opinions. This method enabled the researcher to capture emotions as the questions were answered. For effective interviews, the researcher ensured interviewees were carefully selected and briefed to ensure the questions were well understood by the respondents. The interview method gave the researcher a chance to get more opinions, views and information from the people and obtain information which could not be observed directly.

1.10.4.3 Focus Group Discussions

Focused Group Discussions was used where a small group of people of about five to seven were gathered to give their own views, ideas and opinions. The participants were homogeneous to ensure broad representation. It provided a chance of interaction with the members of the target population and more ideas were obtained since each participant got a chance to express themselves.

1.10.5 Data Analysis Technique

Data was analyzed qualitatively. Descriptive methods was used whereby the data collected was organized into themes and then reported via narrative approach. Qualitative research enables systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of data in order to provide descriptive accounts of social events and objects in a natural setting.

1.11 Chapter's Concluding Remarks

The chapter introduced the study by exploring its background, statement of the research problem, goal and objectives of the study, justification for the study, scope and limitations, literature review, theoretical framework, research hypotheses and methodology. The next chapter handles the causes of parents, death in Litein Town, Kericho County and the categories of orphans arising from these causes.

CHAPTER TWO

CAUSES OF PARENTS' DEATH IN LITEIN TOWN, KERICHO COUNTY

2. 1 Introduction

The previous chapter has given an overview of the study. The current chapter focuses on some of the causes of parents' death in Litein Town, Kericho County. It discusses causes of death and categories of orphans triggered by the above causes, shall be examined.

2.2 Causes of Parents' Death

People do not imagine dying and ceasing to live on earth, such imaginations are seen as scary and frightening. Death is associated with bad, and hence human beings try to protect themselves from it. The feeling of being safe then becomes paramount. People often presume death to only happen to others and not to themselves and their loved ones.[60] Death in the Kipsigis community was either good or bad. A good death is one that occurred from natural phenomena like old age, wars as one died as a hero and was celebrated. A bad death was one that was caused by factors like curses, disobedience of ancestors or breaking of taboos. A bad death was accompanied by various cleansing rituals to ensure that it did not cause more harm to the future generations. A good death was celebrated and even feasting, dancing and singing were done by members of the family and community in general.[61] Cleansing rituals were carried out by the old men in the society, who would sacrifice either a goat or sheep and perform rituals to chase away the evil spirits from coming back to haunt the family. In good death thanksgiving would be done. Thanksgiving rituals were done in a case where a person died of old age. In the Kipsigis community death was caused by natural phenomenon, old age or accidents. As a community, customs and taboos were a guide to how people were expected to live.

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[60] E. Kubler-Ross, *On Death and Dying ;What the dying have to Teach Doctors, Nurses, Clergy and Their own Families(*Simon and Schuster, 2003*) ,*p. 14*.*
[61]Informant 1, interviewed on 2nd May 2016.

2.2.1 Breaking of Taboos

Bujo[62] talks about the biological life being transmitted by God through elders and ancestors. Laws and taboos were to be observed to ensure prosperity of the society. The elders and ancestors were to act as guardians of the taboos. These taboos according to Kwesi were the regulators of morality in the society. They were intended to regulate the relationship.[63] When broken then it would spell danger for culprits. Taboo plays a role of transmitting and preserving life, when a person goes against it or breaks it then it endangers their life and health of the individual and the wellbeing of the society. It guided the relationship between human beings, God and ancestors.

In the TKS, there were taboos that guided the people on how to carry out their activities. Such taboos were set by forefathers and were passed down from one generation to the other. When a person broke these taboos, it put the people in the community at risks of hard times or even death. Death from breaking taboos had to be accompanied by rituals to ensure that it does not affect future generations.[64]

From the respondents, there were serious taboos amongst the Kipsigis society, it was a taboo to; see ones mothers nudity, to beat a woman when girls initiates were in *a menjo*, to kill an animal when the wife was pregnant, this was a show of disrespect for life, yet the man expected life. Such taboos would lead to the wife or expectant woman giving birth to an animal or abnormal child. It was necessary to avoid such so as to have a normal delivery by the woman. It was forbidden to reveal initiation rites to other people or to escape from a *menjo* by an initiating girl or boy before the due period, there were consequences which could include death, family wrangles or misfortunes. It was also a taboo during war to kill children or women, or a man who had picked leaves and knelt to show surrender. When such happened then cleansing rituals had to be done to avoid the consequences.

A striking finding of a respondent who was affected by a relative breaking a taboo was that of a woman who had escaped from the *menjo* and eloped with a man, who later did not marry her. This act led to so many consequences on both parties. The woman was

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[62] B. Bujo, *African Theology in its Social context* (Nairobi: Pauline publication, 1986), p.21.
[63] Ibid., p. 65.
[64] Informant 2 interviewed on 16th April 2016.

married by another man and sired children, when the girls grew up and got married, they could not settle in their families. Two daughters have so far died mysteriously and one is barren. Clan mates have been perishing one by one and so many conflicts have been experienced in the family, like insanity and deaths. The respondent pointed out that, it was only possible to restore happiness and normal life once the two accepted their mistakes and agreed to undergo traditional rituals. The consequences run through the clan since, in the traditional Kipsigis society, families are extended. Taboos were to be guarded and followed strictly by members of a community, this was to evade punishments
and troubles.

2.2.2 Old Age

Old age was also a main cause of death amongst the traditional Kipsigis community. According to the Kipsigis community, when a person grows too old and they pass on, '*kolil*' it was seen that the person having lived on well and so was the correct time for them to leave. It was seen as the Supreme Beings wish for the person to have died. Their life was celebrated and community would organize a good celebration in form of burial for the deceased. The oldest respondents for instance said that to him he had lived the best life and seen children and great grandchildren, who have made him, acquire status as the leader, *kiptaiyat*.[65]He has lived a fulfilled life and when he dies he wants his family to celebrate it and thank God for the life he has lived. He felt a sense of satisfaction for the hundred and years he has been alive. According to his eldest son, they have enjoyed the company of their father to the age where he has started to forget and so if he died they would celebrate since he will rest with the ancestors in peace. His children felt he has lived a life worth of celebration.

It is important to note therefore that amongst the Kipsigis community when a person dies due to old age, it is seen as ripe and a fulfilling death and as earlier mentioned, it was a good death. Although a gap would later on be felt, old age was a blessing from *Assis* (God) and was worth celebrating. It was not accompanied by rituals but sacrifices to the Supreme Being were given as a show of thanksgiving and appreciation.[66]

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[65]Informant 1 the oldest informant, interview on 1st May 2016.
[66] Informant 3, interviewed on 18th April 2016.

Although death due to old age was celebrated, family members still probed more on the real cause of the death, even if it meant seeking a diviner to make things clear. Questions like why that specific old person and not the others, such arising questions get solved with seeking answers. With such clarifications, members had peace. From the respondent, such moves were important as it was believed that, one death can come with another. It means that, a person could have been old, but not necessarily die because of that, the cause of death could be disobedience of ancestors demand or wishes or different causes. This would mean that the family might get more misfortune if they do not identify it and resolve the issue at hand. To avoid such, rituals would be done to cleanse and chase away any evil spirit that could affect the family.

2.2.3 Curses

Curses were a form of punishment for going against the norms and customs of the society. It was mostly administered by the old people in the society. They would curse a person if they failed to confess and apologize. These curses according to the respondents could affect up to the fifth generation and the entire clan if the clan do not own up to the mistakes done and go through cleansing rituals. People amongst the Kipsigis community were cursed if they went against the will of the departed or ancestors. When a person steals and does not confess, when a person kills and also a child beating a parent, he or she could be cursed.

Family tree curses according to the respondents were feared as it caused so much damage to the family. The cursed are inherited through generations, maybe because a grandparent or parent did commit a given sin and owning up cleansing were never done. These curses could be caused by situations like going against the final will of an ancestor, unpaid debts which were claimed. Respondents said that, if during the burial rite a person said that the departed person owed them, then the remaining members of a family were expected to pay it, failure to do so led to consequences like misfortunes befalling the family. Consequences of such curses were difficult to point out as it took long to know. For instance children in a clan could die early, maybe same month of a year, it will only raise eyebrows after three years or so, when people start to find it as extraordinary and dig out the reason behind such happenings.

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Respondent pointed out that killing amongst the Kipsigis community led to serious curses. The curses would affect a family, clan or the community as a whole; this depended on the sin committed. Before a person is cursed, rituals are always performed. These rituals are a way of giving chance to the wrong doer to confess their sin and ask for forgiveness from the person they have offended. The elders announced on the day the *chupisiet* (curse) would take place to give enough room for apology. If no one came forth, then on the day of *chupisiet, wazee* (elders) would gather in a given place, maybe along the road meaning that there were no specified area for *chupisiet*. A few rituals and words would be uttered and they let the invoked spirits to take their course in punishing the wrongdoer. In the curse spelled anyone who witnessed by eye or heard, is supposed to tell out and if they fail to do so, the curse would befall on them.

One orphan under this category though had an emotionally moving story. She had lived with her parents for eight years and had been put in very good school for study. One day she recalls her mother taking her to school and never going to pick her up. When the teacher took her home, they found that her parents had left. Enquiries from neighbors bore no fruits and so she was forced to live with her teacher as they traced the parents. Unfortunately, six years later nobody came to pick her up, or even claimed to be her parent. From the respondents' feedback, the parents were taken by evil *kiib oiik* (spirits) to the spirit of death. This could be due to curses in the family. Investigation towards such a case was often as seen disappearance because they had been cursed and so at times led by spirits to the evil caves and forests where they would later on die.

2.2.4 Wars

The Kipsigis community engaged in wars known as *poriet*, they battled with the Kisii.[67]Some included, Benjo battle, Mogori massacre among others.[68]These wars were usually cattle rustling between the Kipsigis and the Abagusii community. During wars many people lost their lives and so leaving children behind. *Poriet* or cattle rustling was a common way of acquiring wealth. Since large number of animals, made one to acquire status and prestige in the community, people became aggressive and went out to look

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[67]T. Towett, *Oral (traditional) History of the Kipsigis* (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1979), p24.
[68] Ibid., p. 24.

for attacks. In Mogori massacre for instance, the Kipsigis men had gone to steal cattle from the Luo people in Nyanza and the Abagusii. As Toweett[69] points out, it was night time and the leading warriors opted that they would wait till morning so as to embark on their journey back home. That night as they rested the people they had stolen from attacked as they tried to get back their cattle. As a result of the war, quite a number of men who had gone raiding lost their lives. This contributed to orphan hood in the Kipsigis community.

Another cause of wars was scrambling for boarders between the Luo, Abagusii and Kipsigs communities. Boarder conflicts were commonly experienced and they led to so much bloodshed. Individuals lost their lives during this period were sometime left to be eaten by animals. It was a common way to dispose of bodies, since it would be difficult to carry them home. It would be too strenuous with the ongoing war and stolen animals.[70]Respondents claimed that the Kipsigis felt that the Kisii had moved so much into their land, they could not agree on the borders and so they ended up engaging in battles to secure their land. Warriors who died in the battlefield were not buried, they would chop off the hand and carry home as evidence to the family, the rest of the body was eaten up by the animals.

The wars amongst the Kisii people and the Kipsigis have led to the increased number of the orphans. It also contributes to suffering and poor relations amongst the people as they lost their businesses and valuables which were a source of their livelihood. Respondents, pointed out that it is double tragedy when wars happen and they lose family members and at the same time source of income. Orphans from such experiences had a difficult time trying to cope with the loss and at times gave up in life or became suicidal. Additionally, wars between the two communities have greatly affected their relationship. Although there are a few cases of intermarriages, such unions are discourages from the community level as each group views the other as an enemy.

Continuous conflicts amongst the communities have contributed to a rise in the number of orphans who in turn get bitter with the community and hence making it

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[69]Ibid., p. 24.
[70] Informant, interviewed on10th May 2016.

difficult to resolve such conflicts and bind ties. From the respondents, they felt bitter seeing children from the rival community with their fathers yet they had been deprived of the chance to be with them through their killing. Out of bitterness, the victims strive for vengeance. Orphans from this kind of cause fall under the category of loss.

2.2.5 Diseases

In the traditional Kipsigis society death was also caused by diseases which were acquired mostly when there was famine in the society. These diseases were treated using herbs, provided by medicine men and women. Example of disease in the Kipsigis community was *kipkarasit* and *kipsunit*. Some diseases were seen to be from food eaten or from other natural causes. Other diseases were from disobedience of ancestors and so were sent as punishment for such disobedience. Medicine men and women specialized in herbs that helped the people in the society. It would be taken as either burnt ashes or boiled roots. They had knowledge on different herbs used for treating various disease. They would first figure out the disease that a person suffered from, this would be determined by calling on the spirits so that they could communicate the problem or they would look at the symptoms having treated for long and so specialized. These diseases were experienced and it became part of the community hence leading they adopted preventive measures as learned from the previous experiences from relatives or friends.[71]

Spirits of the dead were seen to be the cause of disease in members of a community.[72] Rituals would be carried out by members of the family to plead with the spirits to let the person recover. It would be done by putting water in a pot, a knife with a wooden handle used to balance the pot, by being placed vertically on the ground.[73] *Wimbi* (millet grains) could then be placed on the fire and were expected to burn audibly failure to which people would conclude that the spirits have refused to leave.[74] From the respondent, diseases had a cause behind, either the evil spirits or the ancestors were passing a warning and so much investigation had to be done to establish a cause. It was necessary to pay attention to such lest it "eats" the members of a family. Even if it meant

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[71]Informant 6, former medicine woman, interviewed on 2nd May 2016.
[72]T. Towett, *Oral (traditional) History of the Kipsigis* (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1979) p38.
[73] Ibid., p 39.

consulting specialists like mediums to help communicate with the spirits on what they desired. If the spirits were not pleased with what happened in the community, then rituals to appease them were to be done by the elders.

The Kipsigis society had herbalist or medicine persons. Practically, every man and woman was considered to be an herbalist. [75]They were expected to administer first aid to their children when they fell sick. There were specialized herbalist, who had gained experience by inheritance or apprenticeship. They would be approached by the sick person; he would then give the required prescriptions. After diagnosing the problem, the herbalist would then prescribe required step. If they could treat the sickness, herbs in form of roots, ashes or leaves would be given. If not, then he would recommend the best option to be used.[76]

The contemporary society later acquired different diseases with the change of lifestyle. Malaria became more common, AIDS, diabetes, infections and many more diseases. The respondents who came out strong to share their experiences, talked about how they cared for their mothers or fathers hence spending a lot of their time in hospital to care for their ill partners. For a year or more the parents were bed ridden and could not survive the AIDs predicament. After the demise of the one parent the other got ill too and died. The experience left them and the sibling's orphans. It led to them being thrown from one house to the other.

The researcher also found out that the children who fell in this category of orphan suffered so many struggles to ensure that they compensate what they have lost. They want a future where the sick get healing and are taken to better facilities. In this state of looking for the best, they end up making wrong choices which lead them to either criminal acts like robbing for money or commercial sex.

2.3 Categories of Orphans

From the above discussion, we therefore note that a child can be orphaned in the following ways by both parents;

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[75] Ibid., p 40.
[76] Ibid.

2.3.1 Orphaned via Death of Parents

It was a situation where both parents died and the child was not adopted. There is usually a birth certificate. The researcher identified that children who were orphaned by death, were from AIDs causes, wars, accidents or post-election violence. Death as identified is inevitable. It comes un announced .It leads to children of either age being left alone with so much to grapple with. There could be difficulties faced by the child and hence might end up completely paralyzed. One of the incidents is that of a respondent who was orphaned from a road accident that left her with emotional scars which are yet to heal ten years down the line. She described how well planned her holiday was scheduled to be an interesting one only for their vehicle to be ran over by a drunk driver killing her both parents and sibling. In this situation the child then acquired the title orphan due to death.

2.3.2 Orphaned through Disappearance

It is a situation where a child finds themselves left alone and parents' whereabouts cannot be traced. Therefore, the child is declared to be an orphan since efforts to relocate their parents failed. The researcher located a good number of these orphans. They were not able to tell their stories, well and all they had been told was that their parents left and never to return and so had they to be taken by relatives or friends of their parents to an orphanage. The study found out that orphans from this category had been abandoned by their parents, may be because it was out of unwanted pregnancy from rape, incest or the mother is from a poverty stricken family. So they opt to leave the children to be cared for by others. Some of this are young mothers who could go back to claim their children from wherever they end up in.

2.3.3 Orphaned Through "Convenience" Separation

It is an action of a competent authority for good cause terminates parental rights and obligation permanently and conditionally. Amongst the Kipsigis, a child would be separated from the parents if they were too violent or if the parent went mad and was unable to take care of the child. The separation would become permanent if the parents do not gain sanity or died. This cause of orphan hood was common when there was a curse may be due to fore father's deeds and were never confessed. Parents would take up the curse and would mostly die or be chased away from the community if they insisted on not confessing their sins.

When such people died they would be taken to a forest and the villagers expected them to be eaten up by wild animals like hyenas, vultures and snakes. If days passed on and it had not been eaten up, then the community knew that they were in danger and death would befall them soon. In case of such a situation *boisie*k (old men) would be assembled and would perform a cleansing ritual and try to appease the ancestors so that they would not come to claim another life. The Ancestor would give their own demands and they would be met by the family or community through the elders.

2.3.4   Orphaned through the After Effects of War

In the traditional Kipsigis society, loss would be caused by accidents, war or drought. It occurs in cases of a disaster like fire, drought or violence for example in 2007 in Kenya there was post-election violence which led to loss of lives. Children who lost their parents fall under this category. It was seen as a great misfortune to the family. The cause of such loss was seen to have effects like trauma, hopelessness among others. Children who became orphans under such circumstances were seen to have challenges copying back to their normal life.

In the Kipsigis community, when such losses occur for example through accidents, fire or famine, elders would try to establish the reason as to why a certain family was hit by the problem and not any other. It, therefore, opens up to rituals being carried out in case it was not from a genuine reason that the loss occurred. In case it was genuine then the rituals would be done to chase away any evil spirits that would have come back to attack the family involved.

2.4 Chapter's Conclusion Remarks

This chapter has introduced some of the causes of death in the Kipsigis community. It has also focused on some of the reasons that lead to death; which includes the breaking of taboos, old age, diseases, and curses in the community. From these causes of death, categories of orphans arose, and they were due to aforementioned reasons they became orphans. For example incase parents disappear or natural death. The next chapter will delve into the negative and positive impacts of parents' death on orphans.

CHAPTER THREE

IMPACT OF PARENTS' DEATH ON ORPHANS IN LITEIN TOWN, KERICHO COUNTY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter has examined the causes of death. Now the chapter shall look at both the positive and negative impact of death of parents. First it will explore on what family is, structure of the family, types of family, role of family, then the negative impacts of death and finally the positive impacts. It is important for us to first understand a family, since death breaks the physical family structure which works as dependent. One family member depends on the other for a successful living and harmonious carrying out of activities. The chapter shall therefore have to discuss the contemporary family which was affected by the colonialist and the traditional Kipsigis understanding of family.

3.2 Contemporary Understanding of Family

Family is derived from Latin word "*familia*" which refers to a group of people related either by birth, by marriage or any other relationship or co-residence or shared consumption or some combination of these.[77]The immediate family members include spouses, parents, brothers, sisters, sons and/or daughters. Members of the extended family may include grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, nephews, nieces, and/or siblings-in-law. Depending on an individual's specific relationship, sometimes these are also considered members of the immediate family.

From the respondents' perspectives, a family in the contemporary society is mainly nuclear. The extended family plays fewer roles in the modern family, as is seen as a burden to the people. It is noted that today's family mainly consists of a father, mother and the children. Individualistic living is seen as a satisfying one as it is easier to fend or a small number of people. Maintenance of relations with other family members is not as valued, and in a good number of times cousins end up not knowing each other much, as they are not socialized to it.

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[77]Harper, Douglas. Family. Online Etymology Dictionary. Retrieved 2015-10-24.

3.3 Kipsigis Understanding of Family

The Kipsigis just like most African communities believed in communalism and so a family is first understood from finding the holistic relation of people who are in one society. A family in simplest levels includes husband (father), wife (mother) and their offspring.[78]Orphan-hood is not a new phenomenon, in the traditional African community extended family played a major role in the responsibility of caring and providing for the orphan. In the modern family set up, foster parents take up children but end up frustrated with the economic challenges and expensive life. This then leads to children being taken to a children's home. Extended family played a major role and belonged to every person; it helped in solving problems and also could host each other without financial support from them. Each member had full right to what belonged to the whole family. In the traditional society no gap was felt in terms of provision, care and love for the family. Children were groomed to take care and appreciate all relatives. When an individual needed help, the extended family helped them in solving it.

According to Hearly and Sybertz in their book, *Towards an African Narrative Theology,*[79]they examine the importance of relationship amongst the African families, shared amongst Kipsigis. They understand the meaning and importance of building good relationships with people. They strive to maintain good personal and communal relationship and harmony by all means. An individual in the community receives identity through the extended family and clan. Africans therefore are communitarian people and a person's life is geared to the wellbeing of the community.[80]Africans propagate personal relationships that are closely connected to family values. Every individual is expected to participate in family relationships and friendships. Kipsigis believe in sharing; gifting each person, being friendly and being each other's keeper. In life, people learn so much from each other.[81]The value of personal relationship is emphasized in the African culture. Just like in the New Testament Jesus came and He

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[78] D. Kayongo, P. Onyango, *The Sociology of the African Family* (New York: Longman Group Limited, 1984), p11.

[79] J. Healey and D. Sybertz, *Toward an African Narrative Theology* (Nairobi: Pauline Publication Africa, 1995), pp105.

[80] Ibid., pp.106-107.

[81] J. Healey and D. Sybertz, *Toward an African Narrative Theology* (Nairobi: Paulines Publication Africa, 1995) pp. 107ff.

was aware of the presence of the others. He became sensitive and compassionate to them and did not discriminate or distinct the rich and poor. [82]

The author also talks about the African world view of community on the values of family relationship, parental care, concern for the others, sharing and communal responsibility in raising children.[83] Among the Kipsigis, concern on the behavior of the children and wellbeing of the family is also emphasized. Children are very important in the African family, and a woman/man seemed meaningless without a child. Large number of children highly valued as children were seen as gifts from God. In case of a death of a man in a war, the brother would inherit the children and to protect and care for them.[84]Levirate was a practice, where a brother inherits the widow of his deceased brother. This was to ensure continuity in the family lineage even after death. Children though sired by parents belonged to the kin group. This is evident where parents would send children to live with relatives for several years without worrying about how they would be raised.[85]Children were used to show kinship solidarity. Children were a sign of God's blessing and had practiced values in terms of their potential labor contributions.[86]

Life was sacred and valued in the community. It was seen through the care for and respect for the elderly in the society. One's parents were considered important in African families hence assistance was to be given to them to make their less productive years trouble free.[87] In the traditional family, functions like socialization were done by the kin group and the whole community and could be corrected or disciplined by any adult if he/she misbehaved. This shows that children were owned communally.

The structure of the AF was affected by the coming of colonialist. The African family changed after foreign interaction and hence coming up of the modern/western families. The most important features of the traditional A.F are importance of the larger kin group

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[82] Ibid., p.110.
[83] Ibid., p.114.
[84] Ibid., pp.5-6.
[85]D. Kayongo, P.Onyango, *The Sociology of the African Family* (New york: Longman Group Limited, 1984), p. 7.
[86] Ibid.pp 7f.
[87] Ibid., p.8.

beyond the nuclear family.[88] Individualism came as a rise of the modern families; need to prosper as a nuclear family and hence selfish living. European Arab contact caused a lot of changes in the family life setting such as;

- Changed family production system
- Led to segregation
- Isolation of land
- African seen to have a culture of civilization.

