# ASSESSMENT OF AN IRON FORMATION DEPOSIT IN IKANGA AREA, KITUI COUNTY, SOUTH EASTERN KENYA

BY

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### A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE AWARD OF MASTERS OF SCIENCE DEGREE IN GEOLOGY (MINERAL EXPLORATION)

### DECEMBER 5, 2013 UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

### DECLARATION

This Dissertation is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

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This Dissertation has been submitted for examination with the approval of my supervisors:

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### ABSTRACT

This Research was conducted in the Ikanga area, which occurs at the intersection of longitude 38°33'50"E and latitude 1.7°25'45" S in Kitui County, south-eastern Kenya. The Area lies within the Neoproterozoic Mozambique Belt in which the iron formation deposit, which is the main focus of this study occurs. The deposit is, approximately 250km away from the city of Nairobi. This study was conducted purposely to assess the iron formation deposit in the Ikanga area and find out whether it has some economic value or not. The area is a gently low undulating semi-arid land with acacia tree family and dry drainage system. The rock types of the area are Neoproterozoic in age and include granitoid gneisses which are dominant. On the local scale, granitoid, feldspathic gneisses, kunkar limestone, migmatite, lateritic-silica-baked-ferrous-canga and marble do occur. Alluvial sandy soil deposits of Pleistocene and Recent Age, which include red and black soils, form the local geology of the study area. In pursuance of this research, the following methods were applied: 1). Remote Sensing; 2). Ground Magnetic Survey; 3). Geochemical Analysis; 4). Mineralogical and Petrographical Analyses; and 5). Data Analysis using Software Applications. Application of these methods showed varied results. Remote sensing gave a broad pictorial view of the study area and its surroundings and identified where the iron formation deposit is concentrated for favorable sampling point sections prior to the field work. The Landsat Band etm+3:1 ratio for iron oxide displayed the dispersion of the iron formation in the study area. The ground magnetic method was able to determine the magnetic fields of the area. A proton precision magnetometer was employed in this geophysical mapping to collect total magnetic field in the area. Analysis of the total magnetic intensity (TMI) of the area and associated magnetic source results mark the locations and orientations of southwest-northeast trending linear structures at depth caused by shearing and subsequent mineral alterations. The areas occupied by magnetic highs to the east are interpreted to coincide with locations of iron formations and require ground follow-up and truthing. Geochemical data analyses confirmed predominantly oxide facies mineralization with  $Fe_2O_3$  as the main iron oxide. The highest non-iron oxide amounts in the domain include TiO<sub>2</sub> ( $\leq 9.72$  wt% in the soil), MnO ( $\leq 0.2$  wt% in haematite, gneiss, and soil), CaO ( $\leq$  54.7 wt% in limestone), Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> ( $\leq$  21.8 wt% in soil), Na<sub>2</sub>O ( $\leq$  4.31 wt% in gneiss), K<sub>2</sub>O ( $\leq$ 3.6 wt % in soil) and SiO<sub>2</sub> ( $\leq$  83.63 wt% in pegmatites). The Fe<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> wt% in the hematite mineralized samples ranges from 72.4% to 86.3% Fe<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> wt% with an average of 76.97 Fe<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> wt%. In gneisses the Fe<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> wt% ranges from 3.38 to 16.4 wt%, with an average of 8.0 wt%, while in the soil the Fe<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> wt% ranges from 3.9 to 79.6 wt%, with an average of 22.65 wt%. The geochemical data indicate that the Ikanga deposit is very likely to have been derived from a Precambrian Banded Iron Formation (BIF) precursor by the weathering processes.

### **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to all geoscientists for their continuing hard work in producing voluminous literature in geology from which fruits I have carried out this study. It is also dedicated to relatives and friends for their continued words of encouragement given to me during my stay at the University of Nairobi, and which provided me with partial strength to complete these postgraduate studies.

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 Major elements in weight percent (wt%)

### LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- **DALP** Distance along Profiles
- IGRF International Geomagnetic Reference Field
- nT Nanotesta
- SI Structural Index (geological body in the subsurface formation)
- UTM Universal Traverse Mecator projected coordinate system
- **VDTIF** Vertical Distance to the Iron Formation Downward

### **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

This research project was designed to assess the iron formation deposit in the Ikanga area, southeastern Kenya and to ascertain whether it has some economic value or not. The study area is low lying, with sparse vegetative cover and gently undulating soil profiles. The area has lateritic outcrops which form ferricrete capping in places consisting of composite units of gritty sandy materials. Well defined rock outcrops are not common. What are common in the study area are recent alluvial sedimentary deposits.