Schools founded by colonialist led to rift within families as the educated questioned authority of uneducated, old members of the family. It led to individualized living, land was divided and men took over land ownership.[89]

Family in the traditional Kipsigis society was believed to be instituted by God just as in Christian understanding of family where in the book of Genesis God created Adam and out of his rib made a woman who was supposed to be his helper. God also gives them an instruction to go and be productive and the fill the world (Gen 1:26-29).Through this Adam is the father, Eve the mother and the offspring (children) who make up the family. This therefore shows that God intended that families be formed and to remain productive and be each other's keepers and helpers. A family in the traditional society consisted of the living, living dead and those yet to be born. Communal life was valued in the society meaning that, a family consisted of many nuclear families to make it extended. [90]Traditional family was socio-religious. The rites of passage took place mostly in family level and unit. A family includes a father, mother, children, uncles, aunties, cousins and many more as long as one was related by blood or by marriage.[91]

Respondents pointed out some of the important roles of family which included offering sacrifices to *Assis* (God) to thank him as the Supreme Being of the Kipsigis community. Thanks giving was due to provisions or an achievement in the family for instance, when a child was born, or in times of good harvests, celebrations were organized and sacrifices given to God. To request for some blessing, family members

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[88] Ibid., p.6.
[89] Ibid., p.2.
[90] Ibid, p.2.
[91] Ibid., p.11.

would also offer sacrifices to *Assis* to plead for a thing or two. During the planting season, they would ask for rains and for good harvests. The people also asked for forgiveness, known as *kenyokaat* to avoid a curse or punishment from the ancestors or God.

Secondly, family was supposed to provide economical needs to its members. Basic needs like food, clothing and shelter were mainly provided for by family. When such needs were not met, because of laziness of family members, they would be ridiculed and mocked by the community. This meant that hard work was to be encouraged and taught to the children as they grew up.[92] Family members were to participate in service provision and production, a parent is supposed to look for a job in order to earn a living for their family. In this they provide services to the community and at times produce goods. The community depends on members of the family to work and give services hence development and growth to the whole community.

Family members were supposed to protect one another, provision of protection and good security to the child helps them to grow well without fear of not achieving their future dreams and desires. It is so the duty of parents to protect their children from any form of harassment against them. Parents have to fight the battles of their children. A parent has a role to help their children grow physically, socially, emotional and intellectually by providing them with learning opportunities. Parents should also provide protection and security for their children. Moreover, parents should ensure good upbringing of the child by instilling moral values to ensure that they grow wholly[93]

Major roles were done by the elders especially the parents. Families provided a sense of belonging through parent's provision of basic needs to the children or show of care from and to the members of the family. Family promoted unity amongst its members and hence the cultivated a need for peaceful co-existence in the community.[94] When a member of the family is lost, through disaster or natural phenomenon, then the family structure is affected. If the parent who played so many roles in the life of the child dies,

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[92] Respondent 1 interviewed on 16th April 2016.
[93] Informant 4, interviewed on 10th May 2016.
[94] Informant 2, interview on 16th April 2016.

there was a gap felt, although the immediate relatives took up the responsibility of caring for the child. It was no longer the same. The family structure when affected led to impacts to be discussed below.

3.4 Clan system

A clan amongst the Kipsigis was a group of families claiming to decent from a common ancestor. [95]Respondents confirmed that the Kipsigis community still believed in *oret* (the clan). They still hold clan meetings to strengthen themselves. There are four main groups according to *bororiosyiek* (clan: paternal descent) which are *Kipkaige* or *Kipkwaige, Kebeni, Kipng'etuny* and *Kasanet*. [96]Each person man or woman had to belong to any of this for clans. A woman, who gets married, belongs henceforth to the husband's clan.[97]Each clan has a totem, this is for identification and hence clans use particular signs and symbols (animals, insects or celestial objects). Members of the same clan could not and cannot intermarry. A clan totem served as an emblem or symbol of great social significance.[98]

Different clans had different roles to play for example, political roles or leadership was performed by *Kap-komosik, Chebororek, Kibomoek, Kap-kogoek and Kap-kaon*.[99] Whereas religious roles, like prayers and seeking of *Asis* was carried out by *Kip-samoek, Kap-Ohemisek, Kibasisek* and *Talai*.[100]Due to adoption and absorption the four main clans have been sub-divided and Maritim approximates them to 77 and over Kipsigis clans.[101]

3.5 Impact of Parents' death

A parent plays major roles in the life of a child which range from, but not limited to;

    a. Providing basic needs for the child that is food, shelter and clothing,

    b. Protecting the child,

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[95] B. Ruto, and Maritim, *Kipsigis Heritage and Origin of Clans* (Nairobi, Spotlight publishers, 2016), p. 22.
[96] T. Towett, Oral (traditional) *History of the Kipsigis* (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1979), pp31.
[97] B. Ruto, and Maritim, *Kipsigis Heritage and Origin of Clans* (Nairobi, Spotlight publishers, 2016), p22.
[98] Ibid., p.23.
[99] Ibid., p.23.
[100] Ibid., p.24.
[101] Ibid., p.106.

c. Acting as role models,

d. Disciplining the child,

e. Teaching ethics to them,

f. Nurturing the child's talents,

g. Securing a good and stable future for them,

h. Instilling good morals and values on the child among other roles. [102]

When the parent leaves or dies, the roles they ought to play are left to those close to the children and family. When these people regarded as close cannot provide, then the child has a task to carry on ensuring that they continue without their parents. The chapter shall explore the impact or effect of parents dying on the child. The effects shall be on the child, community and economy in general.

Death of parents leads to several impacts represented in the chart below, and later discussed. These impacts can be either immediate or long term, positive or negative. It can also affect the orphan, family, economy or the community at large. The impacts of parent's death shall be focused on a chart representation, and thereafter followed by explanations on how they are affected.

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[102] Kayongo, P. Onyango, *The Sociology of the African Family* (New York: Longman Group Limited, 1984), pp.2-4.
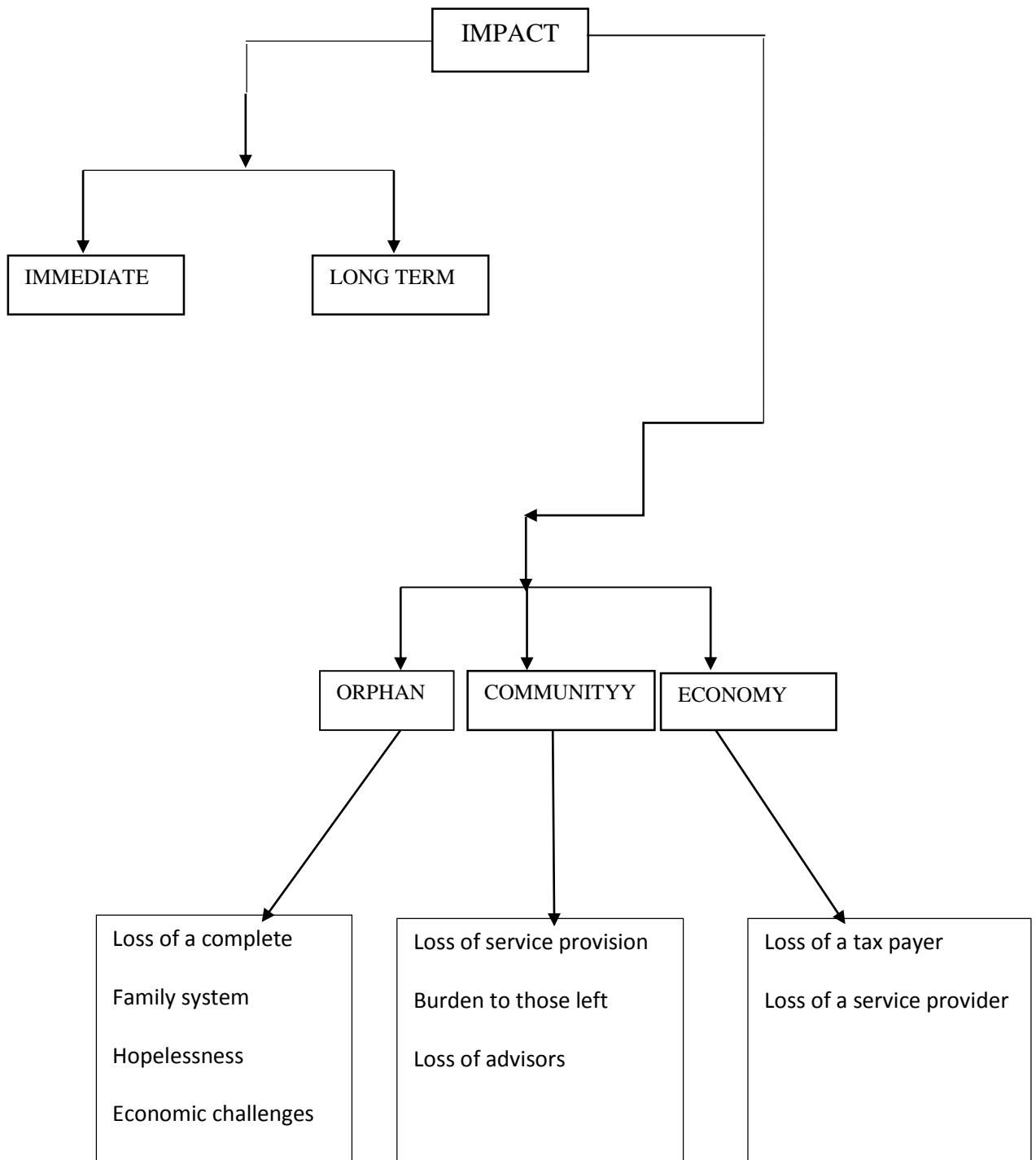
Figure1: The chart above represents the flow of impact after death of a person in a community.

Source: Author.

3.6 Immediate Impact

When a parent dies, there are effects felt at that period. For example the void, during the mourning period and the burial time, there are impact felt on by the family. These are more of social problems and financial challenges. This shall be addressed below:

3.6.1 Disappointment

Disappointment is the feeling of dissatisfaction that follows the failure of expectations or hopes to manifest *(Oxford Dictionary)*. Similar to regret, it differs in that a person feeling regret focuses primarily on the personal choices that contributed to a poor outcome, while a person feeling disappointment focuses on the outcome itself. It is a source of psychological stress.[103] Disappointment theory revolves around the notion that people contemplating risks are disappointed when the outcome of the risk is not evaluated as positively as the expected outcome. Disappointed individuals focus on upward counterfactuals alternative outcomes that would have been better than the one actually experienced to the point that even positive outcomes may result in disappointment.[104] While earlier developers of disappointment theory focused on anticipated outcomes, more recent examinations by Philippe Delquié and Alessandra Cillo have focused on the impact of later disappointment resulting when an actual outcome comes to be regarded negatively based on further development; Disappointment is, along with regret, measured by direct questioning of respondents.[105]

A good number of respondents said that disappointment is an immediate effect of death. This is because they think that their parents should have struggled to live on so as to see them through their lives as they grew older. They felt that it would have been better if they had another chance to be with them as it would give them more comfort and love. This impact was common with children who lost their parents due to diseases, that is when they had seen their parents through the sickness and they had promised to live on. Most said that when the parents were sick and taken to hospital they promised to return home and when they fail to come back, they are left so disappointed. They said

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[103] L.A. Peplau, and D. Perlman, *Perspectives on Loneliness. Loneliness: A Sourcebook of Current Theory, Research and Therapy* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1982), pp. 1–18.
[104] Ibid., p.9.
[105] Respondent 9, interviewed on 4th May 2016.

out of such disappointment, emerges bitterness as they are left alone without their parents to guide them through. They feel that the parents did not prepare them well for their leaving and even wish they should have provided them with insights on how to live without them.

The bitterness at times build up, to the extent that the child does not want to be adopted by foster parents as they think they will eventually leave them and the cycle continues. The respondents claimed that when they are feeling disappointed with their parents, they tend to enter into rejection from the assurance that was given to them by their parents, it takes them long to come to terms with the death. This thought of parents having let them down led to doubtfulness, amongst the orphans, they never get certain with things that happen around them, since the people they trusted and loved most could not fulfill their promises. It becomes very difficult to fill the gap as they grow with the notion.

A good number of teachers admitted that they found it difficult to deal with orphan's disappointment, because most times when they are advised or promised a better life ahead of them, they felt like it would never be realized. Teachers showed that these orphans were under some kind of rejection and they had to be counseled first on the best move to acknowledging that, because of Gods wishes for their parents to die, it did not mean that all was lost. It then took more effort to convince them otherwise. This effect was majorly felt almost immediately after the burial rites were completed as they resumed school, for those who made it to return or find financial support for their lives to remain or continue as it always did.

This effect did not last so long, as the child interacted with other orphans and listening to their sentiments made them to have a change of thought. Socializing with other orphans act as a therapy, as the orphan gets to hear their experiences and to share their pain, this helps to ease their troubles. It also took the intervention of teachers to advice the orphan to move on with their lives. They would commonly tell them that their parents wished the best to them and that even in their death they expect them to live up to their expectations. With this the orphan took a different stand and worked to deal with their disappointment. This would be noted in their new sense of motivation.

When one is disappointed, they may feel challenged to make decisions. They could make decisions from guidance by elders; this is because they could have mixed feelings on what to really believe in. Respondents found it difficult to make any good decisions since they did not know or have a clear judgment on the issue at hand. At some point it felt like they had encountered a number of difficulties but the passing on of their parents came as a great breakdown for them.

3.6.2 Regret and Self Blame

Regret is a feeling of sadness or disappointment that a person has because of something that has happened or something one has or has not done (Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary). Regret, builds up when our expectations are not met by a solution we expected to help. When we fail to achieve our target, human beings tend to think that they would have done better if one thing or the other had been done. This is when regret stimulates self-blame which came as another challenge due to disappointment. The scenario occurs when the child gave consent to a parent being taken to a hospital for surgery. If the parent does not make it through the will leave with a negative thought that the current situation would have been better if they had acted otherwise.

Regret leads to self-blame and depression, knowing that a given solution or idea did not work and there were more options to approach it. Hence the person becomes depressed and blame themselves for having failed to give the other options a chance. When a parent dies because of a choice from the child, it leads to so much regret. For example, if a parent had to undergo surgery and the child gave consent, if the surgery fails and the parent dies, the child will be left with so much self-blame and regret. This regret can lead to depression as they may never forgive themselves for the choice the made, in turn can lead to being suicidal.[106]

Walter[107] points out that this is an inappropriate reaction by the child, to hold themselves responsible for the death or separation from a parent. Self-blame could be caused by

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[106] L.A Peplau and D. Perlman, *Perspectives on loneliness. Loneliness: A sourcebook of current theory, research and therapy* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1982), pp. 1–18.

[107] S, Walter, *Dying in the Human Life Cycle; Psychological, Biomedical and Social Perspective* (New York: CBS College Publishing, 1985), p 64.

emotional immaturity of the child and hence, difficult to appreciate the loss. This is especially a situation where the parent went through painful experiences before death.

As noted from the respondents especially those who were involved in the final life of their parents, they ended with regrets and blamed themselves for the death, even though they were not involved directly but they felt they had a major role to play in it. They became suicidal as they felt everyone was blaming them, adding to their self-blame they were overwhelmed by the occurrences. This situation made it difficult for them to adjust to the normal life after. They lived in regret and forgot to attend to their emotional hurt from the loss of their parent. Failure to address the emotional pain resulted in more damage of the orphans as they could not understand their feelings neither did they make sound judgments as they felt they could end up in wrong or bad choices. Regret and self-blame extended to their academic performances. As teachers noted, the children looked withdrawn and misplaced. They did not talk of their problems and they could not concentrate well in class hence poor performance. Guidance and counseling play a role in such situation, in making the child understand that they do not have any hand in dead and making them believe in their choices again. Regret, guilt and self-blame resulted to losing hope amongst the orphans. Hopelessness is desperation. It's when you feel backed into a corner with no way out. It's more of irreversible because when you feel hopeless you often are blinded by emotion and don't see that there are other ways out (*Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary*).

In the immediate impacts, as respondents indicated, the common immediate impact felt from the loss of parents is hopelessness and loss of direction. Since parental love keeps the child going and having a feeling of being made a priority to the parents. Parents providing every need to the child and when they are no longer available to provide the services to the child, then they get to a feeling of hopelessness and not knowing where to pick life from in terms of coping with the reality that no elderly persons will replace the parents. As the respondents emphasized, during the burial and funeral rites, people are there for them and even promise their support. A sense of love and belonging is felt at that period. But as soon as the rites are over, loss of a loved one and loss of direction is felt. Taking up of roles that one was not used to leads to despair and desperations of the orphan. Too much pressure mount on need to fill the void of the love lost; need to adjust to normal life and fending for one's family.

3.6.3 Loneliness

Loneliness is a complex and usually unpleasant emotional response to isolation or lack of companionship *(Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary)* Loneliness typically includes anxious feelings about a lack of connection or communication with other beings, both in the present and extending into the future. As such, loneliness can be felt even when surrounded by other people. The causes of loneliness are varied and include social, mental, emotional or even physical factors.

Durkheim[108] has described loneliness, as specifically the inability or unwillingness to live for others, i.e. for friendships or altruistic ideas, as the main reason for what he called *egoistic suicide*. In both children and adults, loneliness often has a negative impact on learning and memory. When a person lacks confidants, love or friends it leads to emotional problem and discomfort called loneliness. The inability to have closeness with others may affect a person in different ways. It may lead to one feeling unwanted or rejected. It may in turn generate self-hate or frustration. Parents play an important role in assuring the child of whom they are and that they look perfect, it helps them to grow loving themselves and feeling comfortable with who they are. When they therefore lack such assurance they tend to be sunken or too uncomfortable. Their self-esteem too may be affected and the child loses confidence in who they are.

As noted from a good number of respondents, when one loses parents they feel a gap and lack company, despite having close relatives and friends from prior association and mingling, they said that they did not feel to be part of them anymore. This shows that the parental connection makes a child more comfortable around others. Having someone to go back home to is an important aspect of growth. Respondents noted that presence of parents even when they do not have enough to provide for them makes them comfortable. As the community joins them in mourning and burial rites, they feel their presence but then again they feel lonely, since an important part of them is missing.

Losing a parent creates emptiness and sorrow in the life of the orphan. Socializing becomes a challenge for the individual since they fear interacting with people and them feeling sympathy. A good number of respondents said it became so difficult for them

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[108] Ibid., p. 9.

to find others friendly and even important in their lives. They said that it makes them lose trust and connection with their relatives since they are scared to trust them as they may also leave and then they will have to start over. The feeling of loneliness leads them to try and compensate by finding love elsewhere. This is where wrong choice of sex partners may arise and later sexual immorality. These sex partners give them a fall sense of love and being wanted which in turn comforts the orphan but might be short lived.

Some respondents claimed that they entered into such relations and were blinded by the attention they received. Later on they found themselves in trouble but it was too late to save themselves from. They were either too addicted or already recruited to groups they would not detach themselves from. As teachers observed in schools, the feeling of isolation and loneliness was a challenge to address in schools. Orphans often felt that they are being neglected and would be seen walking by themselves. When in class sessions and the teacher does not notice them or give them a chance to respond to given lessons, they felt that they had been left out and saw no need to participate. The feeling affected their academic performance. When the child is lonely and does not find a solution to it, they became withdrawn and even skipped classes since they felt they do not belong anymore. Teachers try their best not to make them feel left out, to solve their feeling of solitude by giving them extra responsibilities in class. These duties occupied their minds and made them feel wanted and appreciated.

Loneliness increases chances of being suicidal and insomnia. The research found out that, respondents had had a thought to end their live due to loneliness from loss of parents, since they thought that all was lost and would not find a replacement of their parents. Life lost meaning and there was no purpose of living. When one has nothing to live for they prefer to end it. Insomnia according to the *Oxford Advanced Learner Dictionary* is the condition of being unable to sleep. Respondents said they had trouble sleeping with the feeling of emptiness, they did not want to rest and they had so many unanswered questions in their head that were unanswered. They felt they might not wake up in the morning as they thought they might also die. This became habitual and it led to insomnia. They could not control themselves and were forced to use pills to help them sleep. Moreover, the feeling of sadness led them to frustration which is another impact of death on orphan

3.6.4 Frustration

Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary defines to be frustrated as feeling annoyed and impatient because one cannot achieve what they want. It is a common emotional response to opposition. It is the feeling we get when we don't get what we want, when something interferes with one's desired and expected goal. It arises from the perceived resistance to the fulfillment of individual will. It can be physical through one's own limitations, choices, others' actions, other people's motives, or society's injustice. The greater the obstruction, and the greater the will, the more the frustration is likely to be. Causes of frustration may be internal or external.

In people, internal frustration may arise from challenges in fulfilling individual goals and personal desires, instinctual drives and needs, or dealing with perceived deficiencies, such as a lack of confidence or fear of social situations. Conflict can also be an internal source of frustration; when one has competing goals that interfere with one another, it can create cognitive dissonance. External causes of frustration involve conditions outside an individual, such as a blocked road or a difficult task. While coping with frustration, some individuals may engage in passive-aggressive behavior, making it difficult to identify the original cause(s) of their frustration, as the responses are indirect. A more direct, and common response, is a propensity towards aggression.[109] The feeling of being upset or annoyed especially because of inability to change or achieve something is awful. Parents act as providers to the child but when they fail them thy leave a gap which is felt. The child does not know where to take their grievances to or who to ask for the provisions. When such a gap is left the orphan gets into frustration since they cannot reverse the events and cannot undo their troubles. Due to such circumstances frustrations take over.

From the research, it was established that, orphans get into frustration as they grow, their needs and wants arise and so high demand on provisions. They need a person to meet their social, financial and economic demands. When they cannot find such needs because they have lost the parents, they end up very frustrated and wish for things to change. When a child does not get the desired things, they show it in different emotional reactions like rebellion, anger and annoyance. The orphans say they were so irritable

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[109] N.E Miller, *The frustration–aggression hypothesis*, Psychological Review, July 1941, p 337–421.

even in situations that did not warrant it. They felt disturbed by occurrences in their life. Frustration in turn leads to anger which is an intense emotion that involves a strong uncomfortable and emotional response as perceived hurt or threat. When the orphan lacks all they want, they become angry and bitter that they cannot change a situation they are in and yet they should have better.

3.6.5 Anger

Anger is feeling made in response to frustration or injury .One doesn't like what has happened and usually like to get revenge. Anger is an emotional physiological cognitive internal state; it is separate from the behavior it might prompt. In some instances, angry emotions are beneficial; if we are being taken advantage of, anger motivates us to take action (not necessarily aggressive) to correct the situation. Aggression is an action meant to attack and harm someone or a group. It is intended to harm someone. It can be a verbal attack insults, threats, sarcasm, or attributing nasty motives to them or a physical punishment or restriction. [110]

From the research, teachers noted that orphans expressed their anger through engaging in fights and become more irritable. It becomes difficult to crack jokes around them and even hard for them to socialize easily. This kind of anger makes them hated by others and so isolated. Everyone wants to be happy, have friends to play around with and even to laugh with. When situations do not allow them to do so they subject their frustrations to others in school. For example they are found in rough games like football or in arts clubs where they use their talents in drawing or painting to express their pain and sorrow. This becomes helpful but not fulfilling as they need people to confide in and even to help them when doing their assignments.

It's important to note that, frustration can either help the student pass or fail. On one hand, teachers noted that sometime when the child was frustrated and irritable and so most children do not associate with them, they then subject their frustration to reading hard and so passing their exams well. On the other hand frustration can lead to total loss of attention.

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[110]Brown, J.C, *The Social Psychology of Industry*, (Baltimore, MD: Penguin, 1954) pp.53–54.

The researcher noted that anger is used away to communicate the sorrow and pain of the child. It therefore needed the understanding and patience of those around them, especially the teachers and caregivers. Frustration can lead to loss of track by the child and in turn seek comfort in wrong hands. Bad decisions and choices can destroy the future of an innocent child. Furthermore, teachers noted that those who were accommodated and shown love and affection were later successful in dealing with their frustrations.

3.7 Long Term Impact

This are challenges orphans face for a long time after their parents die. They are faced by problems which they may not be able to solve for a long period of time.

3.7.1 Financial Dependency

Dependency is a state of relying on somebody for something especially when it is not normal or necessary (*Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary*) .Financial dependency is a situation where a person depends so much on money from relatives or friends. One of the roles of parents is to provide financial support to their children especially for basic needs. When the parent is not available or has died, then the child has to find an alternative source of provision. The immediate family is the one to be affected more. Orphans become an additional necessity and they need to be provided for. When they have to approach relatives for their upkeep, they end up being a burden. Life has become so expensive unlike the traditional society where the community lived as one and so shared expenses. Individualism has led to so much expensive living since people are competing to fit in the society. It has become difficult therefore for a person has to provide for other children they had not budgeted for.

From the research, relatives felt that the orphan was a burden and are left with no option but to take the children to children home to be supported from there. They said that life became too expensive with the death of their kins since they were breadwinners in the family and the children have more demands as they grow. The orphans did not receive the news of going to children home lightly and they ended up denying any association with the family. They felt neglected and abandoned by them. Financial strain in the family leads to lack of essentials thus had no option but to be handed over to others for care.

Orphans felt that that they had become more of beggars in their family. They became a burden and it led to breakage or destruction of relationship between them and the extended family. It was felt by first born children who were left with the responsibility to care of the siblings. It became so hard to cope with the new responsibility. Being too young and with no qualification to look for a job, they had no option but to move from one relative to the other to borrow money either for fees or food. A good number were lucky to have been in rural homes so had no challenge of shelter left by the parents. This move led to enmity with relatives as they saw them as beggars and could not provide for them anymore. This led to loss of the close relation with relatives and it triggers a new search for solution.

Commercial sex was the next alternative for them. Having been rejected by relatives they had to find money from prostitution. From the research the respondents engaged in such acts to provide for their siblings. The resolution however came with so much negativity, as the relative threw them out of their homes as they were seen to be unclean. Desperation after the other contributed to drug abuse, others raped and contracting infections. Financial challenges created more problems for the orphans. Having engaged in sexual immorality, unwanted pregnancies and more expenses led them to wanting to commit suicide and even loss of friends to help them and to guide them in what they were supposed to do. Financial dependency also led to destruction of self-esteem, as the orphans lost value for self as they were made to know that they could not provide for themselves and hence became so useless before their relatives.

3.7.2 Psychological- Trauma, Emotional Pain and Hurt

Emotional and psychological trauma is the result of extraordinarily stressful events that shatter your sense of security, making you feel helpless in a dangerous world. Emotional and psychological trauma can be caused by: One-time events, such as an accident, injury, and natural disaster, or violent attack Ongoing, relentless stress, such as living in a crime-ridden neighborhood or battling a life-threatening illness. Commonly overlooked causes, such as surgery (especially in the first 3 years of life), the sudden death of someone close, the breakup of a significant relationship, or a humiliating or deeply disappointing experience. An event will most likely lead to emotional or psychological trauma if: It happened unexpectedly, one was unprepared for it.

Walter[111]borrows from Pablo's discussion on the different degrees of trauma on a child. This depends on the cause of death, the period of suffering, illness before death, and relationship of the parent with the child and the timing and manner in which the child is informed about their parent's death. All this imprint a long lasting image and memory on the child.[112] If the child was so close to their parent, in terms of sharing so much time and memories, then the child stands a chance of more traumatic experiences, they are unable to understand what truly happened and so left with so much questions to ask. The state can lead to the child getting into depression.

It is important to note that childhood trauma increases the risk of future trauma.[113]When childhood trauma is not resolved, a sense of fear and helplessness carries over into adulthood, setting the stage for further trauma. Childhood trauma results from anything that disrupts a child's sense of safety, including: An unstable or unsafe environment, separation from a parent, serious illness, domestic violence, neglect, sexual, physical or verbal abuse, bullying. From the research, separation from parent, illness and abuse shall be discussed as main causes of trauma in orphans. One cause may lead to the other.

Trauma can have both positive and negative effects. In positive, repetitive recollection of painful events helps a child to regain control over the event that has caused them he pain.[114] This means that the child can overcome their challenges and get back to being active and happy. But on the negative aspect, it can lead to psychopathology[115] which can be seen in character disorders. It could be caused by delayed grief by a child. From the research, respondents had delayed grief, they got in to shock when their parents died and they could not articulate the events that took place at that time, but it was only after the burial process had taken place and time passed that reality hit them and so got into trauma. They develop so much anger towards anyone who had parents and hostility took over them. Children should be helped overcome their pain so that they do not have to deal with a postponed grief, which has much effect on their growth and future relationships.

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[111] S, Walter, *Dying in the Human Life Cycle; psychological, Biomedical and Social Perspective* (New York: CBS College Publishers, 1985), p 64.
[112] Ibid., p 67.

[114] Ibid., p 68.
[115] Ibid., p 69.

As discussed earlier on, a child can be orphaned in various ways including, death of parents, abandonment, disaster or separation. Such ways of being orphaned leads to the child growing away or without a parent. With this the child feels vulnerable. If the way of separation included pain and hurt for example forceful separation then the child grows traumatized. Separation from the parent means a child is taken to a new family or foster home where it is difficult for one to adjust. A good number of respondents said they were picked by a relative or a friend of the parent and so had to start a new life with them.

A surprising incident from the research is of a parent who gave away the child to another woman and disappeared. The child was around ten years and so could recall how the mother lied to her that they were going to Nairobi on the way they met a woman, she was told to go ahead with the woman to bus stage as she went for some snacks but never came back. That was how her life changed. She was engaged in difficult tasks and at some point taken to *kibarua* (manual job) and the money she got was to be used by the woman. She recalls being sexually abused by boys and even the husband in the same house. She was raped and forced to abort by the head of the family. These were elder people she expected to care for her and protect her but then they had turned her enemies. From such experiences the orphans were traumatized by what had happened to them. They feared future relations with any man. They did not want to be adopted as they already had a bad experience with a family that was not of their parents. Such painful experiences led them to being too bitter. They said that the children's home was much comfortable and happier and peaceful place to be in. They did not have future dreams of having a family because they thought their parents had led them down and they don't want to have children because they thought a person cannot forever treasure them and preferred being alone.

Serious illness also came out as a reason for trauma amongst the orphans. Those who lost their parents because of sickness and had seen their parents taken ill they were traumatized. They saw the pain their parents had to go through before they died. From the research those whose parents had died from HIV/AIDS, medication had not been introduced yet and so their parents grew thin and bedridden. They could not go ease themselves so they had to be assisted by others to get, cleaned and so became a burden to the family. The pain and helplessness of the parent became so hurting and the orphans

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still had a picture of what used to happen even ten years later. When such children got to know the causes of such diseases they tend to fear associating with persons of the opposite sex as they think they could also be infected and suffer the same fate as their parents.

3.8 Positive Impacts of Parents Death

Negative impacts have been discussed at large above. It is important to note that death does not only have negative impacts but it also has positive impact. It was further noted from the research that, other orphans found life happier and worth living with the death of their parents. These orphans included those from, families that suffered from domestic violence, or a drunkard parent. Those from violent parents said that they had experienced so much violence day in day out in their lives and never knew any peace in life. They would sleep with too many fights by their parents and wake up to same quarrels. The death of such parents led to so much peace in their lives. They could now organize their lives better and greater improvements of their living standards were seen. Their family economy grew with the guide of their elder siblings. They improved in their academics in school and even had better chances in life. This is viewed as a positive impact in the life of the orphan. They did not regret the death of their parents as to them they were better not around than having them to disturb their peace and life.

Secondly are those from families with drunkard parents. Their parents were very irresponsible and did not care much about the welfare of the children as they focused so much on their drinking. These parents spent so much time in the drinking dens and forgot to come forth for the help of their children. Children from such families had financial challenges as large amount of money was used on alcohol. When their parents died they used the inheritance to sustain their lives and even improve the family status. They could afford to go to school and manage their families better. They did not see any importance of their parents as they thought if they lived on, they might have never had a chance to go to school or even lived to see their future. With the drunken parents children were forced to go to struggle for their survival as drinking came with so much irresponsibility. Children from such families saw the death of their parents was a good opening and so a good impact.

Acquisitions of moral values like responsibility, independence, accountability among others were also positive impact of death. A good number of orphans whose parents died when they were of mature age, said that they grew to being better people unlike when their parents were alive. They understood the importance of being accountable and being able to budget better. They became more organized and mature. This was a good impact of death.

The research showed that those children who saw the death of parents as a positive impact, had a great life and progressed so much in life since they had so much motivation and saw everything from a good ending point of view. Compared to those who had negative impacts, they struggled and a better part of their lives was wasted trying to fix what they had lost. This prevented them from growing and even succeeding in their life. It should be further noted that this orphan with positive impacts did not go round celebrating the death, but they experienced immediate impacts only to later realize that they had a better life and chance without their parents.

3.9 Chapters Concluding Remarks

The chapter has looked at both the positive and negative impacts of death of parents, this included short term and long term effects which are financial dependency, self-blame, discrimination, and disappointment among others. First it explored on what family is, structure of the family, types of family, role of family, then the negative impacts of death and finally the positive impacts. The chapter noted that each family member depends on the other for a successful living and harmonious carrying out of activities. The next chapter will then look into the African understanding of death and life hereafter.

CHAPTER FOUR
AFRICAN UNDERSTANDING OF DEATH AND LIFE HEREAFTER IN
VIEW OF THE SUBJECT

4.1 Introduction

The chapter shall look at the understanding of death among the Kipsigis. A society has a totality that makes it up; it is therefore difficult to look at death which is a rite of passage on its own without exploring the other stages of life which makes a person in the Kipsigis community. The chapter will therefore explore on conception and birth which is the beginning of life, initiation, marriage and finally death. Rituals accompanying the rites of passage shall also be looked into.

4.2 Background

The Kalenjin community has nine subgroups. These are: Marakwet, Kipsigis, Pokot, Tugen, Elgeyo, Nandi, Sebei, Terik and Sabaot**.** The Kipsigis are the most populous and the southernmost ethnic group of the Kalenjin speaking people of Kenya. They are estimated to have 1.92 million Kipsigis people.[116] Like all other Kalenjin speaking groups, the Kipsigis traditionally inhabit the Rift valley and are majorly found in Bomet, Bureti, and Kericho districts, though they have also moved to parts of Nandi, Trans-mara, Usain-Gishu, and Nakuru. Among the Kipsigis people it is widely held that they descended from an area called "Too", which is thought to be located in the vicinity of Lake Baringo.[117]

The Kipsigis are a sub group of the Kalenjin speaking people. They believe to have descended from an ancestor called Lote[118] They stayed shortly at Kamalinga, and later moved to the Eastern slope of Mt. Elgon at the border of Kenya and Uganda, where they settled. Later in 17th century, a section of the Proto-Kalenjin left the slopes of Mt. Elgon moving further southeast to a place called the Mau bamboo forest in the South Western part of Kenya. The group became the Kipsigis. After initially hiding in the Mau forest to evade hostilities from the Maasai, the Kipsigis resumed their Southward

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[116]*Republic of Kenya, 2009 Kenya Population and Housing Census Report* (Nairobi: Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2010).

[117]I. Q. Orchardson, *Religious beliefs and practices of the Kipsigis*. (East African Literature Bureau, 1961), p 157.

[118]T. Towett*, Oral (traditional) History of the Kipsigis*, (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1979), p.8.

migration in the 18th Century.[119] This is how they ended up in their current location, a territory they expanded through repeated wars with the Nile-speaking Luo, the Bantu-speaking Gusii (Kisii), and the Para-Nile-speaking Maasai. At the end of the 19th century, the exclusive Kipsigis territory included the present day Kericho County and the surrounding lands.

4.3 Social, Political, Economic Setup

Before the advent of colonialism and to some extend in the present times, the basis of the Kipsigis daily social activities was the neighbourhood or otherwise referred to as the *Kokwet*. Initially, a neighbourhood was established on *masop* (a highland) with relatively cold weather and large amounts of rainfall. On average, a single neighbourhood consisted of 10 to not more than 100 small households.[120] Instead of creating villages, houses were built far from one another within farmlands demarcated for the household. Since the Kipsigis population at the time was quite low, it can be stated that neighbourhoods appeared like isolated islands in "sea" of vast land they inhabited.

4.4 Roles of Members in Community

Kipsigis elders lived with women and young children within the neighbourhood. Every member played specific culturally-informed roles within the neighbourhoods. Women mainly spent their time cultivating sorghum and eleusine on small farms that were prepared using the burn-field agricultural method, and of course, they were expected to offer care to family members. Elders were tasked with overseeing the neighbourhood's religious and legal functions. They were exempted from labour, saved for occasional tending to a few cattle, and much of their time was spent mainly drinking locally-brewed beer.[121] Children looked after sheep and goats in addition to conducting a few other minimal tasks within the homestead. The neighbourhood also had married warriors who were looked upon for protection of members and livestock from enemies and wild animals.

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[119]Ibid p 112.

[120] H. Mwanzi, *History of the Kisigis* (East African Literature Bureau, 1977), p 144.

[121] Toru Komma. Language as an Ultra-Human Power and the Authority of Leaders as Marginal Men: Rethinking Kipsigis Administrative. 1992, 116.

The eldest boys in families within the neighbourhood were responsible for raising cattle, the most valuable possession of the Kipsigis people. They would set up a cattle-grazing camp by the neighbourhood on *sion* (pasture) that was relatively dry at a distance of between half and full-day travel from their neighbourhood and would gradually move within the camp in search of grass and water. The neighbourhood's cattle were not kept in mass as each family was expected to take care of its own herd. Unmarried worriers camped with the grazing boys to offer protection to the boys and the cattle against wild animals and enemies. The eldest girls played an important role of regular shuttling between the neighbourhood and the grazing-camp to bring milk and lifeblood of the cattle back to the neighbourhood, and to deliver powdered grain to the grazing camp.[122]

It is safe to say that the basic corporate unity that tied the Kipsigis together was the dependence on cattle of the family lineage. Most of the married men in the traditional Kipsigis society were polygynists meaning majority of the traditional Kipsigis women had co-wives.

4.5 Leadership, Military, and Social Organization

The most critical organization that has united the Kipsigis as an ethnic group or tribe and the successful structuring of the society was the combined system of age-grades and age-sets. They did not set the opening of their age-set with the blooming of *setio*t members. Those in the age-grade of boys did not belong to any age-set yet. Each neighbourhood had a "platoon" of warriors which had a *kiptaiyatap* language as a display of Ultra-Human Power.[123] The platoon constituted both the minimum and the maximum defence unit of for each neighbourhood and was led by *Murenik* (the leader of warriors). However, a far larger organization was required and always came into being during wars with other ethnic groups. "Platoons" from several bordering neighbourhoods formed a military "company" with a single leader, *kiptaiyatap boriet* (leader of the army). The leader of the military "company" was known far and wide and each company was named after its leader in the following manner "so-and-so's *boriet*."

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[122] Toru Komma. Language as an Ultra-Human Power and the Authority of Leaders as Marginal Men: Rethinking Kipsigis Administrative. 1992, 117.

[123] Ibid,p. 113.

Traditionally, the Kipsigis held the concept of *emet*, or great region, which simply referred to a geographical division without any social or political connotations. Prior to colonization, the Kipsigis organized themselves in three "great regions", including Belgut, Buret, and Sot. Each great region had its own "battalion" that corresponded to the nature of the region and was controlled by one of the three *kiptaiyat neo nebo boriosiek* (great leaders of the army).

An individual to lead the warriors would be selected from members of an age-set that had just retired from the warrior age-grade and, in some instances, from members of the age-set that corresponded with the warrior age-grade.[124] The "leader of the army" and the "great leader of the army" were usually picked from members of the age-set that corresponded to the elder age-grade. Whenever the popular "leader of the army" or the "great leader of the army" became unfit for military service he was automatically conferred the *kirwogindet* status which loosely translates as "advisory judge". The title *kirwogindet* is derived from the verb *rouch*, which means to discuss or to take council or the verb ruokin, which means arrange, to settle, or to adjudicate.[125] Peristiany called the council of elders in each neighbourhood "*council of kapkiruok*" [126]Kapkirouk however is the noun for the place where elders of a neighbourhood conducted their *ruokin* or *rouch*. Other Kalenjin ethnic groups conducted a single kapkiruok at a specific place for each neighbourhood. The Kipsigis, however, did not have a fixed place for the Kapkiruok but instead opted for an appropriate place each time, mostly under the shade of a tree.

The role of *Kirwogindet* was different from that performed by the warrior leaders in the sense that the advisory judge did have a specific place under his jurisdiction. Instead, he visited any neighbourhood when called upon and played a role of arbitrator to the council of elders of the given neighbourhood. This was the main political function of the advisory judge.

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[125]Ibid,p. 17
[126] J.G Peristiany, *The Social Organization of the Kipsigis*, (London: Routledge &Kegan Paul, 1939), p180.

The neighbourhood council of elders, which basically consisted of equal male adults of the neighbourhood, were tasked with representing the legal functions of the Kipsigis people. The council of elders discussed issues pertaining to the neighbourhood, including things like how the neighbourhood is managed (cooperation between members, demarcation of farming areas, and investigation of what caused discord among members), misfortunes and sickness in a given household within the neighbourhood, epidemics, natural disasters and the measures put in place to counter them. The council of elders also exercised judicial functions within the neighbourhood and this enabled them to solve disputes between individual members and between families.

Each Kipsigis neighbourhood had its own leader, referred to as *kiptaiyatap kokwet* (leader of neighbourhood) alias "elder of neighbourhood" *boiyotap kokwet*. Individuals who held such titles were in effect the peacemakers of the neighbourhood. For instance, during disputes in the neighbourhood, they would listen to the parties involved in the dispute and ask them to settle the matter amicably in a private manner. The neighbourhood's council of elders were only summoned after the *kiptaiyatap kokwet* had exhausted their arbitration efforts without finding a solution. During council sessions the leader of the neighbourhood or *kiptaiyatap kokwet* would double up as the chair and continue with his role as the arbitrator.

4.6 Worship Places

The Kipsigis community had main places of worship. The places would either be where family worship was carried out or communial worship. These places are *Mabwaita, Kapkoros*, and *Sach Ooran.*[127]

4.6.1 Mabwaita

This was a family altar. It was where family religious observance took place.[128]It was located to the east of the house just as *Kapkoros*.[129] It was a family prayer altar, mostly built outside the homestead.[130] This was where families would meet to petition, or pray

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[127] T. Towett, *Oral (traditional) History of the Kipsigis,* (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1979), p 32.
[128] Ibid. pp.32f.
[129] Ibid., p. 33.
[130] B. Ruto, and Maritim, *Kipsigis Heritage and origin of clans* (Nairobi, Spotlight publishers Ltd, 2016), p12.

for others in case they were in trouble. It was highly respected. Sacrifices could be offered in such places at family level. Rituals to appease God or to ask for favors were also carried out at this place.

Ceremonies that took place here were ones connected to home and the family. Vines and branches of ceremonial trees such as *Tebeswet, Emityoot* and *Choorweet* were used to construct Mabwaita.[131] People worshipped facing the rising of the sun, that is why it was constructed facing the east. The head of the family who was the father officiated ceremonies in the family altar. Example of family ceremonies included ear piercing, anointing and hair cutting,[132] whereas communal rites performed here included initiation and marriage which were solemnized by a priest. Other ceremonies would include, purification/cleansing of a mother after birth, offering of sacrifices for either thanksgiving, asking for forgiveness and *katumeet aab lakwet* (this was cleansing of a sick child).[133] The family altar was so important and was highly respected. This was a way to ensure that no curses befell the family. As pointed out by the informant, *Asiis* (God) was seen to be present in the altar.

4.6.2 Sach Ooran

This is a crossroad; it refers to intersection of paths or roads. It's where roads branch.[134] These crossroads were used to perform religious rites. It was viewed as a shrine. [135]It was regarded as sacred and children were not allowed to go near a shrine or a crossroad.[136] There were no shrines or altars erected at an intersection. Instead leaves would be put until it created a heap, this meant that passersby would add the leaves.[137] Anything symbolic would be dropped at the crossroad when there was a ceremony. [138] It was a worship place or prayer site for visitors or passers-by, who were on transit to the neighboring community.[139]They would use such sacred places to thank God for His

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[131] T.Towett, *Oral (traditional) History of the Kipsigis* (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1979), p 33.
[132] Ibid., p. 33.
[133] Ibid., p. 35
[134] B.C. Fish and G.W. Fish, *The Kalenjin Heritage, Traditional Religious and Social Practices* (Kenya: African Gospel Church, 1986) p 136.
[135] Ibid., p.136.
[136] Ibid., p. 136.
[137] Ibid., p.136.
[138] Ibid., p.136.
[139] B.Ruto, and Maritim, *Kipsigis Heritage and origin of clans* (Nairobi, Spotlight publishers Ltd, 2016) p. 33.

protection throughout their journey up to where they were and to also ask God to take them safe home. They would also pray for blessings depending on how they had been received in that family.

Examples of ceremonies that took place here included k*isanet* which is derived from *keesaan* a Kipsigis word meaning to cease from. Everyone participated in ceremonies at the crossroad and it was a way of evading curses and chasing away any diseases.[140] Cleansing ceremonies was also done at this shrine. For example a person who was sick was washed with salty water from a *kerugut* (small pot), shaved then the hair placed on broken pieces of broken pot, then leaves from Moronget (herbal plant) would be smeared on the individual. The hair were buried in a hole as people chanted "sickness go away".[141]

Another ceremony performed at Sach ooran was *tegeryoot* (celebrating a surviving child, if all born children had been dying, celebrating). [142]The ritual was as a way to chase away any evil spirits that might be after the child. This was also to ensure that the child was protected from anything that could harm them. Sach ooron was also used for used for *kamung'et* (rest).[143] It was therefore a resting place where village elders would go to rest at the crossroads and greet any person who was passing by, response, the person received the greetings by giving news on what happened on the other community they came from, visitors would start by giving good news first before delivering bad news. Sach ooran played a major role of passing and receiving information.[144]

4.6.3 Kapkoros

This is derived from *kaap* meaning "*place of*" and "*koros*" meaning a gift or a sacrifice. Hence, it is a place of sacrifice.[145] It is a clan altar where worship by the whole ethnic community took place. Preferred places were hilltops, for example *Tulwetap Kipsigis*,

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[140]B.C. Fish and G.W. Fish, *The Kalenjin Heritage, Traditional Religious and Social Practices* (Kenya: African Gospel Church, 1986)p 136.
[141] Ibid.,p.136.
[142] Ibid., p 136.
[143] Ibid., p. 138.
[144] Ibid., p. 138.
[145]T.Towett, *Oral (traditional) History of the Kipsigis* (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1979), p 33.

which was the first *Kapkosos, Chemororoch, Cheptoromet, and Changana*.[146] These were worship altars set aside and were seen as sacred. No cultivation, grazing, planting were allowed because things to do with *masambwaanik* (evil spirit) were to be brought there.[147] People had to keep clean and pure before going to *kapkoros*.[148] And so, all who wanted blessings had to abstain from any form of sexual vice. And the first day after Kapkoros worship, people were not allowed to engage in any sexual union.[149]

Fire was lit at the Kapkoros and at the end of the worship, each household carried a firebrand home. Women were the ones who carried the firebrand, and would be required to place it in the fireplace at her house.[150] Four virgins resenting the clans were the ones to fetch "sugutek" (water from a river where cattle have their salt-lick).[151]

A spotless white goat was taken to altar, decorated with beads *segerek* and sinendoik and then was followed by a procession. They entered from the West and so faced the East. Ceremonies took place at sunrise. [152]Words were offered as long as they pleased *Asiis*, these would be words to ask for blessings from Asiis, to chase away any evils, to ask for tribe wealth and children, and to ask for freedom from any diseases.[153] Prayers would cover all people, animals and things, for example children, parents, the old, grass, land, cattle and soil. People would ask Asis to make grass good and nutritious for their animals.[154]

4.7 Rites of Passage, Birth, Initiation, Marriage and Death

According to Mugambi in his book titled *Christianity and African Culture*, rites of passage were then communal ceremonies that were performed as an individual passed from one stage to another; at birth, adolescence, adulthood and death[155]. According to the author it was an expression of the understanding and expectations of African

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[146] B.Ruto, and Maritim, *Kipsigis Heritage and origin of clans* (Nairobi, Spotlight publishers Ltd, 2016), p. 12.
[147] T.Towett, *Oral (traditional) History of the Kipsigis* (Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1979), p 40.
[148] Ibid., p. 40.
[149] Ibid., p. 39.
[150] Ibid., p. 39.
[151] Ibid., p.40.
[152] Ibid., p.40.
[153] Ibid., p. 40.
[154]Ibid., p.40.
[155] J.N. Mugambi, *Christianity and African Culture* (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2002), p 96.

communities regarding the role of the individual in society[156]. Rites of passage were means through which individuals were made aware and continuous reminder of their responsibilities as members of the community.[157] Rites of passage were established and maintained so that it prepares, test, confirm and reinforce the positive values cherished by the community.[158] It established physical, social and emotional growth of persons.[159]They were intended to prepare each person in particular and a whole generation, to cope responsibly and courageously with the next stage in life. For example, initiation prepared the initiates moved from childhood to adulthood, Marriage prepare and initiate the person for responsible parenthood.

Death marked the end of procreation cycle but anticipates renewal of life through the next cycle that is birth.[160] Rites connected to death were intended to prepare the individuals to cope responsibly with the reality and inevitability of death and to affirm that death was not the end.[161] Rites of passage instilled moral values to the people in a given community. Each rite of passage had an important impact on the community. From conception a woman acquired virtues like patience as they had to wait for nine months for the new born. At birth people acquired the values of responsibility, care, concern, love and tolerance. During initiation an initiate acquired virtues like, tolerance, courage, bravery, responsibility and perseverance. In marriage the person acquired the art of love, care, perseverance, hard work, respect and hospitality.

4.7.1 Conception, Birth and Naming

A new born baby amongst the Kipsigis community was celebrated. Naming took place and the child was given two names. One was *kurenet* that is a name of a departed person termed as the ancestor, the name was believed that the spirit would live in the child[162]. The second name would be the name used to identify the child in the society. Naming of new born was done according to the customs of the community. A child named after important event that had taken place when one was born, season, time of the day, after

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[156] Ibid., pp. 96-97.
[157] Ibid., p.122.
[158] Ibid., p. 122.
[159] Ibid., p. 123.
[160] Ibid., p. 124.
[161] Ibid., p.124.
[162] B. Rutto and Maritim, *Kipsigis, Heritage and origin of clans* (Nairobi, Spotlight Publishers, 2016), p37.

relatives.[163] During *kurotet* (naming) of the children, old women had the role of giving names especially *batiem* who is the grandmother of the child. There were practices carried out during this period. The first was to wash the child with clean water mixed with herbs showing a new start for the baby and it signified a new beginning of life. Both the mother and child were then shaved to signify a new beginning in the life of the pregnancy period for the mother and hence a new start. The child was then to be fed with food and given *busarek* this is herbal leaves burnt to ashes.

Feeding of the child was to show growth of the child and to show that the best life was expected for the child as they grew. The grandmother would then go ahead to give a name to the child, this name *kurenoik* was to be of the dead person. The grandmother would mention names of ancestors one by one until the child sneezes as a sign of acceptance. If a child was a girl, then women names were mentioned, if it were a boy then male ancestors were named. Death was not the end of life but was a beginning of a new realm. Continuity of life after death was shown through practices like; naming children after the dead, invoking the names of the death, offering sacrifices to the dead, fulfilling wishes of the dead and taking care of the children left behind by the dead. Once they sneezed, then blessings were proclaimed on them and a feast and celebration took place, this was to welcome the new born into the community. Gifts were then given to the child. The child would then be given to women in attendance to show appreciation, but since life was protected, the child was supposed to wear protective charm to avoid any evil eyes.[164]

Its therefore noted that first event in the life of a *Kipsigis* was birth which was honoured through a naming ceremony. Apart from the name given at birth, the *Kipsigis* people got new names after initiation and after marriage. The names carried both personal and cultural identity of the person. It was easy to tell where a typical *Kipsigis* belonged to just by hearing their names. New born babies were named in accordance to the following factors: the time of birth; events that took place at the time of birth; naming according to ancestors; the place the child was born; the prevailing season; and the situation of birth.

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[163] Ibid., pp 96-97.
[164] B. Rutto and Maritim, *Kipsigis, Heritage and Origin of Clans* (Nairobi, Spotlight Publishers, 2016), pp37-38.

In naming according to ancestors, the *Kipsigis* believed that the spirit of the dead ancestor was recalled back to life through the new born. They believed that dead never completely disappeared and departed members of the clan would always be renamed. The ancestral name given to a child was generally referred to as *Kurenet* which may also translate as the determination of the spirit possessed by the child. The term *Kurenet* translates to calling the spirit but human participants in the naming have no influence on the type of the spirit that comes. That is left for the spirit to decide. There could even be a competition between the spirits on which spirit to come as all of them, whether embodied or not are yearning for reincarnation. As the child grows up, it is expected that it will have the same character as the *Kurenet* (spirit). Naturally, the spirits in the reincarnation are either from grand-parents, uncle, great-uncle or close relation. Ancestors that were famous or were considered to be heroes during their lifetime would reincarnate more. After the naming ceremony, an individual was considered to be part of the family, neighbourhood, and the *Kipsigis* community as a whole. The second major in initiation event occurred at puberty when the person was no longer considered a child but an adult. The third key stage was marriage and this gave one the power to start own family.

4.7.2 Initiation

As described in the previous section, birth is a key rite of passage among the *Kipsigis* community. However, the second main event referred to as the *Keeba tuum* (the coming of age of the initiation period, was considered to be one of the most important events in the life of a Kipsigis.[165] In addition to circumcision, there were other initiation rites for both males and females that ran into months and were very extensive. In addition to other activities, male and females coming-of-age was initiated into many into many secrete rituals that were practiced by the *Kipsigis* people.

Initiation was a very important step for both girls and boys within the *Kipsigis* community. It was known as" *tumndo*". Initiatiates had seven stages namely; *yatitaet, labet-ab eun, tienjinet, kayaet, ngetunotet, yatetaboret* and *tilet ab kirokto.*[166]The stage

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[165] B. Rutto and Maritim, *Kipsigis, Heritage and Origin of Clans* (Nairobi, Spotlight Publishers, 2016), pp50.
[166]Ibid., p.51.

took place within festive periods. The initiates would undergo some preparations which included getting a sponsor who played a very important role in the life of the initiate. Their roles included; getting the correct attire for them "*Muito,*" they were also to be present as a guide during initiation process and would encourage the initiate. They were to give assurance and courage to the initiate in case one was acting as a coward.

The selection of warriors, age-set and age-grade descriptions provided in the preceding sections have elements of initiation and rites of passage among the Kipsigis people. The initiation of rights among the Kipsigis and most other Kalenjin groups was termed *Tuumwek* (initiation of rights." There were many different events. In addition to the rights of passage in the life of a Kipsigis.After the initiation rituals the initiates would be taken or put on seclusion, where they were expected to heal. During this period, they sang songs mostly educative songs to encourage themselves and to assure the community that they were doing fine. It was also to instill moral values to them to ensure they had educative songs. Apart from songs, old men were to teach boys responsibility in guarding the community, providing for their families and their general role as men in the society. For girls, they were taught to show respect, obedience and be responsible in taking care of their husbands and children. The most important purpose of initiation was to transit from childhood to adulthood. Initiates were prepared for their marriage.

After the seclusion period, the initiates were welcomed back to the community with an expectation that they were fully changed and that they were ready to take up their responsibilities. They acquired new names and status. They were seen as mature and so boys were to sleep in their own houses separate from that of their parents. Initiation was a compulsory stage, and the initiates acquired a new age – set and age – group. Those who refused to go through circumcision were treated as outcasts and seen not to belong anymore. They lost privileges of being part of the community and anywhere they went they were ridiculed. After initiation they would then enter to mature relationships.

4.7.2.1 Circumcision and Initiation of Boys

Beginning with the circumcision of boys, the Kipsigis did not have an appropriate time during which they circumcised there boys. This was typically done when there was plenty of food and other supplies in the land. The boys to undergo the rite typically

range from 5 to 15 years, and had to seek the approval of their fathers and appropriate arrangements made with a friend of the family, A practice that was referred to as *pamungo* to the candidate.It mainly involved the supply of food to the candidate with food during his time in seclusion. The duties were however carried out by the wife of the volunteering man and she was identified by her protégé as *koruchon*. The sponsor of that initiate supply of food to the boy undergoing initiation was then paid back by the boy's family in the form of a goat or anything of similar value.[167]

The Kipsigis circumcision was not often comprised of conducted of large batches at one time or at a single *menjit*, or a circumcision house rather, but of a convenience number of boys generally belonging to the same *Koret* area. However, it is sometimes believed that the originally the circumcision rights were conducted on large batches, as the circumcised fell into the same age-grade throughout the Kipsigis land.

Shortly before the circumcision ceremonies were commenced, two *moterenik* (sponsors) to each *menjit* (house) were appointed by those who had undertaken the duties of pamungo to the *tarusiek* or novices. The *moterenik* referred to feed officials of both junior and senior rank, and apart from their ceremonial duties they were required to serve initiates with food brought by the *pamungo*. [168]Twigs and grass cut by the initiates is used in building the *menjit* (house that is often located in the bush and away from neighbourhoods or inhabited homesteads. The ceremonies often began at full moon with the cutting of an amount of *siek* or stinging nettles by *moterenik*, which were then placed in readiness in a conveniently large hut that was located near the site of the *menjit* house.

A large party of men, women, youths, and girls would collect in a ceremony during which the mothers of the novices would carry wands of *korosiek* or withies made from *senendet* grass (this was afterwards laid on the roofs of the mother's huts in their sons are reported to have undergone the rite without fear). The gathering often took place in near the *menjit* house during evening hours. The *Chepkotilet* dance often took place during such gatherings. The dance was accomplished by circling of the *murenik*

[167]B. Rutto and K. Maritim, *Kipsigis, Heritage and origin of clans* (Nairobi, Spotlight publishers, 2016), p52-56.
[168] Ibid., p 53.

(warriors), tip-tapping slowly a holding their spears or sticks at the cant, twisting them every now and then, and humming a chant.

They were then informed that the *majaita* (circumcision knife or *rotwet*) was already heated in fire and ready. An elder with a skin robe covering his face and body and head covered with a baboon skin- covering would be seated in the hut. One by one, the candidates would be led to him and asked whether they have ever had a connection with a married woman, and would be prevailed upon to answer truthfully. Upon giving an answer, they would be led outside by the *moterenik* to whom they would confine the name of the woman and her husband. While back in the hurt, the *moterenik* would ask them to give the name of the woman. They would all return to the hurt and led up to the elder wearing fur, and instructed to hold his shins in turn. Unknown to the candidates, a small hole filled with water and a stick inserted and held between the feet of the elder would produce a sound each time they held his shin. A sound would be produced and the initiate asked to describe. If a correct description was given by a candidate that denied the first question, a cross examination would follow with the objective of identifying the woman's name. The mechanism of the trick would be explained by the elder wearing fur, who was usually referred to as *Arap Kimos*.[169] He was said to have a relationship with a mythical bird that gave him the news of the countryside. This marked the end of the first day's activity.

Immediately after the exercise, food would be brought by the wife of the *pamungo* of each novice, often a thin gruel made of eleusine grain and *musarek* cooked three days before. The woman would serve food at a distance for it to be fetched by *motorenik*. For some months, candidates did not use their hands to eat and most food eaten consisted of milk, porridge, blood, meat and this was conveyed to the mouth using a calabash. After four o' clock on the day the candidates were circumcised, they would be ushered into the *menjit* hut for the first time with the *moterenik* (Sponsors) who would sleep with them until the end of the ceremonial seclusion. For the first month, the initiates remained in the menjit hut, going out only due to call of nature. They would receive occasional visits from the *muren*, (men making booming noise with the bull-roars and frightening them with stories of the animals said to produce these noises. The

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[169] B. Maritim, Kipsigis*, Heritage and origin of clans* (Nairobi, Spotlight publishers Ltd, 2016), pp51-59.

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Lapat ap Eun would be ushered in at the end of the first month. A number of elders would collect and bring nettles. The novices would be brought out one by one and in the presence of their father's age grades, they would be beaten on the face with the nettles, resulting rash on their faces closing their eyes. The elders bring the cattle trough of moinget (hollowed tree), and placed with an axe (*aiyuet*), *morut*, a salt pick (*majaita*), a hoe (*mukombet*), grass, and berries from a solanum fruit.[170] A man was made to lie in the trough and the skin garments won by the novices taken by the *moterenik* placed in such a way that it covers the trough and its contents. The initiates were then brought out and asked to give the meaning of the trough, and upon responding that they are ignorant, the men secretly hidden in the trough would shake the skins above and make noise that mimics that of a leopard grunt. The *moterenik* assured the boys that the beast is very fierce and asked them to pick their clothes from the trough, as they advanced scared those men. He then pretends to think better of it and orders them to return. They were then taken aside and the hidden man emerges. The *moterenik* asks them to take their clothes and explain the meaning of the items in the trough. The boys then cleansed their hands and arms and a thick porridge of eleusine was brought and apportioned to the initiates. As the *Lapat ap Eun* ceremony drew to the end, the *moterenik* gave the boys greater freedom, allowing them to fetch firewood and water but he still brought them food.

The boys would cut *chagiek* (withies) at the beginning of the third month and place them in close proximity to the *menjit* hut. The elders would them come for the *Maiwek ap Tum* (beer festival). The beer, made from eleusine grain would be brought outside and set on the ground near the *mabwaita* shrine, and hot water brought from the *menjit* hut would be added to the brew. The *boyot ap tum* would take a mouthful of the beer, enter the *menjit* hut and spit a little on each of the novices. The withies earlier brought by the novices would then be used by the *moterenik* and the novices (*tarusiek*) to build the *tomnet* enclosure inside the *menjit* hut. Three balls of grass would be fastened to the roof with a small bundle of twigs, and this was used by the initiates to burn the *menjit* house when the seclusion ended. The *moterenik* would now go with the *tarusiek* and lie under the *tomnet* enclosure. The elders would drink outside and as many as are capable would end their drinking and visit the initiates inside the hut. The initiates are then

[170] B. Maritim, Kipsigis*, Heritage and origin of clans* (Nairobi, Spotlight publishers Ltd, 2016), pp57.

allowed to visit their relatives but not permitted to look at unmarried women until they finally leave their seclusion. After that, the initiates would seek permission from the *moterenik* and grudgingly be allowed to sleep away from the *menjit* house. In a low voice, the elders would tell the initiates to avoid speaking with girls, forcing women or girls to lie with them, never attempt witchcraft and not to msteal. They were also advised that they will undergo a further ceremony *Eit ap Kirowek*, ox of the staff, and must never divulge the secrets of the ceremony to women, strangers, and the uncircumcised. The elders would then utter more words as they occurred to them.

The following month of initiation would begin with beer drinking by the elders during the night time, and the following morning (at four o'clock) the initiates would be taken to the river to a place where a dam has been made and tiny hut built in the water using withies or grass. It was would be made of two doors, and the initiates, preceded by the senior of the *moterenik*, and in the order of seniority, would enter the water and pass through the booth, *Kaiyeyet*, used for naming. A given quantity of *solanum* berries would be placed along the line and the initiates instructed to scramble for them. The *moterenik* would count the berries taken by each initiate as an indication of the future herd of cattle that will be possessed by each of them. Additional activities would be conducted at that time.After scrambling for solanum berries, solanum bushes would be cut by the *moterenik* and each initiate handed two, together with bow's and bird-arrows, which the held in the right hand together with the solanum wand, the other wand would be in the left hand. The novices would then be asked to go out and seek out a woman or a girl upon whom they would thrust their "uncleanness". This was done by touching her with the wand in the left hand, which was then thrown away into the bush.

   The initiates would then go back to the *menjit* house and those who had failed in their quest were made to eat and sleep separately in the *tomnet*, and entered the *menjit* house through the back door until they achieve their goal. They were given more freedom of movement in the fifth month, and in the sixth month (Nget'unatet, was ushered in by beer-drinking by the elders and two horns of a cow werefilled with rancid butter brought for each candidate. The initiates would go to their mother's huts, and without uttering a word to her take her bead embroidered skirt, and her ornaments. They would then go near the hut of their *pamungo*, and find that a gate-fence has been erected on the path close by. The initiate would stand on the other side and his sister or a female friend on

the other. The gate would then be opened by the girl, and if she fails to offer the initiate a present of beads he would refuse to go through. The activity was referred to as the *Oiyotwa Oret* (the opening of the path). The initiates (several of them had one *pamungo*) would then fall in line near the *mabwaita* shrine of the *pamungo*, and the *moterenik* would anoint them on their heads with the butter from the horns which washed down their bodies. During the entire ceremony, the initiates would be clad in their mother's clothing and ornament, and would discard them at this point and put on the piece of cotton cloth they have collected from her.[171]

The initiates would then return to their homes, still not talking to their mothers, and would be in a dumb seclusion in the hut for 3 days. On the fourth day, he would emerge and sit near the *mabwaita* shrine, where his father or mother would then shave their head. The initiate would remain silent until presented with a goat and would leave the cloth borrowed from her mother near the shrine where she would collect it from. The novice would have a wand he has decorated, referred to as *kosisitiet*, his father would ask for it and the initiate would refuse to hand it until he is given a present. Once the father has taken it, he would proceed to place it on the roof above the goat's place in the hut. For the next 24 to 25 days, the initiate was not allowed to talk to women. After the period he was allowed to strike a connection with a girl or woman, even applying force if she is apprehensive. At the end of it all the initiate would now be called a *muren*, and would go by the name Arap …… (The son of). [172] The ceremony would end with the youth being allowed to take his place in constant feasts by men, having provided his first animal for such. A man was then only allowed to marry after having gone through this mandatory ceremony.

4.7.2.2 Initiation of Girls

The Kipsigis people practiced clitoridectomy upon girls when they reached marriageable age, often at the age of 15 or 16 years. Preparations for the ritual women begun at about 4 p.m. on the previous day and the assembled initiates broke into a dance referred to as the *Kipsegoit* dance, and they would sing, "I shall be circumcised

[171] Informant 1 interviewed on 1st May 2016

[172] Informant 1 interviewed on 1st May 2016.

tomorrow". The warriors or the *murenik* would dance the *Tiendo* dance. The girls would carry wands referred to as the *korosek*, from *kurundusiet* and *sinendet* trees.

Warriors would have monkey fur on their ankles and have *rungut* (a warriors club), and warrior bells, *kipkurunguraik*. [173]The girl's fathers wore the *nariet* headdress, while mothers had bands of *sinendet* around their forehead and sashes across their breasts. Stools would be placed near the *mabwaita* shrine, and on them would be a piece of brass wire (often used for earrings) milk, and the salt used by goats. Only virgins were allowed to sit on the stools to show that virginity was highly valued among the Kipsigis.

The dance would break up at night and all males would leave. The girls would then be taken into the *kaptiriot*, or circumcision hut. It was an ordinary hut vacated for the occasion, and girls would enter this hut naked. Before the ceremonies, a large disused cooking pot, *tama-terit*, having been prepared by the women would contain a salt pick (*majaita*) a cowrie shell belt, (*legetiet),* a stole-like necklace (*semonok*), cowries and beads, cupping arrow (*loynet*), a needle used for sawing string bags [174](*katet*), and a number of solanum berries. This was hidden in the hut, and was played upon by elderly women to the amazement of the girls.

The girls wearing food bags, *Kesiet*, on their heads would take in their left hand the dust sweeper, *Kweyet*, containing a number of solanum berries. In their right hands, the girls carried a mu imitation of a child's gourd, *sotet ap lakwa*. A mud figure of a child was placed on their backs. The girls would proceed around the hut carrying these items, and after that they would sleep in the hut for the night.

On the second day at around 5 a.m. the girls would leave the hut, and stand 200 yards away facing the direction of the sun. The initiate, there would be a woman to support her. She was referred to as *tiendet*. The girls would be circumcised depending on the seniority of their fathers. The first girl to be circumcised was called *kiboretiet*, the last one *koiumkoi*, and a coward would henceforth be referred to as *chebite*. Three months after the circumcision, the *Lapat ap Eun* (washing of hand) ceremony would be ushered in. Women would bring a beer bowl plastered with goats' dung and studded with

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[173] B. Maritim, *Kipsigis, Heritage and origin of clans* (Nairobi, Spotlight publishers, 2016), pp57-58.
[174] Informant 7 interviewed on 4th April 2016.

solanum berries. The beer would be taken by women in men's fashion through *rogorosiek* tubes. The girls were then attended to by *moterenik* of their own sex. The following day, the girls would be made to pass under a nest of ants and get stung as the nest was beaten as they passed under. [175]

4.8 Marriage

The ritual came after initiation. Initiates were seen as mature and ready for marriage. *kotunisiet* as known amongst the Kipsigis, was a union between a man and a woman. Polygamy was practiced especially when the first wife was barren or was unable to sire boys for the man. Dowry was paid to the girl's family in form of cows, goats and sheep. Marriage partners were chosen for individuals. A family would identify a girl of their choice and then send old men to disclose their interests to the family. The family would then give their consent and negotiation on dowry would begin. The girl would at times be told of the intentions of the man, but other times the old men and his father would organize on a time she was going to fetch firewood or water then she would be forcefully taken by strong men to the family that had identified her.

Although, traditional weddings were done by some families, it was not so common. The wedding involved slaughtering of a goat. Marriage was expected to be blessed with children. The more children one had, the more status they attained. A huge number of wives and children would sometimes be used as a way of identifying a leader. Men with few children and maybe one wife would even lose respect from other men. Such person could even not be allowed to address *Barraza la wazee*. More children and wives meant that a person was capable of leading others well especially if they managed their families exceptionally.

Marriage is seen as the beginning of a lineage and new life since the newlyweds were expected to sire children to show the fruits of their marriage. When children were born to a family, that family is seen as fruitful and productive and it received so much praise from members of the community. It was regarded as a complete family. Boys were more celebrated as they would be heirs; girls too received a warm welcome as they were seen as a source of wealth to the family. Children were supposed to pick up roles

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[175]Informant 1 interviewed on 1st May 2016.

from their parents that is; girls observed their mothers while boys observed their fathers. Grandparents too played an important role in telling stories to grandchildren so as to instill good morals to them.

Among the Kipsigis there were slight variations in the payment of the bride price. Among the Sotik, the first bride price would be paid while the girl-child was yet to be weaned. Among the Belkut and the Buret, the first payments were made when the girl was still a nubile. The former custom was more sensible to the Kipsigis people, as it was stated that the girl would appreciate her future from a tender age, and therefore, had a high chance of avoiding the "fast" life lived by rest of her sisters in the area. The presumption was not however proved in practice and was a major source of marital discord in the ethnic community. There were several instances during which a father would receive the first payment but later marry off her daughter to someone else (in most cases a rich man) to whom she would bear children but there was however a chance for redress. Girls were married off when they reached age 12 to 20. Often, when the first payer delayed over his rights, and it was proved that he did make the first payment to the satisfaction of elders, the woman, with all her children, would go back to him on his paying a full-bride price equal to that paid by the usurper, and no objection would be raised by the children[176].

When a typical Kipsigis girl emerged from the *kapteriot*, following the circumcision ceremonies and was still held in the semi-seclusion hut of her mother, the father of the groom-to-be, dressed in *sambut* (a monkey-fur robe) or a hairless goatskin garment, and in his hand an oiled *norgirwet* stick, would set off to visit the hut of the girl's father, in a journey referred to as *koita*. The respondent, explained further that on arrival, he would remain at the *mabawaita* shrine, and send a message that to know the reason for his visit. He was then asked what he has brought, and would reply "*iiwoget*", a fertile cow. The groom's father would then return home after a little conversation and a future date would be set for a more elaborate meeting. In most cases, this would be the next day. The first meeting would include informing the bride's father on the status of the groom.

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[176] Respondent 2 interviewed on 2nd May 2016

The following day, the father of the groom would return dressed as before, and would again be asked what he has brought and he would reply that he has brought a *moita nyoo* (a large calf). He would then return after having a polite conversation, and this will leave a third meeting arranged for the next day. On the third meeting on following day, his reply would be that he had come with a small calf (*moita ne mining*). [177]He would return for the fourth meeting, and would say that he has brought a bull (eita), and at this time he would travel back with the father and brothers of the girl to see the actual cow he is proposing as a bride price. The visitors would remain with him, as negotiations on the payment to be made were conducted. If an agreement was reached, the groom and a friend belonging to his age grade, would go alone to the hut of the bride's father, and they would be both anointed with butter by the father, mother, and the brothers of the girl (in the absence of the girl). They would return home after the ceremony.

On the sixth day, the groom and his friend would go back and enter the house by the door, *Kurk ap sang*. They would pay goats and sheep before entering by the door and they would be accommodated in the goat's compartment where food would be prepared and served to them by a sister or a friend of the bride. They would then be anointed by the girl's father and exit by the same door and go back home to rest for a day. On the eighth day, the groom would come accompanied by a *mistoat* (herdsman, a boy in this case), and a *cheplakwet,* a girl nurse. They were required not to eat anything before starting the journey. If the (a monkey-fur robe) bird would call a little on their right hand they would mean bad luck will follow, if on the left side, good luck. If the bird called from a position directly opposite their right thigh this would signal bad omen and they would return back. They were not required to greet any passer-by as during the journey to the bride's home.

On reaching the hut of his father in law to be, all three would stand near the mabwaita shrine, and then the girl called and told that son-in-law (*sandane)* has come, and would refuse to get out of the house until her father promises to offer her a sheep or goat. She then leaves the leaves her father's hut and goes to the *mabwaita* shrine to meet up with her future husband. The two are then anointed using butter by the girl's family – which

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[177] Respondent 2 interviewed on 2nd May 2016

is smeared on the forehead, legs, among other places. This is followed by beer ceremonies, the bride donning dress ornamented with beads and the groom in a long robe made of goat skin. The two are then enjoined by a *moteriot*, who plaits two cords of *segutiet* grass, working them around the pairs outstretched hands. Elders continue drinking, and people sleep in the hut (the bride and groom apart). The following day, the *moteriot* takes the *segutiet* grass twine to the *mabwaita* shrine of the marriage hut. A ritual was conducted by burning them on *labotonik* and *senetwet* wood, food eaten and the two are allowed to live together as husband and wife. [178]

4.9 Death

A person amongst the Kipsigis was seen to have lived a complete life only after completing the rites of passages. Death was the last rites of passage though not an end to life. Naming the children after the dead made the living dead present and it also showed gratitude to the living dead. The last rite of passage one underwent amongst the Kipsigis was "meet" (death) and *tupsyeet* (burial). [179]A father's *kerarget* (last oral will) was taken very serious and was observed to the later. This could have been on how to share the fathers' possession, it would extend to his wishes, where and how he wanted to be buried, naming those who owed him and confessing anything he owed others. [180]Death amongst the Kipsigis was met with sadness and in other occasion's happiness. Sadness of one being separated from the terrestrial kin and happiness because of the belief of the afterlife, entering into the realm of ancestors.[181]

Burial ceremonies took place at a dung heap west of the house. The burial rite gathered the whole community and work was put on hold temporarily till the rites were done. [182]The widow would go up to four weeks not doing any work hence their relatives would be seen helping her out. After the burial, people would chant *weegen wee* meaning "come home soon".[183] It was seen as an invitation of the person to return soon

[178] B. Rutto and K.Maritim, *Kipsigis, Heritage and origin of clans* (Nairobi, Spotlight publishers Ltd, 2016), pp58.
[179]B.C. Fish and G.W. Fish, *The Kalenjin Heritage, Traditional Religious and Social Practices* (Kenya: African Gospel Church, 1986) p 26.
[180] Ibid, p. 26.
[181] Ibid, p. 26.
[182] B.Rutto and K. Maritim, *Kipsigis, Heritage and origin of clans* (Nairobi, Spotlight publishers, 2016),p. 63
[183] Ibid, p. 27.

and enter the afterlife. The Kipsigis believed in life after death and is evident during the burial rites and the spirits were thought of as the living dead.[184]

After the burial rites were done, various rituals were performed to cleanse all that the deceased left behind. These rituals or rites includes; "*I seet-ab koot*" [185]which involved a special ceremony of cleansing the house of the deceased to enable other members of the family to live in it again. The ceremony involved sacrificing of a goat and using the blood in cleansing the whole house by sprinkling with blood. Secondly, *kibuchgee* was another rite carried out after the burial. The members left in the family were required not to speak to anyone, they stopped working and were required to shave their heads. This was to mark a new beginning. This practice was also meant to appease the spirits of the dead person.[186]

The third cleansing ritual was referred to as *ngisiriisye*t [187]this is where the widow removed some things from the house and took them to the river for washing. The widow and her children too were expected to bath as a way to wash away the uncleanness from the dead. The last rite was referred to as *kiil-kaarik* which involved the cleansing of the weapons of the dead man. All the bows, swords, arrows and spears were cleansed by the eldest son. It was done to preserve the life of the living members of the family. It's only after cleansing the weapons that they could use again.

According to Dickson Kwesi in his book titled *Theology in Africa,[188]* society was at equilibrium when the customs were maintained, goals attained and the spirit power given regular and adequate recognition. Members of the society were expected to strive to promote society's wellbeing. Anything that went in the unexpected direction was disliked. Children in the society were raised recognizing their roles in the society so as to strengthen the community. Part of observing rules and regulations promoted unity in such society.[189]

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[185] Ibid,p.63
[186] Ibid,p.27
[187] Ibid., p 27.
[188] D. Kwesi, *Theology in Africa* (New York: Maryknoll, 1984), p. 62.
[189] Ibid., p 63.

Kwesi further talks about significant ideas in the celebration of death in an African community namely:[190]

1. "Death is caused by evil
2. Death does not end life
3. Death does not server the hand between the living and the dead
4. Death is an occasion for seeking more life
5. Death does not negate natural self-expression
6. Death affects the whole community."[191]

When a person dies in the African community which include Kipsigis proper burial rites were done. There graveyards would be respected and even cared for. Rituals showed a sense of solidarity. During mourning, people would gather together to empathize. Spiritual world has different spiritual beings, divinities, associates of God ordinary spirits and living dead[192]. The living dead are not dead, as death does not break the family and community links[193] . Borrowing from Birago Drops poem, "the dead are never dead," an enduring relationship between the living dead and the world is portrayed.

"Those who are dead have never gone away
They are in the shadows darkening around
They are   in the shadows shading into day
They are   in the dead are not under the ground.
They are in the trees that quiver
They are   in the wood that weeps
They are   in the waters of the rivers
They are   in the waters that sleep
They are   in the Crowds they are in the homestead
The dead are never dead"[194]

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[190] Ibid., pp 192-194.
[191] Ibid., pp. 192-194.
[192] J. Healey and D.Sybertz, *Toward an African Narrative Theology* (Nairobi: Paulines Publication Africa, 1995), p211.
[193] Ibid., p.212.
[194] J. Healey and D.Sybertz, *Toward an African Narrative Theology* (Nairobi: Pauline Publication Africa, 1995), p212.

Death was feared most among the Kipsigis community because it came unannounced. People did not know when death would strike and so it created fear not knowing who would be the next victim. It was also feared because it separated one from t loved ones, knowing that the physical interaction and living would be distracted. Despite the fact that the people knew that life was a beginning of a new realm, it did not convince them so much. Physical death meant that the dead person would never have a one on one talks, storytelling or even seeking advice for them as they did when they were alive.

Thirdly, death was feared because it disrupted the rhythm of human life. A family was supposed to consist of parents and children. When the parents die then the hierarchy breaks down. If they were the bread winner's then disruption would take place challenges would be experienced by the children. And since death did not only affect the children, the community also experiences so many challenges. Fourthly, death was feared because it deprived the community of an individual. If the person who died was an expert in herbal medicine then the society would have lost a very important person and might not get any replacement to help them with the knowledge that the dead had. Such kind of loss lead the society to challenges.

Lastly death was feared because it was unavoidable or inescapable. The Kipsigis believe that one day in one way or another each person has to die. This kind of thought instills fear on people because they are left wondering if they would live to fulfill their mission on earth before they joined the ancestors. Mourning for a man took four days.

Bottignole, in the book titled, *Kikuyu Traditional Culture and Christianity*[195] profits the study with the insights of death and yonder life from the Agĩkũyũ Christian perspective. The author talks of the acceptance of death and the belief in life after death. The Agĩkũyũ community sees death as a begging of eternal life with God. In this regard, the author gives an example from *Wathiomo Mukinyu*, in which a Christian of Mugoiri insisted on purgatory and talks of his initiation- mates having died but to the living they had entered into another realm of life after the earthly life and even celebrating their new lives.[196]In addition, the author further discusses family ties which were

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[195]S. Bottignole, *Kikuyu Traditional Culture and Christianity* (Nairobi: Heinemann Educational Books, 1984), p.77.
[196] Ibid., p.77.

characterized by strict and strong links and responsibility towards one another in times of need. The author uses general reciprocity mechanism to show the cooperation that existed not only at the family level in times of need but also at clan level where if one member of the clan had a problem then all clan members participated in helping the person. [197]

4.9.1 Rituals that Accompanied Death amongst the Kipsigis.

The dead were still an important aspect in the community, and much respect was shown even at it. As Bujo puts it,

> *"Africans know how to distinguish between individual,*
> *Social and political life can only be enjoyed in its fullness*
> *When the ancestors are remembered and honored.*
> *The dead can only be happy when they live on*
> *In the affectionate remembrance of the living.[198]*

To ensure a continuous remembrance of the dead, death was accompanied by a number of rituals. The main purpose of these rituals was to chase away evil spirits associated with death, to ensure that the person left in peace and was happy. The rituals depend on whether the dead were married or not.

If they were married, *Mabwaita (*worship altar*)* which was a ritual ceremony that involved shouting and chasing away the evil spirits. Slaughtering of goats and sheep too was done as a way to chase evil spirits. The body of the deceased would be kept in the house, the night of burial. Men would light fire outside until morning. Family was expected to shave their hair to cleanse themselves from any spirit and to show a new beginning. A house would then be built using *keriet* (tree leaves) then the wives to the deceased went round it three times. They were expected to wear skin cloths. This was a sign that they were ready to move on with life without their husband. A part of the skin cloth would later be cut to slow legging go.

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[197] Ibid., p. 34.

[198] B. Benezet, *African Theology in its Social Context* (Nairobi: Paulines Publication, 1986), p23.

After burial, properties or mans' cloth were shared amongst family members as follows; First wife – shield and arrows, Second wife – walking stick and sword, First son – heifer ("*chemusit*") Last son – house and millet grinder "*koitab bal*" The daughters would apply lamb oil on their bodies. The rest of the property would be then divided amongst family members.[199]

When a mother died, a fire stone "*sincherwoot*" was removed from the fire place and replaced with a new one. The ritual helped a person to cast away bad dreams. Other rituals to chase away evil spirits were applying milk fat or cream on spears and swords. In case a person committed suicide, different practices took place depending on the place one committed suicide. But first, investigation on what led the person to commit suicide was done. In case of suicide, cleansing rituals would be performed *"kianyiny"* milk would be poured in to the mouth of the dead body. If a person jumped into the water to kill oneself then the body of the deceased would be buried near the river bank. If a person hanged themselves on a tree, the tree was to be cut down. Traditional brew and milk would then be poured on the tree. Goats would also be slaughtered and waste from the animal would.[200] From death came the living dead and ancestors.

4.9.2 Spirits, Ancestors or the Living Dead.
4.9.2.1 Spirits
The Kipsigis believed that death was not the end of life instead the body was seen as a temporary abode of the "*tamirmiriet*" (spirit). The Kipsigis believe in good spirits and bad spirits that is if a person lived an exemplary life, their spirit would be good. But if a person lived a despicable kind of life then when they die they become evil. The good spirits are then refered to as "*oiik*" and the evil spirits "*masambwaanik*". We note therefore that, the kind of life a person lived in the terestial life determines the kind of spirits that one becomes. *Oiik* would be reincarnated through *Kuurseet* (naming) amongst the Kipsigis.

Amongst the Kipsigis spirits lived in various places, existed in various forms. They were believed to live in the air, the earth and the underworld mostly in the anthills.

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[199]Respondent 1, interviewed on 1st May 2016.
[200] Informant 2, interviewed on 16th April 2016.

Spirits were appeased so that they could not cause any illness. They were believed to return to the natural world in several forms like as a snake, lizard or rat. They were believed to visit the living people through dreams and visions and could show the wrong and what to be done to make things right. *Oiik* would help mediate between the living and *Asiis.* Women too were believed to have *oiik* and they would pass it on to their grandchildren. The other type of spirit is ancestral spirit, known to have a higher status and deemed to be sacred.

4.9.2.2 Ancestors

Nyamiti defines Ancestorship as a sacred kin-relationship which establishes a right or title to regular sacred communication with one's own kin through prayer and ritual offering (oblation)[201].Whereas Mbiti in his book, *African Religions and Philosophy* defines a living dead as a person who is physically dead but living in the memory of those who know him in his life as well as being alive in the world of spirits.[202]They can still be remembered up to the 5th generation because they have a close link between human beings and the spirit world. The living dead according to Mbiti are bilingual i.e. they speak in the language of human beings, spirit and God. They are part of the family and human beings hold them in their memories. They appear symbolically to the living and can even share a meal with them. The African community believe that they appear to the eldest to; enquire on the family affairs[203], warn on impending danger and rebuke the wrong dowers. Some other roles are being the guardians of the family affairs and traditions and also mediating between men and God in times of need.[204]

The living dead are both wanted and unwanted in the community. When the last person who remembers the living dead dies, they stop being linked to the living and they become spirits.[205]Citing examples of some different communities' .Some African communities including Kipsigis believe that the living dead are reborn through renaming of the children. They are either created by God or they were once human beings. They are controlled by God. Some are good others are bad. They can possess

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201 C. Nyamiti, Studies *in African Christian Theology, V2, Jesus Christ the Ancestor of Humankind: An Essay on African Christology*, (Nairobi: CUEA Publishers, 2006), p4.
202 J.S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (Heinemann Educational Book, 1969), p25.
203 Ibid., p.87.
204 Ibid., p 83.
205Ibid., p 84.

people and appear to them through dreams or specialists.[206] They are also feared and believed to confine in a kinship group.

Nyamiti in his book, tilted Studies *in African Christian Theology, V2,* explains African traditional conception of an ancestor as determined by elements like; consanguineous kinship, this is the relation between the dead and the living kings. Ancestral relationship did not exist beyond tribal limits.[207]Ancestors must have come from a family system, either nuclear or extended and so he has relatives. These people in the traditional society are bound by blood relations. Secondly is the superhuman sacred status which was acquired through death. Because of their proximity to the Supreme Being the ancestors are seen to receive or acquire superhuman sacred condition with magico-religious powers that is beneficial to the earthly relatives.[208]This power enables them to have a closer relation with the Supreme Being and can link the living to the Creator.

Third element is exemplarity; one has to have had a morally good and upright life in the human community.[209]This would be considered a model of conduct in society and as a source of ethnic tradition and its stability. As a mediator, an ancestor is believed to act a link between the Supreme Being and the earthly kins.[210]Furthermore, an ancestor has the right or title to regular sacred communication with the earthly kin achieved through regular prayers and ritual donations. It is intended to be a manifestation of love, thanksgiving, confidence and homage to the ancestors from the kins. In return, the ancestors respond to the prayers and oblation by bestowing material and spiritual goods to the kins as a sign of their love, gratitude faithfulness and respect towards them.[211]

Ancestors were another category of beings that were believed to inhabit the after world.[212] Physical death then did not mean the end of existence. The author further says that after death a person became a spirit.[213] Spirits of people who had physically died

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[206] Ibid., p 88.
[207] Ibid., p 3.
[208] C. Nyamiti, Studies *in African Christian Theology, Vol.2, Jesus Christ the Ancestor of Humankind: An Essay on African Christology*, (Nairobi: CUEA publishers, 2006), p. 4.
[209] Ibid., p 3
[210]Ibid., p 3.
[211] Ibid., p 4.
[212] J.N. Mugambi, *Christianity and African Culture* (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2002), p. 66.
[213] Ibid., p 60.

continued to influence the life of the community. The influence was either positive or negative depending on the conduct of the living individuals. In case the community failed to observe established customs and taboos, it could lead to punishment from the ancestors.

Diviners were consulted in case of misfortunes and if the diviners attribute the misfortune to a breach of positive relations between the community and the ancestors' offerings would be made to appease and please them.[214]Relations with the ancestors were maintained through practices like libation pouring or offering them some food at the beginning of a meal. According to the author, any offence against the ancestors would lead to wrath from God since it was believed that they were between Supreme Being and human beings.[215]

Amongst the Kipsigis, ancestors were greatly respected since ancestor ship began from physical death; those who died were believed to start a new realm of afterlife. Ancestors were greatly honored. They played an important role in the life of the community. They had to be recognized since they were present in every gathering and they would watch and monitor what took place in the community. The ancestors would communicate to people through dreams; it was either to declare their happiness or what displeased them in the society. Ancestors lived on in the community and played the following roles; to protect the people of a given community. This was from any harm that threatened the happiness of the society. It was the duty of the ancestors to communicate to the people when there was harm to befall them.

They would later advice on what could be done to evade the supposed harm. The community was then expected to do as advice or else if they failed to have a plan later on regrets would befall. Often, rituals would be done especially if it was a harm caused by disappointing the ancestors. Whenever the community was not in harmony with the ancestors, appeasing would be done "*kianyiny*" so as to avoid any dangers that would befall them. Leaders "*Kiptainik*" would meet and discuss a way forward whenever such warnings were given.

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[214] Ibid., p 66.
[215] Ibid., p. 66.

Ancestors amongst the Kipsigis had a role as mediators between them and their Supreme Being "*Asis*". They would pray but then expect that through the ancestors; their prayers would be answered easily, since ancestors were believed to be nearest to *Asis.* All needs therefore were expected to be answered when people were in good terms. Needs of the Kipsigis included; good harvest, rains, success in raids, plenty of wealth, tracks of land and herds of animals.

Ancestors gave identity to the living, since their names lived on the lineage continued through grandchildren. To ensure a continuation of life of the ancestors, children would be named after them to show that they lived on. It's through them that the family was identified their stories would be told on through from generation to generation hence they were never forgotten. When an ancestor was greatly respected then it continued to live on as people sort to ensure their family retained the prestige and status of the ancestor. Through such incidences their identity was from the ancestor.

Ancestors were also believed to have a role in giving instructions on how the community would maintain law and order. Ancestors left ascertain pattern of life on what was to be done, how to relate and how the community was to be run. At the afterlife, these ancestors gave direction on how activities were to be carried out in the community. These instructions came through elders, who would then pass it through to the generation.

Ancestors blessed the living in the society. Blessing came in form of children, peace, good harvest or even wealth. Sacrifices were made to ancestors to show their appreciation. It showed that the ancestors were in harmony with the living and so ensured that they got their best. Blessings created or promoted a happy community. Although it was not at all instances that the ancestor blessed, sometimes they punished the living for their mistakes. Punishment would come in form of drought, madness in a family or even lack of children. The punishment caused so much pain and devastation. Rituals to appease ancestors would be carried out to plead with them to withdraw the punishment on the community. This rituals would include pouring of libations or sacrifices on a holy alter" *Mabwaita*".

Ancestors were to protect family members. Whenever the community was faced by any kind of danger, ancestors would always act as a shield. It would happen by communicating to the living on the best solutions to a predicament before it befalls them. They would require them to take preventive measures to ensure that everyone in the society was safe. Through this kind of protections the community evaded so many problems that would have befallen them. Secondly, ancestors were to give sense of identity, ancestors are part of the community and they leave a lineage behind. Through names and previous achievements of the ancestors, a status is created to the people of the same lineage. The identities would be used to the advantage of the family. Their names would be used on children to ensure that they live on and have a better remembrance. This was seen in the naming rite where if a child was not named according to the ancestors, they would either fall sick or cry with no apparent reasons, old women would then be called to name '*kurotet*' the child.[216]

Thirdly, an ancestor acted as a mediate between God and human beings. People would go through the ancestors to communicate their wishes and desires to the Supreme Being. They would intervene on their behalf for their prayers to be answered. In case the community was getting cursed, then ancestors would appeal so that the curse would be revoked. Forth, was giving instruction and warning on impending dangers. When a community was about to get attacked or was endangered, the ancestors would communicate through mediums to inform individuals about the impeding danger. They would also give instructions on how activities were to be run in the community.[217]Their wishes were a must to be followed or else they would turn back to haunt the society. This means peace between the living and the living dead had to be maintained for prosperity in the society. Therefore, it meant that ancestors were to bless the family, ancestors were supposed to bless their families for their good deeds. They were to bless their work and even give them a good harvest. The community would in turn give sacrifices in form of food or drinks.

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[216] Respondent 8, interviewed on 10th April 2016.

[217]B.C. Fish and G.W. Fish, *The Kalenjin Heritage, Traditional Religious and Social Practices* (Kenya: African Gospel Church, 1986), p 148.

4.10 Kipsigis Proverbs and Wise Sayings Related to Death

There are quite a number of songs, sayings, stories, myths and proverbs concerning death among the Kipsigis. This proverbs and saying have what characterizes death in the community. Life on earth is seen as changing. People live but are at the verge of dying[218] .

Death is attributed to a cause, whether it is the will of *Asis* or whether it is natural causes like diseases. Death has to have a cause. People don't die without a reason. Most times when a person dies, members of the clan or family try to find out the reason as to why they died. It was important since they believed in cleansing rituals to ensure that incase it was a sin, the member had committed it does not go back haunting other members. The proverbs talk of there has to be reason behind a death. Sin is also attributed to death as seen in the third proverb which means wages of sin is death; death therefore is associated with sin

> *"Mame sigiriet buch"*
> *"Mame chii buch"*
> *"Melektab cholwok ko met"*

Death is inevitable. When the times come for a person to die, they cannot dodge death according to the Kipsigis proverb below.Death is inevitable whatever the age, situation or position

> *"Ya yosin ne kibar kipkwonyo"*
> *"Makitomjin bei tulwo"*

Death is for everyone, Death is universal. Everybody has to die one day or the other. The Kipsigis community, believe that death belongs to each and every person in the community. It is portrayed in the proverbs below.Death and laughter are related, they are inevitable and everybody laughs at some point in life.

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[218]J. Healey and D.Sybertz, *Toward an African Narrative Theology* (Nairobi: Paulines Publication Africa, 1995), p207.

> *"Motinye kapkiruog chaman"*
>
> *"Tupcho meet ak rorion"*

Death amongst the Kipsigis people does not spare anyone, whether rich, poor, young or old. Death will come for each. It is said that the firewood in fire is the same as that in the stores since it shall burn too in few days or weeks. It refers to death as it does not choose the fattest or youngest. It advices people that, they should not rejoice of other people's misfortunes for they may never know the future

> *"Kerkei kwendet ne mi ma ak nemi busa"*

Death is non-discriminatory[219] amongst the Kipsigis; death does not discriminate from the family or community. Anybody can die at any given time.

> *"Wekse uruon bo get"*

4.11 Religious Practices and Beliefs about Death

The traditional Kipsigis people practiced monotheism but they had three names for God, *Asista,Chebtalil* and *Nggolo* (a rarely used synonym of *Chebtal*il and thought to have originated from other tribes). *Asisa* refers to the sun, and hence, earlier ethnographers had referred to the Kipsigis as sun worshipers. It is important to note that the Kipsigis offered their prayers to *Asista* more often compared to *Chebtalil* and most of their ceremonies were conducted while facing the rising sun. To the Kipsigis, God was not only seen as the controller of the world but also as the protector of mankind and animals. One of the most noticeable features of the Kipsigis was the view that God was entirely beneficent. Things like illnesses (such as sickness), loss of children or property were not attributed to the anger of God in the traditional Kipsigis worship.[220]

Only major disasters such as drought, famine, locusts, and defeat in wars were attributed to God, whereas personal suffering and loss were often linked to spirits who were thought to be meting out punishment to individuals for moral delinquency. However, if one fell sick the Kipsigis people prayed to God for one's recovery and did

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[219] Ibid., p 208.

[220] I. Q. Orchardson, *Religious beliefs and practices of the Kipsigis,* (East African Literature Bureau, 1961), p154.

not forget to give thanks to God for ensuring recovery. The Kipsigis believed that God controlled war. For instance, when a halo appeared around the sun during war-time it was considered an omen indicating victory or otherwise, depending on whether the halo opened towards home or towards the enemy. [221]There were many praise names of God, and in relation to the halo that would come in the form of *Asista chebo kipkoyo* (God with the halo).

Before the advent of colonialism, there was a great annual ceremony among the Kipsigis for the worship of God. The ceremony was centred on the *Kapkorosit*, (a large cone of poles of trees that were seen as sacred among the Kipsigis clans and which were tied using special lianas). It was placed adjacent to an altar, and around the altar there was a pure white he-goat that was decorated for the ceremony. It is important to note that no sacrifices were made during the ceremony but prayers thanking God for the blessings he has bestowed on people in terms of herds of cattle, fields, and flocks. This greatly contrasts with sun and phallic worship where blood sacrifices were common.

The large ceremony was later abandoned and replaced with one that was more centred on the family, and referred to as the *Mabwayta,* which was can be considered as a small replica of *the Kapkorosit*. It was like a family altar that stood outside every married man's or widow's house. Same as the *Kapkorosit*, it consisted of narrow cone of sticks placed about eight feet high bound together with creepers. They were all considered to be special plants that were sacred to the man's clan. The altar played a key role in almost all ceremonies that a person went through, typically from birth through to death.

The sun also played a key role as the *mabwayta* was always located on the East side of the house. Additionally, each traditional Kipsigis house was made in such a way that the door faced either East or West. Drawing a line halfway would divide the house into Eastern half and Western half, commonly referred to as *Njor* and *Koyma* respectively. It played an important part, not only in ceremonies but also in relation to behaviour and other activities within the household. The Eastern side or *njor* was commonly associated with all relations by blood or by marriage. As such one stage of the process

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[221]Ibid., p155.

of getting into marriage was referred to as entering *njor* (the Eastern side) and thus becoming a relation of the bride's family.[222]

Many of the Kalenjin ceremonies were held at the *mabwayta* just after sunrise, and all the participants would face to the East, which was always the standard, even when ceremonies were conducted in the afternoon. In some ceremonies, such as a marriage that took place after dusk, the procession often went around the *mabwayta* without facing East or West (though the bridal pair still faced the east within the house during the ceremony). Most of Kipsigis ceremonies were accompanied by prayers asking for blessings from God.

There were no priest among the Kipsigis but at any given ceremony, the oldest man present or better "*Poyot ap Tumdo*" the principal old man of the *Kokwet* was chanted the prayers. Even in ceremonies involving women, it was only the elder of ceremonies who was supposed to ask for blessings from God. If he was not present then some other elderly man could take his place, and in such a case a sheep or goat would be sacrificed at the *Mabwayta* and this had to be done by man. Even when there was no serious ceremony but merely a beer drinking activity one of the elders would ask for blessings on behalf of all of those present and their relations. In some instances he would single out one person for a special mention.

The blessing would be given in a very attractive way. The old man would chant in a very vigorous voice, with the assemblage repeating in chorus at intervals a final word, till at the end the elder raises his voice end finishes the prayer together with the assemblage.[223]

There was no apparent fear of God among the Kipsigis people. It was uncommon to find the Kipsigis people speaking of God in a hushed voice but they talked about him in an openly manner but with respect. People were however very secretive in their prayers and required a lot of intimacy before one could learn about another's prayers.

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[222] Informant 8, interviewed on 2ⁿᵈ May 2016.
[223] I. Q. Orchardson, *Religious Beliefs and Practices of the Kipsigis*. (East African Literature Bureau, 1961), p 157.

4.12 Beliefs on Death among the Kipsigis

Among the Kipsigis and other Kalenjin groups, death did not exist and was widely seen as a rite of passage that prepared the spirit of the deceased to move to the next realm. The notion of death was long substitute by the belief in human spirits.

A belief in the human spirit was practiced as part of the traditional religious beliefs of the Kipsigis people. The belief is made possible by the existence of death, and was in no way likened to the belief of evil spirits or the fear of evils which predominate in many other traditional African cultures.[224] The basis of the Kipsigis belief in spirits was the immortality of the human spirit. The immortality is not the same as the one in Christianity and other major religions that suppose heaven as a place of eternal bliss in accordance with different ideas of happiness. The belief in spirits to the Kipsigis is linked to ancient tales and is related to the mortal life they know. The actual immortality is achieved through the continuous reincarnation of the spirit in succeeding members of the family. The story of how immortality was achieved by the Kipsigis underscores the great sacrifice that was made by the people.

The story termed, *chebyosok en bore*, states that Long ago man lived for so many years. When one was getting older, he would cast his skin like a snake and become younger again. Death however came and it was permanent. The dead man's body was buried in a dung heap or he was thrown away to the hyenas and that was the end of it. This made the children to be born without spirits in the same manner was animals.

The old people asked themselves, "why is it that they die forever and not return again"? "Even the moon dies but it's born again, why should man be lost eternally"? They then decided to go and beg for death in Bore, at the river at the bottom of the precipice so that their children may have spirits that will return and be born again and again forever more. In preparation for this, the old women ground flour and each took some in a small basket at dawn and walked slowly, singing, as they moved towards the precipice. They

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[224] R. Manners , *The Kipsigis of Kenya: A culture change in a model of East African Tribe* (Contemporary change in traditional societies, 1967), pp.207-359.

then stood with their backs to the gulf and facing the rising sun, let out a cry, "The moon dies and returns again but man dies forever". They then hurled their baskets of flour over their shoulders and fell with them backwards *"Siel!"* From that point their spirits seized to die, always returning to live in the children again and again forever.

Each time a person passed away, their spirit would return to the nether world awaiting reincarnation. As such there were no evil spirits among the Kipsigis people. With no fear for evil spirits, the Kipsigis people, including children wandered about at night without any fear of darkness. To them, spirits were not evil, but human beings that were retaining the character they had before they died. A man only had to deal with a spirit of deceased family or extended family members or those they have established relations through marriage.

It was therefore a common practice for Kipsigis people to say that they are going to meet the spirit of their deceased father or any other relative. Such pronouncements were accompanied by a suppressed joy (adult Kipsigis suppressed all feelings) and they found it dutiful to carry out a small ceremony which they saw as being desired by their dead father. As stated earlier, the basis of the Kipsigis belief in spirits was the immortality of the human spirit hence summing up the traditional Kipsigis belief about death.

4.13 Chapters Concluding Remarks

The current chapter has explored the understanding of death among the Kipsigis. It has looked at the rites of passage that take place in the Kipsigis community because one cannot handle the ritual of death and leave out the other rituals of birth, naming, initiation and marriage that an individual undergoes in the society. Additionally, the chapter has discussed the Kipsigis proverbs that are associated with death and the relevant theologians' reflections and Christian instructions on death and life hereafter with reference to the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

THEOLOGIANS' REFLECTIONS AND CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTIONS ON DEATH AND LIFE HEREAFTER WITH REFERENCE TO THE STUDY

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter handled African traditional understanding of death and life hereafter hence giving insights into African view on death. The present chapter looks at the theological and Christian view on death and the afterlife. It shall explore the sacred scriptures used by the Christian and some theological reflections from scholars who have profoundly written on death and life hereafter. The chapter shall also try to explore how death came to be and some of the effects of death especially in the Synoptic Gospels.

5.2 Selected Theologians' Reflections on Death and Yonder Life

Mugambi in his book on *Christianity and African Culture*, defines a Christian as a person who has accepted the Christian faith and made own decision to become a follower of Jesus Christ. Christianity therefore affirms that Jesus of Nazareth is Christ the Son of God, but each Church lives this faith according to its understanding of the demands of the Gospel.[225]

Christians in Kenya are either Roman Catholics or Protestants. They use the Bible as their guide. The word Bible is derived from the Greek word *Biblia*[226] which means books. It is a collection of writings originally collected in scrolls. The Bible is divided into two, the Old Testament and the New Testament. The OT has various divisions which include Pentateuch, Historical books, Poetic books and prophetic books. The NT is also divided to Gospels, Epistles which can be general epistles or Pauline's. Matthew, Mark, Luke are referred to as Synoptic Gospels because it has the same perspective.[227]

In order to effectively articulate the Christian view on death, it is critical to differentiate between physical and spiritual death. Physical death can be described both from a

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[225]J.N. K.Mugambi, *Christianity and African Culture* (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2002), p.88.
[226] A.Y William and C. Haven, *An Introduction to the Bible; A Journey into the Three Worlds, 8th ed.* (Pearson Publishers, 1995), p 4.
[227] Ibid., p.9.

theological and a medical point of view. From a medical view, physical death is described as a permanent cessation of all vital bodily functions. It often takes place when a person's heart ceases to beat and the brain ceases to send electrical impulses. From a theological point of view, death can be described as the time when a person's body is separated from the soul (also known as the immaterial part). Perhaps the first bible verse that should be referred to is (Eccle12:7), which says "then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it" It implies that after death, the physical body decays and hence is resolved into its constituent elements on earth.

In regard to death, the bible makes a clear distinction between physical death and spiritual death. It states that even when a person is alive, he or she could be dead spiritually. Spiritual death is described as a state in which the human soul is separated from God and has not been enlivened by his spirit. There are a number of biblical passages that support this view, and they include the following: In (Eph 2: 2-5), state that humans were considered dead in their sins and trespasses before they were considered Christians. It was made possible by the act of God making humans alive again through Jesus Christ. Apostle Paul expounded further on spiritual deadness in Eph 4:18 as being in a state of "alienation from the life of God". In first (Tim5:6), there is an evident contrast between physical and spiritual life, making it very clear that a person was "dead even while they live.

As a normal course of experience, every living human being is expected to experience death. If a person dies physically before they are spiritual enlivened, then they are expected to face eternal separation with God. According to scriptural passages, Christians who have gone through spiritual enlivening while they still exist on earth will go on living in fellowship with God in "eternal life" (Jn 10:28; 17:3; 1 Jn 5:20). The bible goes further to state that individuals who have not experienced spiritual enlivening by God's spirit will experience the ultimate second death, which, among other things, will be underscored by eternal separation from God. (Rev 20:14; 21:8).

Rayan [228]discusses that in the Christian view of social suffering and death, each person is affected by death and feels pain. Suffering and death are mystery just as life and suffering just as life and happiness.[229](Gen 3:11) interprets death as refusal of fidelity to the Sinai covenant, creation covenant and the covenant of brotherhood.[230]When people do not adhere to the laws given to them by God, which is noted in the Ten Commandments given to the Israelites, then it warrants death. In the covenant of brotherhood as discussed by Rayan, a person is expected to do justice to the fellow human being, love for one another and caring for each other, failure to do so is death.[231]Death is not only seen as a biological phenomenon but is seen as a regressive evolution. It is considered as falling back to the level of inert nature below level of liberty which defines the human[232]. Death is shown as a failure to adhere to liberty's dynamism.[233] The liberty is seen to be fundamental and show the human quality of determination and self-giving[234]. Furthermore, discussion on the Christian view of death is that it is the loss for appetite for the fruits of the tree of life. From the above analysis, it is important to note that, in Genesis Adam and Eve are instructed not to partake of the tree of knowledge and they disobeyed. Being able to stand firm and overcome temptation is what is seen as the loss of appetite of the tree of life[235].

Fidelity to the covenant[236] that is, abiding by the laws given to human beings, leads to the fulfillment of promises and success. One not sinning means that they do justice and without violation of social healthy relationships. To the Christian, eternal life and eternal death is what they believe in. Life in Christian view therefore, is when a person is alive, it's because they live in and for Gods friendship, as they work with Him for the liberation of captives[237], transforming of the world to the kingdom of God. But then they are dead when they are not Gods friends and they deny Him in the collaboration.

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[228]…Rayan, "*Christian View of Social Suffering and Death*," in C .McMullen (ed.), *The Problem of Death and Suffering in Indian Religion* (Delhi: Lithouse Publications, 1983,) P 25.
[229] Ibid.
[230]Ibid.,p.26.
[231] Ibid., p.26.
[232] Ibid., p .29.
[233] Ibid., p .29.
[234] Ibid., p .29.
[235] C. McMullen, *The problem of Death and Suffering in Indian Religion* (Delhi: Lithouse Publications, 1983), p29.
[236] Ibid., p. 29.
[237] Ibid., p.43.

Life and death therefore are relational realities. To refuse to love one another is to remain dead. As in (1Jn 3), to love brothers is to have assurance of having passed from death to life. A person can be biologically alive but humanly dead and vice versa. Biological death is selfishness, suffering and separation from God[238]. Christian perspective has it that suffering and death are not fate and cannot change[239], but can be transformed given new quality and new meaning[240]. The authors also points death as having positive dimension which is, through death, one acquires all cosmic relationship, and a person organizes their life and creates rules and get the freedom to make decision, have a good relationship and follow Gods given destiny[241].

Bailey in his book titled *Biblical perspectives of death*,[242] refers to the book of Genesis. The author talks of death as having begun with the warning of partaking the fruit of the tree of life, which if taken would lead to death. So as a result of Adam and Eve's disobedience and taking of the forbidden fruit they were expelled from the Garden of Eden, which he calls paradise. They were condemned to toil in pain and return to the ground which they were created from. The Genesis the creation story talks of God taking soil from the ground and molding man out of it. He goes ahead to give him the breathe of life and hence the beginning of life in man (Gen 2: 7).This implies that life began when God forces breath into man and he becomes a living creature, When man is therefore cursed to go back to soil, it implies that God wanted them to go back to their original state of lifelessness. (Gen 3:19).

The study notes therefore that the first mention of death in the bible occurs in the book of Genesis Chapter 2 verse 17, where it is stated that "from the tree of knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you surely eat from it you will surely die". This can be related to the Adam and Eve predicament, in the sense that when humans first ate from the forbidden tree, they ended up dying in spiritual sense and entered into a condition in which physical death could not be escaped. The passage clearly shows that disobedience to God and human sin as the reason why man was

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[238] Ibid., p. 43.
[239] Ibid., p .43.
[240] Ibid., p.44.
[241] Ibid., p.39.
[242] B. Lloyd, *Biblical Perspectives on Death* (USA: Fotress Press, 1979), p.36.

condemned to face death. For Christianity, therefore, death can be seen as a God's judgement upon humans as a result of the human sinfulness. (Gen 3:19). The position receives support from numerous versus in the bible. In Rom 5:12, the penalty for the original sin is associated with all humans through the statement that "sin came into the world through one man, and death came through sin, and death spread to everyone because all have sinned". (Rom5:12)This is further clarified in Romans 6:23 where it is declared that the "wages of sin is death".[243]

Since the advent of Christianity, debate has raged among believers as to whether human could still have died if they had not sinned, or whether humans were indeed created as mortal or immortal beings. As a Christian, I would side with the argument that God created human beings to be immortal. However, before the first humans attained the immortality they had already disobeyed God and hence, bringing mortality to themselves. By refusing to eat from the tree of life and choosing to eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, humankind chose to die. According to the bible, human beings were choosing one tree in exclusion of the other. It is evident by the fact that after humans ate from the Tree of Knowledge God put them out of the Garden of Eden so that they might not "reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever" (Gen 3:22-23)

   Therefore, physical death and spiritual death (as determined by Christianity) were occasioned by the act of sinning by men. And by choosing death, the fate of dying was passed to all. "When you hide your face they are terrified, when you take away their breath they die and return to the dust."(Ps 104: 29)death would thus be an intrusion into the creator's design, a curse which humans were of necessity placed, and a manifestation of their fallen state. It can therefore be seen that death would not be a thing to be enjoyed as portrayed that humans end their journey on earth and ends up in helpless state in soil form.[244] Lloyd goes ahead to discuss the manifestation of death, in the OT and NT of the Bible. He says that death manifests itself in three ways; as a metaphor, as a power and as biological death[245]

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[243]Ibid., p.35.
[244]Psalms 104; 29.
[245] B. Lloyd, *Biblical Perspectives on Death* (USA: Fotress Press, 1979), p36.

When death manifest itself as biological, people reacted with so much anxiety, for example amongst the Israelites they were so anxious about it and feared death so much. When people knew that man had to die then it was seen as oppressive.[246] It was seen as oppressive for the human creature in case of the following;

1. If it was a bad death

If a person dies prematurely and human life is cut short then such a death has oppressed the individual and also the community as a whole. Premature death was associated with guilt and punishment.[247] It was seen as a great evil amongst the Israelites to die prematurely and not be able to reach the full potential by a person. Wisdom books in the Bible gives Christians instructions on how to avoid premature death.

2. If the death was violent

Violent death is seen in the OT, where jealousy drove Cain to kill his brother Abel, and Abel's blood is crying from the ground. It shows us the aspect of going back to the ground as earlier mentioned by Lloyd. Shedding of blood for whatever reason was seen as an offence against God, and resulted in the pollution of land.[248] The people understood that incase of violence then they get oppressed through death, the story of Abraham surrendering his wife to avoid being killed (Gen 12; 11-13)

Amongst the Christians in Litein town, when violence causes death and so makes children orphaned, they are obliged to lead them and to provide them with their needs. It is seen as bad death as it contributes to avoid pain and suffering and the person becomes oppressed by the death. It is therefore advisable to live in peace with one another and to learn to solve disputes in a peaceful manner to avoid such incidences. Just as the Bible story of Sarah and Abraham, anything has to be done to protect life as death from violence would cause more pain and suffering.

3. If there was no surviving heir

Offspring's were a source of comfort and pride. Childlessness caused so much anxiety, evident from the story of Abraham where he got so frustrated as he grew old ad did not

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[246] Ibid., p 47.
[247] Ibid., p53.
[248] B. Lloyd, *Biblical Perspectives on Death* (New York: Fotress Press, 1979), p. 49.

get any child. He went ahead with God instructions to sire a child with a maid, but still did not feel content. It is when Abraham asked God for a sign that he would bless him with a child, hence the covenant between him and God.[249] Those with no heirs faced loss of property and identity and so in this case death was seen as very bad as it oppressed such people. It might not have been their making that they do not get heirs so as to have a continuity in their lineage, in case of such childless state adoption, polygamy or levirate marriages was used as a solution. It is important therefore that the desire for offspring and reputation need not be motivated by self-interest .It is not always the preservation of the "I" that is desired or gives comfort. Even those with no offspring and participate in the life a community through their influence and get comforted.

Although in the traditional African society children are seen as a blessing of marriage in the Christian perception of marriage, children are not a must since it is God who gives the children. When Christians do not sire children they are given a chance to adopt and care for the children as their own. Death of such parents leaves them with an heir. The Bible talks of death when one had no heir as a bad death. In the contemporary society of Christian faith much influence is not put in this. The tone of pain and anguish as in (2sam 18: 18), shows lack of an heir as and death drawing near, made people desperate and in pain. Whereas in, (Job 5: 25-26) a tone of celebration having heirs to take up after the death is seen as joy. One would die not frustrated about an heir in their family. This kind of bad death amongst the Jews therefore put emphasis on the importance of children, and the role they played in the life of their parents. Childlessness would mean living in misery and anguish.

A good death[250], according to the Bible was when no blood was shed. In Jeremiah 34: 4-5, God promises that Zedekiah was going to die a peaceful death not one of the swords. It is important to note that it would not include any kind of bloodshed and so it shall be a good death. Christians today believe that death from old age does not involve much sin and is seen as a blessing from God as the person sleeps and goes to enjoy the life after as they await resurrection.

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[249]Ibid. p.9

[250]B. Lloyd, *Biblical Perspectives on Death* (USA: Fortress Press, 1979), p.51.

Secondly, a good death was when a person died at an old age; it is seen as an ultimate blessing. Long life is a contributing factor in a good death and it seems to be a central one, then mortality itself becomes acceptable by Christians.[251]

5.3 Old Testament Reaction to Death

Lloyd goes ahead to describe how people coped with death in the OT of the Bible. Since it was understood that God set bound of human life, He is seen as one who gives and takes away. The life of fore was not only his power at work but He who commands it to return. Some people even requested God to take their lives away [252]

First, death was not an irrational, intruding enemy but was part of an ordered, controlled harmonious creation. Life and death were bound together as part of a singular divine will for Gods creations[253.] Amongst the Israelites, the welfare of the group predominated over the individual. Secondly, that a person died did not mean an ultimate love since the group survives. They understood that their survival was not a mere human value but the will of God. He had chosen them, preserved them and promised them, and so their destiny had not yet been realized. [254]Thirdly, to the Israelites it was the faith of the ongoing life of God's people which provides a context for the realization of other values which make it possible to accept mortality with ease [255]

5.4 New Testament Reaction to Death

In the NT, death is seen as a blessing, persecution of the righteous and being put to suffering would be solved by death. Those who remained faithful to Yahwism faced pressure to conform to Hellenistic culture [256] in the NT, premature death and violent death was seen as a norm and yet seen as a sign of sin in the Old Testament. Death freed the faithful and righteous from suffering.

Secondly, death is an occasion to witness in faith that is through martyrdom, where one was willing to dies for their faith than to conform to other forms of worship. Thirdly,

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[251] Ibid., p 52.
[252] Ibid., p57.
[253] B. Lloyd, *Biblical Perspectives on Death* (New York: Fortress Press, 1979), p.57.
[254] Ibid., p58.
[255] Ibid., p59.
[256] Ibid., p78.

there was hope for resurrection in explicitly cited as awaiting the righteous who resist apostasy. It acted as a form of compensation.[257] Death is an ultimate threat only to those who are wicked and assume that death is the end of meaningful existence [258]

Apostle Paul in Romans refers to death as a curse which God pronounce following the disobedience in the Garden of Eden that it was not merely upon the human race but on the earth itself. This means that the entire world could be viewed as futile and that death is directed. To Paul death is a paradigm of all existence, the background of all patterns of possibility, demoralizing, challenging and negating all human vitality and sense of purpose [259] Death is a manifestation of power of sin related to the activity of the devil, which has infected the entire world and set it in opposition to the creators design on.[260]

5.5 Death in the Synoptic Gospel

According to D.J Campbell in his book *The Synoptic Gospel*, [261]talks about synoptic gospels as Mathew, Mark and Luke. They are referred as Synoptic Gospels because they look at objects from the same point of view. They offer historical account of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. The author goes further to give characteristics of the Synoptic Gospel as follows. Mark has an orderly arrangement and is divided into two sections; Galilean ministry and the journey to the cross. Secondly the aim of the author of the book tries to unfold the messianic secrets[262]. It also focuses on the Gentile Christians he writes for the Gentile Christians and mentions less of the Old Testament. Luke is written to give a full account of the faith to a high-ranking Gentile convert. The presentation of the life of Jesus is therefore designed to append to the Gentile readers.[263]

Secondly it stresses the importance of the Holy Spirit as a special possession of those closely connected with Jesus. Thirdly the interest focuses on both the poor and the despised. Jesus is born on a manger as a poor person[264]. The book of Luke also shows expression of joy in prayer, praise and thanks giving. The Gospels also talks about death

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[257] Ibid., p79.
[258] Ibid., p80.
[259] Ibid., p 88.
[260] Ibid., pp89.
[261] D.J Campbell, *The Synoptic Gospel* (London: John Murray publishers, 1969), p1.
[262] Ibid., pp5-6.
[263] Ibid., p8.
[264] Ibid., p. 9.

of people, Jesus raising the dead and Jesus himself dies and resurrects. In this gospels death is not seen as a major problem that faces human beings.

Mt 10; 28. The Gospels urge people to regard for God than for human coercive powers, even when life is threatened. Mt 10; 32, in which God makes it clear for man to always choose his ways over his life. Premature death, is not emphasized or neither is sin seen as a cause of death[265]

Luke, Jesus does not say it was because of sin that human beings suffered. In the Mark biblical accounts, Jesus begins to be distressed and troubled and wants to be spared of the ordeal that was before Him .He did not want to be left alone in the crucifixion and talks of God abandoning him. The research analyses two different Bible stories to figure out the effects of death in the synoptic gospels.

From the experience of the death of Lazarus, (Jn 11:30-44) his sisters Mary and Martha are portrayed in sorrow and pain. The community of the Jews has come to console with them. They were weeping too because of the loss of a member of their community. Mary tells Jesus that if he had been there e Lazarus wouldn't have died. This is a show of despair or hopelessness as it had turned out that nothing would have been done." Jesus also wept when he saw the pain of the Jews and the Lazarus sisters and He is compelled to go ahead and raise him from dead.

From the dead of Lazarus we learn some of the effects caused by dead.

i. Emotional pain-This is evident from the weeping of the Jews. Martha and Mary and also Jesus. They are drawn to cry because of the pain they felt.

ii. Loss-People are detached from their loved ones and it could lead to despair and refusal or inability to move on with life. It had been 4 days since the burial of Lazarus but all was at stand still. People still converged weeping and consoling each other. The thought of not seeing or interacting with Lazarus came with so much pain and loss. Lazarus being a man might have been the head of family now that is being mentioned about parents existing. Loss of provision and leadership in the house might be experienced.

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[265] Ibid., p. 92.

iii. It also causes suffering and loneliness. Mary and Martha had been left alone and were bound to start providing for themselves. It leads to hopelessness and a desire to have alternative to make sure that life continuous well

From the situation of the widow in Nain,(Lk 7:11-17) so much hurt and devastation of having lost her whole family was evident as when they met with Jesus, He was filled with so much compassion, that He would not have left her crying her herself. Jesus empathizes with her and saves her the trouble of later being rejected by the community. Having lost both husband and son, the perspective people would have of her would be that of a person who has bad omen. Had she been in an African community, maybe she would have been made to pass through a couple of rituals before being left to associate with the rest of the community. This would have been torturing an already broken heart. The widowed woman would have been lonely, rejected and maybe banished had Jesus not saved her from death with had snatched her family. Death therefore is depicted as a loss and those affected go through pain and suffering.

5.6 Intermediate States of Death

According to Christian interpretation (which is also shared by the Kipsigis people) when a person dies physically, it does not imply that they have permanently died but rather they have only transformed from one state of being to another (Heb 9:27) The difference is that the Kipsigis believed that a dead person would remain as a spirit until reincarnation, while Christianity stress on life after death.

At one point, every human being will be resurrected from the dead and will be judged according to how they lived and their relationship with Jesus Christ. In(Jn 5:28-29), Jesus stated that "the hour is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and will come out – those who have done, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to resurrection of condemnation." Every person who ever lived will come back to life at the resurrection, be judged, and be reunited "to be with the Lord forever"[266] or to be eternally "separated from the presence of the Lord",(2 Thess 1:9) and this will depend on whether a person has a righteous standing with God and is spiritually alive or dead. This is considered a final state of being in which every person

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[266]1 Thess 4:17.

will spend their eternity. Each person's condition will be determined at the end of the world when God will subject everyone to judgement based on righteousness through Jesus Christ. The repayment will be done in accordance to "each one's deeds". (Rom 2:6)

However, before the time of resurrection of all people and the determination of their eternal state through judgment, existence is often said to be in a state of being that is commonly referred to as the "intermediate state". From biblical texts, it is not easy to correctly define what will constitute this state.[267] The bible also reveals about the intermediate state and leaves a lot of questions unanswered. In this sense, the study of the future can be said to remain through God's wisdom,[268] according to the words of *Oden*. In the scripture, even Apostle John is documented to that "what will be has not yet been revealed". (1 Jn 3:2)

The bible however provides a number of indications in relation to the intermediate state that need to be mentioned. From a number of passages, there is a strong indication that human are not annihilated following death but continue to exist in a pleased place that is referred to as paradise or unpleasant place, referred to as Hades. The two places are seen to differ from what has traditionally been referred to as heaven and hell.

In this sense, Hades can be understood as the place of the dead, where the unrighteous people are tormented before resurrection of all people. In second Peter, it is stated that "the Lord knows how to keep the unrighteous under punishment until the day of judgement". (2 Pt 2:9) This indicates that, even before the final judgment of all people, there is an unpleasant place where the ungodly people are kept. This place is clearly defined in Revelation 20:13 which states, "Death and Hades gave up the dead that in them, and all were judged according to what they had done." (Rev 20:13).

After the final judgment that will occur at the end of time, the unrighteous people, along with death and Hades will be thrown in the lake of fire. It establishes a distinction

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[267]A. A Hoekema, *The Bible and the Future, paperback ed*. (Grand Rapids: William B Berdmans Publishing Company, 1994), p94.
[268] T. C. Oden, *Life in the Spirit, Systematic Theology*: Vol 3, (New York: Happer Collins, 1994; Peabody: Prince Press, 2001), p 373.

between Hades and the "lake of fire" as places that are separate. In the parable of (Lk 16:19-31) Jesus describes Hades as a place of torment. In verse 31, it is clearly understood that the setting up of this parable is before the dead are resurrected.

5.7 Chapter's Concluding Remarks

The chapter has introduced who a Christian is and looked at some of their perspectives of death and yonder life. The judgement and expectation of believers after their death was explained too. Then some of the causes of death according to Christians were highlighted borrowing from the Biblical aspects and understanding. It has also discussed effects of death and types of death from the Bible. The chapter has pointed out a few instances in the Bible of death and the reaction of those affected by it. The chapter acts as a springboard to the next chapter which gives the summary, implications of the study, recommendations drawn from the work and conclusion.

CHAPTER SIX
SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

After an in-depth study and research as discussed from the previous chapters on the causes, impact of parents death, African and theological understanding of death and yonder life. The study came up with the summary, implication and recommendation on the challenges that orphans go through in their day to day life.

6.2 Summary

The study examined the impact of parents' death on orphans in the light of African and Christian perception of death and yonder life in Litein town, Kericho County. It looked at in-depth the challenges that are faced by the orphans as they try to live on and adjust to the new life after the death of their parents. The study also sought to find possible solutions to the challenges the orphans go through.

The main goal of the study was to examine the impact of parents' death on orphans in the light of African and Christian perception of death and yonder life. To investigate the causes of parents' death; To explore the impact of parents' death on orphans in view of contributing the way forward, To discuss African understanding of death and yonder life and To examine selected theologians' reflections and Christian instructions on death and yonder life with reference to our subject.

The main hypothesis of the study was that properly examined in light of African and Christian perception of death and yonder life, parents' death has an impact on the lives of the orphans. Various factors have contributed to the death of parents in Litein town, Kericho County. The death of parents in Litein town, Kericho County has positive and negative impact on the orphans that need to be investigated. Properly elaborated, African understanding of death and yonder life is necessary for our subject. There are important Church's teachings and theologians' reflections on death and yonder life. The study established that death of parents not only affected the child but it affected the community and the economy. From the impact it could either be immediate or long

term effects. The immediate impact included; disappointment, regret and self-blame, loneliness, frustration and hopelessness as discussed in the previous chapters. The long term effects were lack of a family system, financial dependency, psychological trauma, pain and hurt and lastly discrimination. From the research this effects were seen to have both negative and positive displays. Positive impact has been discussed too; orphans who came from disturbed families felt it better to have lost the parents.

From the Kipsigis understanding of death, types of death were also evident from the study. Death in the Kipsigis community was either good or bad. A good death is one that occurred from natural phenomena like old age, wars as one died as a hero and was celebrated. A bad death was one that was caused by things like curses, disobedience of ancestors or breaking of taboos. A bad death was accompanied by various cleansing rituals to ensure that it did not cause more harm to the future generations. A good death was celebrated and even feasting, dancing and singing were done by members of the family and community in general. Research established the rituals that accompany death and the research discussed some of the rituals. Death was not the end of life and was a rite of passage which was an important stage. Rites of passage are seen to play major roles in the community.

Christian theological understanding of death is explored on the causes of death. From the biblical understanding, the book of Genesis explains on the fall of man and the curses that man received from it. This theological understanding also explores the spiritual and physical death. From the Christian understanding of death it was important to be in harmony with the God because disobedience would lead to punishment. This was seen from the creation story in Genesis where the first man and woman created disobeyed God and ate from the middle tree in the garden which was the tree of knowledge and so led to their being thrown out of the garden and losing the privileges that man had and so the beginning of death, pain and suffering of mankind. Spiritual death came with a privilege or pain, which is entry to heaven or hell. It depended on the acceptance of Christ as the Savior. From the study therefore we can draw the implications of our study.

6.3 Implications of the Study.

Drawing from the study's findings and the analysis done so far, the following implications are made. It is discussed in two main areas as follows; Pastoral implications and Catechetical implications.

6.3.1 Catechetical Implications

Death comes unannounced and most times find people unprepared. It leaves family members confused and devastated. Having this in mind Church members should be taught on the effects of death on those left behind and maybe what to expect in the afterlife. Since Christians believe in the second coming of Christ and resurrection, they then need to be prepared on how to wait for that coming. The Church has to take up the role of educating its members on the need to prepare and be responsible while still alive. These preparations sets pace for those who are left behind, mostly children who are always caught in the middle of their parents irresponsibility ,especially those who drink or misuse the family resources in ways that do not go hand in hand with God. They end up wasting resources at the expense of their children. It would then mean the Church has to be mobilized on the importance of responsible parenthood. Teaching Christians on death and how to prepare helps them not to waste resources, which would be of great help to their children in future. Teaching them responsibility and accountability, help Christian to look at the importance of saving and investing so that they avoid the suffering of their kin. Such teachings go a long way in improving the lives of the Church members and their children.

 They can also be taught on how to save up for their children by setting aside, resources for them to use in the future while parents are no longer alive. It is important to accept that death is inevitable and that all Christians need to develop a personal relationship with Christ, so that people become at home with Him. Impending judgment basing on the kind of life Christians live on earth is an important observation they need look into. Try following a Christ like example so that when the time comes they are at home with Christ.

Christians in Church need to be made to understand the challenges orphans go through as part of their training. As the Church leadership take up responsibility of educating its members. For better illustrations they have to focus more on the problems faced by

orphans in the country. With this therefore, it would mean that the Church has to employ different ways of teaching so as to reach the congregation well. This could mean that they have to come up with seminars to educate them, or also incorporate it to their Sunday worship. When they are all in Church and can listen. It can also drive the Church to publishing educative journals which deal with the same issues. Or even writing books that are meant to talk about and address the challenges faced by the orphans in the Church. It will therefore mean that the Church must have enough resources to be utilized.

Not only orphans should be guided and counseled on the effects of death but the Church should try as much to incorporate all members of the Church in. This helps to build on their emotional confidence before they can face the real effects. Growing up prepared and knowing what to expect makes it easier for the members to cope with the new phase of life and the challenges they would face. It's necessary therefore for the Church to put in consideration employing of psychologist. The budgetary plan on allocation of funds that shall be used to train the pastors on how to deal with such occurrences in the Church are needed funds to be set aside to employ new people to work in the same position.

6.3.2 Pastoral Implications

Pastors or Church leaders enter into the African culture and become at home with the local people, their customs and tradition. Personal relationship and friendships people become at home with each other and with others makes us understand and share in the pain of other people. When the community is at peace with each other, then people can comfortably share in their troubles and new challenges they encounter. Church leaders need to be able to identify with the troubles that the people in the community face. Especially when they have vulnerable children, they need to be able to meet their needs. Leaders need to set up a kitty in the Church for the needy hence the Church members would have to be mobilized so that they can contribute on certain period or system, whether monthly or after two months or generally a period of time agreed to by the members. This would mean an extra effort in trying to make the people understand the importance of helping and sharing. And also being accountable for the money collected by the Church leadership.

Plan for budgetary allocation for counselors in the Church to help the orphans in overcoming their loss and being able to live on. The Church has to employ a psychologist to deal with trauma that children go through after losing their parents so that the can be able to have a positive perspective even after loss. Such kinds of counseling sessions would help improve the perspective of the orphans and help them to live on with their lives. Positivity will be the driving force of such children as they are sure they have people left behind to support them.

6.4 Recommendation from the Study

From the findings of the study, the following recommendations were given to the schools, Churches and government on how to help the orphans cope with the challenges they faced in their day to day life. These recommendations are expected to give a long term solution to the problems rather than address partially the problems experienced by the orphans. A good number of government projects have been put in place to help solve some of the challenges faced by the orphans. For example AMPATH OVC programs, USaid/KEA and AMURT just to mention a few. These organizations, both governmental and non-governmental, have played so much role to try empower the orphans and vulnerable children. They have established home based cares to ensure the wellbeing of the orphans in Kenya. Systems have been set up to ensure that the children access education, shelter and clothing which are the basics needs. The study found out that regardless of this effort being made by the government to cater for the orphans, it found it important to highlight the following recommendations;

Income Generating Projects and Investments

An income generating investment or project is a plan that raises money for maintenance or for use to the orphans. It's important for the government to set up of income generating project for the orphans from each and every community. This is to ensure that those vulnerable children in the community still meet their basic needs without overly being dependent on others. Orphans interviewed said they had been forced to compromise on their morality since they could not get money enough to cater for their needs and those of their siblings. If the government would start up projects that gave them a daily bread on their tables, then they would be better placed. In as much as the government give them bursaries, they are not given much privileges and so end up treated like other children with parents. A good solution therefore is giving them, or

starting for them an income generating project. This income generating projects could be run by organizations that must have an up to date database of the orphans in various places in the country. The organization can in turn tap the potential in the orphans and train them in other ways to earn a living but then has to be, projects that do not interfere with the education of the orphan. They can be allowed in until they are capable to fend for themselves and for the siblings. Before they can earn own living, they can be given full privileges but ones able, a few of the privileges can be taken away until all are withdrawn when they are fully capable.

Orphan Kitty in the Church

The Church acted as a second home for a good of number of orphans, interviewed they felt so much at home when in Church. Especially, if their parents, or the guardian was serving with that congregation. They felt that they could easily confide in the Church leadership for help whenever they were in trouble. It means an orphan would rather go to the Church leader when they lacked the basic needs than go to their relatives since they felt they became a burden to them. With this in mind therefore, the Church would be expected to help them.

A good number of Churches from the research had fund drives for orphans, once in a while, especially when they were about to go back to school. The drives would then cater for a few requirements by the orphans on the day the return to school. It meant that the Church would exhaust all the money on that period the school is opened. In case the vulnerable kids are sent home for lack of school fees then they have to look elsewhere, from begging or willing relatives. If they had to go back to the Church, then another *harambee* or mini *harambee* had to be held to help them.

Direct Channel of Finances in Budgetary Allocation

The study also recommends that the government should have a direct channel of funds to the orphans. Not just budgeting for the orphans and never following up to confirm if they have received the money or if the money benefits them. The government should maybe disburse funds to schools direct to cater for the school fees and other school needs for the orphans. If the government comes up with school finds that are channeled directly, then it would solve the issue of school fees payment. The government should not only empower groups and organizations that deal with the vulnerable children, but

should try to have at least a direct channel to orphans meaning that a program that automatically gets updated on the progress of the students should be developed to ensure that, in case of an increase in the school fees required it can then be reflected. With the increase in corruption in the country, a good and manageable system need to be developed to ensure that each orphan has their needs addressed. The program should be run from the wards or sub county levels. This will ensure that even those orphans in the interior   areas have been reached to. This will enable them to acquire education comfortably, and be able to later fend for themselves.

School Administration to come up with Systems that Cater for Orphans

Another recommendation is for the schools to start up a good system that caters for all the needs of the orphans. A good number of the orphans said that the school, offered scholarships. It catered for only the school fees and most times they have to again struggle to get the basic needs. If the school is day, then they have to find a place for them to stay near the school. These scholarships come with conditions, which could be unfavorable for the child. Some conditions include following the school rules and being in correct uniform which they may not be able to afford. Moreover, maintaining high performance was a requirement, yet they cannot get enough time to study on extra hours since they are forced to find something to earn them money. This means that the free times they get are all wasted looking for money or else they end up sleeping hungry. With such demands they end up giving up on education and suspending it to some other times. If the school would come up with a system where they try catering for the orphans in totality, that is providing them with food and uniforms, it would make it easier for them to perform better in schools. They would be better placed on what they do. The school should therefore consider coming up with a favorable system for the orphans.

Programmed Guidance and Counseling Sessions

Depression, loneliness, self-blame and denial were the common effects of death for a good number of orphans. When going through such challenges, they did not find anybody to try and fit into their shoes or empathize with them and so became so much troubled. They grew in bitterness for lack of people to listen to them. Death is not a new phenomenon, and every day in Kenya there are a good number of people who die and leave children parentless. If there were established centers where children who have

117

lost their parents would receive full time counseling then much of the depression and hopelessness would be solved. Losing hope in life and giving up on life, and seeing no need to further live on can lead to one being suicidal. And yet if the Church, school or government would set up programmes to solve the emotional troubles of the orphans it would have been better.

Guidance and counseling enables the orphans to help them in emotional growth and development. It is necessary for the stability of a child so as to be able to make judgments which are helpful. These sessions will help to erase any doubt of life after being left alone. Secondly, to be able to make proper choices in life, orphans get a new phase of life, where they have to depend on themselves for the needs. They are left with responsibility and they may not be able to cope with being alone and providing own basics. Guidance and counseling sessions help the child to learn to adapt to the new responsibilities and be able to stand on their own. Continuous sessions will improve the attitude of such children. Thirdly, guidance helps them to face and tackle new challenges and changes in their lives. Changes occur immediately after their parents leave and therefore, they have to learn to adopt to such new changes and be able to deal with the new challenges like, seeing other children being visited in school by their parents while themselves they don't have any to visit them. If they were used to privileges and luxuries then they have to start living without some of the things they were used to. This can only be achieved through guidance and counseling sessions. Lastly, guidance enables them to establish new identity and to reduce their chances of getting indiscipline.

6.5 Recommendation for Further Research

1) After the parents die, close relatives are left with the responsibility to care for the children left. Due to life challenges they decide to either give them out to the foster homes and children's home or support. There is need therefore to research on treatment of orphans in children homes and their welfare in general.

2) From the research, it was established that from challenges like frustration, self-blame and trauma. A child may take so long to fit back in the community and feel wanted once more. They try to identify themselves, and this may affect their performance in school, depending on how they cope with their challenges. With

this need to research on a comparison of orphan and vulnerable children performances in schools and that of children with both parents.

3) Communal living, sharing and cooperation were an important aspect of the African society. Land, children and property was owned communally. The whole clan took responsibility of the properties and each person worked to ensure that the community was prospering. Children were punished and corrected by members of the community. This kind of communality led so much to harmonious co-existence amongst the people in the community. Further research should be done on the importance of communality amongst the African communities in ensuring a good living and the welfare of people in the society.

4) Extended family in the tradition African society played an important role in ensuring the wellbeing of orphans. Colonialist came and influenced the family structure and led to a selfish kind of living, where each person wanted their nuclear family to succeed. From this individualism took root. It's important to look at Individualism as a current way of living amongst the African societies and its effects especially on the social and economic effects on the family.

5) Orphans should accept their situation and that God is the giver and taker of life. Those being hopeless are losing faith in God and His providence. As discussed by Wachege in his book, hopelessness is a sin he refers to as the sin of despair. Orphans should therefore take their burden to Christ instead of blaming themselves each time. With this further research can be done on how orphans can be guided through from the sin of despair ,regret and self-blame and find out how they can be helped to overcome it faster after the death of their parents.

6) Discrimination was one of the challenges that the orphans go through. They experience discrimination in schools especially those who lived in children's home. It would be necessary to research on the causes of this kind of discrimination and the steps that can be taken to ensure they live a better life with no discrimination.

7) Teacher and the school administration have an important role to play especially in forming kitty, to help the orphaned and needy students in the school. At times bright students have been bereaved and cannot afford to continue with their education. It's the duty of the school to help the child and maintain their bright student. They could do this by either finding scholarship opportunities or by kitty support. Need to look at the role of teachers and school administration in caring for the welfare of the orphans.

8) Urbanisation, looking for greener pastures in urban areas and modernization has led to families living far apart. Children are born in towns and are not taken to rural areas to meet and interact with the family back in rural areas. They grow knowing that they have uncles, aunts and cousins but they really do not give much interest in meeting them. This makes the extended family not so important to them. Grandparents in the traditional society played an important role in educating the children on different roles, but the contemporary life they no longer need such education as they see it as backward. Further research is then needed to find out what role of the extended family in the contemporary society and in modern families.

6.6 General Conclusion

The previous chapters discussed the causes and impact of parents death, African and theological understanding of death and yonder life. The present chapter summarized the study, its implications and recommendations. By way of conclusion, the following is reiterated:

Chapter One introduced the study by exploring its background, statement of the research problem, goal and objectives of the study, justification for the study, scope and limitations, literature review, theoretical framework, research hypotheses and methodology.

We then had Chapter Two which introduced some of the causes of death in the Kipsigis community. It has also focused on some of the reasons that lead to death; which includes the breaking of taboos, old age, diseases, and curses in the community. From

these causes of death, categories of orphans arose, and they were due to aforementioned reasons they became orphans.

Chapter Three looked at both the positive and negative impacts of death of parents, this included short term and long term effects which are financial dependency, self-blame, discrimination, and disappointment among others. First it explored on what family is, structure of the family, types of family, role of family, then the negative impacts of death and finally the positive impacts. The chapter noted that each family member depends on the other for a successful living and harmonious carrying out of activities. Chapter Four looked at the understanding of death amongst the Kipsigis community pointing out that a society has a totality that makes it up. It explored the rites of passage amongst the Kipsigis people exploring the other stages of life which makes a person in a Kipsigis community. The chapter also looked at conception and birth which is the beginning of life, initiation, marriage and finally death also examining the rituals accompanying the rites of passage. It furthermore explored the understanding of death among the Kipsigis looking at the rites of passage that take place in the Kipsigis community because one cannot handle the ritual of death and leave out the other rituals of birth, naming, initiation and marriage that an individual undergoes in the society. Additionally, the chapter discussed the Kipsigis proverbs that are associated with death and the relevant theologians' reflections and Christian instructions on death and life hereafter with reference to the study.

We then had Chapter five which introduced who a Christian is and looked at some of their perspectives of death and yonder life. The judgement and expectation of believers after their death was explained too imbued with theologians' reflections. Then some of the causes of death according to Christians were highlighted borrowing from the Biblical aspects and understanding. It also discussed effects of death and types of death from the Bible. The chapter pointed out a few instances in the Bible of death and the reaction of those affected by it. The chapter acted also as a springboard to the current one which has given the summary, implications of the study, recommendations drawn from the work and conclusion.

It is hoped that the aforementioned suggestions and the study as a whole will go a long way in helping the orphans address the challenges they encounter at their diverse ages

of bereavement. From the African perspective, they are expected to perceive death as having a causative agent even when it was from a natural cause. The community therefore attributed every death to some cause which was further verified through religious specialists such as mediums and diviners. One will be wiser to know that death is both a curse and a blessing depending on the causes. As spelt out, in the work, the experiences of a person during their death has a great influence on the deceased. The study's findings reveal that some effects are positive whereas others are negative. The community and the Church are tasked with responsibilities of caring for the needy as they strive to fulfil the will of God. Emotional stability of a growing child, result to better and successful future. Orphans lack such stability and hence vulnerable and might not fully exploit their potential. The study strongly recommends emotional stability be worked on by the community among the aforementioned.

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APPENDIX 1

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8th March, 2017

Judith Cheptoo Bii
University of Nairobi
P.O. Box 30197-00100
NAIROBI.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on *"Impact of parents` death on orphans in the light of African and Christian perception of death and yonder life: A case of Litein town, Kericho County,"* I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Kericho County** for the period ending **7th March, 2018.**

You are advised to report to **the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Kericho County** before embarking on the research project.

On completion of the research, you are expected to submit **two hard copies and one soft copy in pdf** of the research report/thesis to our office.

DR. STEPHEN K. KIBIRU, PhD.
FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO

Copy to:

The County Commissioner
Kericho County.

The County Director of Education
Kericho County.

National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation is ISO 9001:2008 Certified

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

I am a Masters student registered in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies-University of Nairobi. As part of requirements for award of the degree, I am conducting a research on the topic ''Impact of parents' death on orphans in the light of African and Christian perception of death and yonder life: a case of Litein town, Kericho county.''The questionnaire attached herewith is meant to gather information for this Study from you.

Kindly respond to the items in the questionnaire. Please do not indicate your name anywhere in the questionnaire. The information provided will be solely used for the Study and will be treated with utmost confidentiality. You are requested to tick the spaces [ ] for appropriate alternative or just fill in the spaces provided and give your opinion where

APPENDIX 3

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ORPHANS

1. Please tell me, what caused the death of your parent(s)

   Sickness   [   ]

   Accident   [   ]

   Crime/Murder [   ]

   Alcoholism   [   ]

   War   [   ]

   Suicide   [   ]

   Violence   [   ]

   Fire   [   ]

   Birth related complications

   ……………………………………………………………………………………………

   ……………………………………………………………………………………………

   Others

   ……………………………………………………………………………………………

   ……………………………………………………………………………………………

2. How old were you when you were orphaned?

   Below 5 [   ]

   5-10   [   ]

   11-14   [   ]

   15-17   [   ]

3. Where do you live and with whom? What is your reason for choosing to stay there?

   Where?..

   Why?

   ……………………………………………………………………………………………

   ……………………………………………………………………………………………

   4. Who provides for your needs?

a) Sponsor   [   ]

b) Guardians   [   ]

c) Church   [   ]

d) Orphanage management   [   ]

e) If any other mention…………………………………………………………

4. How did you react out your parents' death?

………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………

5. How did your close relatives react?

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

7. What changes occurred after your parent(s) died?

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

8. How did the Church assist you at the time of your loss?

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………

9. How has the society helped you since the time of you lost your parent(s)?

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

9. How did you cope with the changes that occurred after you lost your parent(s)?

………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

10. What challenges did you face after the death of your parents?

a. Social challenges

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

……

b. Economic challenges

………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………

c. Academic challenges

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………

d. Other challenges

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

12. How have you been addressing some of these challenges as an individual?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

13. How has the Church responded to any of the challenges you face?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

14. Are you comfortable and satisfied with the treatment you receive from your relatives and others who support you in the community? Whoever provides for you?

Yes   [   ]

No   [   ]

15. Give reason for your response above

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

16. Do you get any harassment from schoolmates or people in the society?

Yes   [   ]

No   [   ]

17. How do you relate with them?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

18. What programmes (if any) has your Church or communities developed to assist orphans address their   needs?

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

19. In your opinion, should orphans be adopted by people who are not relatives yes/no?

Yes   [   ]

No   [   ]

20. Give reason for your answer

……………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………….

21. What do you suggest to the Church and community so as to assist the orphans?

a) Church

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

b) Community

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………

22. What challenges do orphans go through in your Church and community?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………….

23. What would you recommend the government to do to improve the lives of orphans?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………….

APPENDIX 4

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH

1. Please indicate your gender

   Female [   ]

   Male   [   ]

2. What is your occupation /profession

   …………………………………………………………………………………

   ……………………………………………………………….

3. For how long have you worshipped in this Church?

   ....

   ....

4. Are there orphans as members of your Church?

   Yes   [   ]

   No   [   ]

    IF Yes how many

   …………………………………………………………………………………

   …………………………………………………………………………………

   ……………….

5. How do you relate with them as a member of this Church

   …………………………………………………………………………………

   …………………………………………………………………………………

   …………………………

6. How do members of your Church help orphans to address their challenges?

   …………………………………………………………………………………

   …………………………………………………………………………………

   …………………………

7. What programmes does your Church have to assist orphans in addressing their challenges?

   …………………………………………………………………………………

   …………………………………………………………………………………

   ………………

8. Do these programs benefit them? Yes/no

Yes   [   ]

No   [   ]

9. Give reason for your response above

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

………………

10. In your opinion, does the Church do its best to ensure that orphans live a better life? Yes/no

Yes   [   ]

No   [   ]

11. Give reasons for your answer

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

………………

12. What would you recommend the Church and community to do to help the orphans have a better life?

a) Church

……………………………………………………………………………………………

…………

b) Community

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

………………

APPENDIX 5

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PASTORS AND LEADERS

1) Please indicate your gender

   Female   [   ]

   Male   [   ]

2) How old are you? ....

   40-49 [   ]

   50 and Above [   ]

3) How long have you served in this Church?

   ....

   ......

4) Do you have orphans in your Church?

   Yes   [   ]

    No   [   ]

   If yes how many are they?

   ………………………………………………………………………………

   ………………………………………………………………….

5) Has the Church set up any programs to assist the orphans?

   Yes   [   ]

    No   [   ]

6) Give reasons for your answer above

   …………………………………………………………………………………………

   …………………………………………………………………………………………

7) Are the programs you have benefiting the orphans in your Church?

   Yes   [   ]

   No   [   ]

8) If yes, how do you ensure that the programs you have are beneficial and effective?

   ………………………………………………………………………………

   ………………………………………………………………………………

9) Have you encountered any challenges in the implementation of programs to assist orphans? (Explain)

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

10) Do you know of any challenges orphans encounter?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

11) How have you helped them solve some of the challenges you have indicated above?

Yes [   ]

No [   ]

12) How do you help the orphans in your Church solve some of the challenges they face?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

13) What responsibilities do you give the in the Church?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

14) Do they meet your expectations in those responsibilities?

Yes [   ]

No [   ]

15) Give reason for your answer above

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

16) What would you recommend to the Church and community to help improve the lives of orphans?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

17) What recommendation would you give the government on how to assist the orphans in your Church and community?

……………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………

APPENDIX 6

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

1) Please indicate your gender

   Male

   Female

2) How old are you? ....

3) How long have you served in this school?

   ....

   ....

4) What position of leadership do you hold in the school?

   …………………………………………………………………………………

   …………………………………………………………………………………

5) Do you have orphans in your school?

   Yes   [   ]

   No   [   ]

    If yes, how many are they? ....

6) Do you have any programs set up to help the orphans?

    Yes [   ]

   No   [   ]

7) If Yes Name them are the programs you have benefiting the orphans in your

   school?

   Yes   [   ]

   No   [   ]

8) If no, how do you ensure that the programs you have are beneficial and

   effective?

   …………………………………………………………………………………

   …………………………………………………………………………………

9) What challenges have you encountered while trying to implement some of the

   programs on orphans?

   ………………………………………………………………………………

   ………………………………………………………………………………

10) Do you know of any challenges they face?

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

11) How have you tried to solve some of the challenges you have indicated above?

    …………………………………………………………………………………………

    …………………………………………………………………………………………

12) What responsibilities do you give them in the school?

    …………………………………………………………………………………………

    …………………………………………………………………………………………

13) Do they meet your expectations in those responsibilities?

    Yes   [   ]

    No   [   ]

14) Give reason for your answer above

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

15) Have you encountered any cases where they tend to be bullied?

Yes [   ]

No   [   ]

16) How do you address such cases of harassments and bulling amongst the students

……………………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………………

17) What would you recommend to the school and community to help improve the lives of orphans?

    …………………………………………………………………………………………

    …………………………………………………………………………………………

18) What recommendation would you give the government on how to help the orphans in your school and community?

    …………………………………………………………………………………………

    …………………………………………………………………………………………

KIPSIGIS PROVERBS

Mame sigiriet buch -There has to a reason behind a person's death.

Mame chii buch- There has to a reason behind a person's death.

Melektab cholwok ko met-Wages of sin is death.

Makitomjin bei tulwo

Monome ngwonet olemomi korotik- Nothing bad happens to good people

Motinye kapkiruog chaman

Wekse uruon bo get-it will always come back

Mokiyumen sasor ye moen iyep

Kergei kipset ak kiptep-Death is inevitable

Tupcho meet ak rorion-Death and laughter are related, they are inevitable

Kiminten ngwonydut ne monenyon ak kimi kebendi gaa

Ya yosin ne kibar kipkwonyo-Death is inevitable whatever the age, situation or position

Kerkei kwendet ne mi ma ak nemi busa-People should not rejoice o others misfortunes for they may never know the future

APPENDIX 8

EXAMPLES OF KIPSIGIS CLANS AND THEIR TOTEMS

Clan (Oret)	Totem (Tiondo)
Kip-Sirgoik	Warthog (Toret)
Motoborik	Hyena (Kimagetiet)
Boek	Elephant (Belyot)
Boguserek	Buffalo
Kap-Bargesaek	Red Ants (Birechik)
Kap-Chepalungu	Lion (Ng'etundo)
Kap-Cheptalamek	Stork (Cheptalamiat)

Kipsigis Age Set Chart-Note
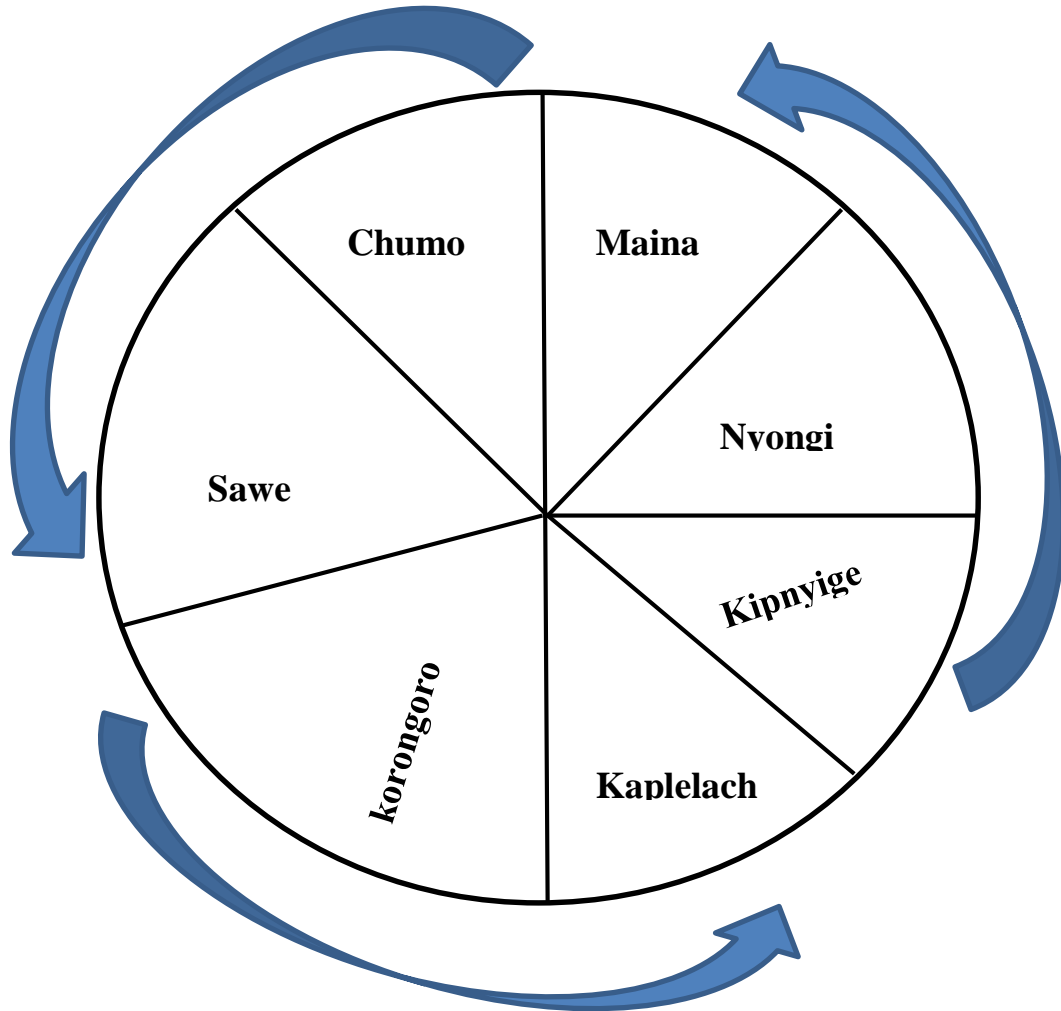
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NAME: BII, JUDITH CHEPTOO ADM. NUMBER C50/77346/2015 IMPACT OF PARENTS' DEATH ON ORPHANS IN THE LIGHT OF AFRICAN AND CHRISTIAN PERCEPTION OF DEATH AND YONDER LIFE: A CASE OF LITEIN TOWN, KERICHO COUNTY CHAPTER ONE BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY 1.1 Introduction The setting chapter introduces the study by exploring its background, statement of the research problem, goal and objectives of the study, justification for the study, scope and limitations, literature review, theoretical framework, research hypotheses and methodology. 1.2 Background to the Study Human life is greatly valued both in the African and Christian societies. Africans did and still do anything they can to ensure wellbeing of the members of the community. Vitality is seen as a gift from the Supreme Being. That is why life is highly sacred and guarded from conception to death and even to the yonder life. Mbiti in his book, Introduction to African Religion,1 discusses life amongst the African community, which include the kipsigis as highly valued. When a woman conceived her news of conception was received with joy and much expectation. She was respected and great care was given to her. Life began at conception. This was evident with the high care for the pregnant woman.2 The life of unborn child was cared for, there were rules observed by a pregnant woman. This included, the woman not handling sharp objects, because it was seen as putting the life of a child at risk. The pregnant woman would wear protective charm, to keep off evil eyes that would cause harm to the unborn. They were also not to do hard task, this was to ensure that the unborn child was not affected. The woman ate special food "mursik" mixed with blood (amongst the kipsigis). It was seen to be healthy for the growth of the baby. All this practices showed that life was greatly valued and respected. Any person who caused anything to endanger life was punished. Everybody worked to ensure that life was well preserved. At birth, the whole community came together to celebrate the birth of the child and give gifts. Generally the five main elements in the African worldview3, namely; vitality, sacrality, dynamism, communality and anthropocentrism are centred on life. Among the Kipsigis in 1 1. S Mbiti, Introduction to African Religion, 2nd edition (East Africa Educational Publishers, 1991), p 87. 2 Ibid., p. 88. 3 C. Nyamiti, Studies in African Christian Theology, VOL 1, Jesus Christ, the ancestor of Humankind: Methodological and Trinitarian foundation, (Nairobi: CUEA, 2005), pp.55-74. particular, life began at the conception of a child and continued even after death. It was evident by the cultural and religious practices that were performed at death to ensure peaceful transition of the dead into the yonder life (ancestral realm). Ancestors were highly respected and venerated since they were considered part of the community and most importantly because they played an important role of mediating between the living and the Supreme Being due to their proximity to Assis.4 In the case of the death of parents, the extended family and the community participated in the upbringing of the children. This is why the term orphans in its strict sense did not exist in the traditional Kipsigis community. In the contemporary Kipsigis society, orphans of whatever age, that is, young ones or those advanced in age, are well pronounced and can be easily identified in comparison to the traditional Kipsigis society. The situation worries and provokes such disturbing questions as: What does the death of one's parents mean in the contemporary Kipsigis society? Has the Kipsigis communal way of living been distorted? Inheritance in the traditional society was more defined as the sons were given to share what was left by the parents. The issue in the contemporary society is that people struggle to take up the larger share. What happens when those children left behind are too young and did not know what steps to take? Relatives especially brothers of the father, that is the uncles claim ownership of the property. This denies the children a chance to get what rightfully belongs to them when they grow up. This has led to questions like, has the contemporary society become so materialistic and led to family tie or kinship ties breaking down? And what then do orphans solve such kinds of changes in the society to ensure that they fit in? In the Christian perspective, life is a gift from God. God Himself breathed life to man (both male and female) as is recorded in Genesis 1 and 2. He confirms the fullness of life by sending His only son Jesus Christ who came to give life in abundance (Jn. 10:10). Furthermore, God is seen as the one who gives and takes life. Death is thus viewed as the Will of God. At the death of parents therefore, the Community of God is called upon to care for the orphans. She is to "Give justice to the weak and the fatherless, maintain the right of the afflicted and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked." (Ps 82:3-4) 4 B.C. Fish and G.W. Fish, The Kalenjin Heritage, Traditional Religious and Social Practices (Kenya: African Gospel Church, 1986), p. 136. The situation in the contemporary society especially in Litein town, Kericho County however, has it differently. The Church seems to neglect the orphans. Does it mean that the above Christian teachings have lost meaning? How is the image of the Church as the Community of God reflected among the Christians? Does it in influence Christians' day-to-day living? How does the Church today address the challenges confronting the orphans? Such among other issues form crucial background to the Study. Scholars have looked into related areas like Wachege has written a monograph on, Living to Die, Dying to Live: African Christian Insights. 5 Kayeli did a research on, The role and meaning of Birth, Naming, Initiation, Marriage and Death rituals among the Logoli of Western Kenya in view of inculturating related sacraments in Roman Catholic Church. 6 Rop, did a research on Kipsigis worldview items towards understanding the Catholic doctrine of salvation through Inculturation Approach.7 Also a research was done by Kakulu on, Challenges facing orphans and vulnerable children in accessing free primary education in Kenya, A case of Embakasi division in Nairobi.8 1.3 Statement of the Research Problem Death is an indispensable stage of life both in Christianity and among the Africans. Generally, the Africans valued life especially human life and the community participated in preserving and protecting life. When the parents died therefore, the orphans were taken care of by the extended family and the community at large. These among other values are common in African communities. For practical purposes however, and due to the limitations imposed in our work, the study focuses on one African community namely: the Kipsigis particularly in Litein town, Kericho County for an in-depth research. 5 P. N Wachege, Living to die dying to live, African Christian Insights, (Nairobi: Signal Press Ltd, 2002). 6 E. Chamwama, The role and meaning of Birth, Naming, Initiation, Marriage and Death rituals among the Logoli of Western Kenya in view of inculturating related sacraments in Roman Catholic Church (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Nairobi, 2012). 7 N. Rop, Investigation of Kipsigis worldview items towards understanding the Catholic doctrine of salvation through Inculturation Approach; A case of Kericho Sub-county (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University 0f Nairobi, 2015). 8 S. W, Kakulu, Challenges facing orphans and vulnerable children in accessing free primary education in Kenya, A case of Embakasi division in Nairobi (Unpublished M.A Thesis, University of Nairobi, 2008). In the event of parents' death, children are left as orphans in a devastating state with some not knowing who and where to turn to for help. Contrary to the traditional Kipsigis society which insisted on communality that ensured the well-being of the orphans, the contemporary Kipsigis society seems to neglect the orphans. The society seems to curtail their growth and development by denying them love and moral support necessary for the actualization of their potentialities. The death of one's parents comes with its known and unknown challenges. Some of these challenges are positive while others are negative with some orphans being overwhelmed while trying to cope up with the situation. They need to be helped, guided and supported to come to terms with the reality of the loss of their parents. The contrary situation provokes such disturbing questions worthy of academic research as: What are the causes of parents' death in Litein town, Kericho County? What impact does it have on the orphans? How should the contemporary Kipsigis society address such unfortunate scenario? These among other crucial questions are the kernel of our study. It was further disturbing that the orphans in the contemporary society especially in Litein town, Kericho County have to grapple with the challenges resulting from the loss of their parents, yet they belong to the Church which is the Community of God guided by Christian principles; the Church who should shepherd the lost, the needy and destitute like the orphans. They are to feel loved, find support and sense of belonging in the Community of God. The contrary scenario depicted in the Church today especially in Litein town , Kericho County prompts us to ask such questions as; What is the Church's understanding of death and yonder life? How does such understanding influence the day to day lives of the Christians? What is the Church's role in responding to the challenges facing the orphans? Such is the further problem the Study seeks to investigate with a view to contributing the invaluable way forward. The study was guided by the following main research questions: 1. What are the major causes of parent's death in Litein town, Kericho County? 2. How does the death of parents affect the orphans? 3. What is the African understanding of death and yonder life? 4. What are the theological reflections and Christian instructions on death and yonder life? 1.4 Objectives of the Study The overall objective of the study was to examine the impact of parents' death on orphans in the light of African and Christian perception of death and yonder life. The specific objectives that guided the study are: 1. To investigate the causes of parents' death in Litein Town, Kericho County. 2. To identify the impact of parents' death on orphans in Litein Town, Kericho County in view of contributing the way forward. 3. To discuss African understanding of death and yonder life in view of our subject. 4. To examine selected theologians' reflections and Christian instructions on death and yonder life with reference to our subject. 1.5 Justification of the Study Orphans of whatever age seem to be greatly hit group by the loss of their parents as a result of death. Some are left with the burden of caring for themselves and their siblings. They face both developmental and social challenges that need to be investigated at erudition level. They look upon the church and the society for support which seem to ignore them. For some, the society denies them opportunities for growth and development and instead curtails their actualization of their talents. There is need to examine how these two important institutions address unfortunate scenario hence the present study. The study drew from the aspect that in as much as death is seen as a rite of passage and the life of the dead person is celebrated in different communities and is said to have entered into the realm of ancestors, the death of both parents is at times seen as either a curse or a misfortune to the family. What comes after the burial of the dead seems neglected in the contemporary society. People come to sympathize with the family for the loss of the loved ones, but little attention is paid on what would happen to the immediate family especially the children who are sometimes too young to fend for themselves or sometimes too old to care for themselves. The practice has created a gap which the study intends to