### **1.1 Introduction and General Information**

The study focuses on a thinly scattered iron formation deposit in the regolith in the Ikanga area rather than the massive banded iron formation that are hosted in well defined lithologies in large concentrations. There is limited published data on the Ikanga type of regolithic iron deposit. Regolithic iron deposits in this sense actually represent low value, but readily accessible sources of iron. Until about some decades ago, such iron mineralization was considered uneconomic owing to the low iron content which was not sufficient to attract investors. With the increasing availability of effective and relatively less expensive metallurgical processes for the treatment of lateritic ores (Kennedy, 1989), this set of low grade deposits has become an economic source of iron and associated minerals, and is currently the focus of numerous exploration programmes in Australia, Africa, South Africa and India (Butt, 1988; Bowell et al., 1991; Davy and El-Ansary, 1989).

The Ikanga iron deposits were investigated using a combination of techniques. These included geological field mapping followed by petrographic analysis of rock samples. The ground magnetic geophysical mapping technique was employed to study this deposit. Magnetic data were acquired along fifteen profiles at the end of every twenty meter interval and the data obtained were analyzed and studied which indicated the various depths of the iron formation deposit in the study area, ranging from zero meters on the surface and to below meters beneath the surface. This mapping was conducted by the use of the proton magnetometer, also known as the proton precession magnetometer (PPM), which uses the principle of Earth's field nuclear magnetic resonance (EFNMR) to measure very small variations in the Earth's magnetic field, allowing ferrous objects on land and at sea to be

detected (Desa et al., 2007). Geochemical data were acquired and also analyzed to characterize the Fe composition of the Ikanga iron deposit and associated minerals.

This research project is presented in this dissertation in five chapters. Chapter One gives the introduction to this project, while Chapter Two presents the methodology and materials used. Chapter Three presents the information acquired during the field mapping and associated petrographic analysis phases. This chapter then discusses the geologic setting and mode of occurrence of the Ikanga iron deposit. Chapter Four presents the results of the ground magnetic survey of the Ikanga area and also the results of the geochemical analysis of samples from the project area. Chapter Five presents the discussion, conclusions and recommendations arising from this research project.

### **1.2 Problem Statement**

The growth in global population and the increasing demands of man to construct shelters, build industries, and infrastructure in general, have made the use of iron ore products very much important. Development of communities and nations worldwide therefore requires the use of materials that are derived from iron ore productions. It is predicated upon this background that this research project is designed to assess and ascertain the Ikanga iron deposit to ascertain whether it has some economic values and whether this deposit can be utilized for the development of the Ikanga's Community and the Republic of Kenya at large. This project also seeks to provide information on the geological, geochemical, and geophysical information and data on the Ikanga iron deposit.

### 1.3 The Study Area

The study area lies in a geographical region centered on longitude 38°33'50"E and latitude 1.7°25'45" S in Kitui County, south-eastern Kenya (Figure 1.1). A detailed description of the locality of the study area is further presented in a topographical map of Ikanga (Figure 1.2). The area is defined by its post Archaean, metamorphic rocks of north-south trending Mozambique mobile Belt of Neoproterozoic age consisting predominantly of granitoid gneisses and quartzo-feldspathic gneisses (Warden and Horkel (1984). The area also contains sedimentary deposits of Quaternary age. Walsh (1959) argued that the rocks in the study area are all of sedimentary in origin. Hornblende–biotite gneisses in the area are thought to represent a difference of composition in the original sediments, perhaps an increment of

chlorite, as compared with those sediments which gave rise to the hornblende gneisses, rather than a difference in metamorphic grade.





### 1.3.1 Location and description of the study area

The study area can be defined by its four corner rectangular points which are presented in the UTM coordinates as: (391000E, 9817000N); (391000E, 9818000N): (394000E, 9817000N) and (394000, 9818000N) on the topographical map of Ikanga. The study area is 1km wide north-south and 3km long east-west and lies just to the west of the main road leading to Ikutha from Kitui Town via Ikanga, between Makaleh and Dakadede towns. It is approximately six kilometers (6km) to the north-north-west (NNW) of Ikanga (Figure 1.2). The north-south trending Nzeeu River, which is one of the main Rivers in the Ikanga area, crosscuts the study area into two parts (Figure 1.2). To the southwest of the study area also lies a floodplain. This floodplain comprises of alluvial sedimentary deposits, which have been transported by the flooding of the Nzeeu River during rainy seasons. Flooding serves as the

mechanisms through which heterogeneous surface soil materials are deposited in the study area.

In much of the study area the surface soils are reddish brown, and in some portions, the vegetation cover has been removed by overgrazing and poor animal husbandry. The fertile portion of the study area is along the western side of the Nzeeu River bank on which all agricultural activities are carried out. Kunkar limestones are widely developed in the area. They are usually buff or pink in color due to iron staining, and often include angular fragments of quartz and feldspars. These limestones seldom exceed a few meters in thickness.

The area is situated in the Neoproterozoic Mozambique Belt in which complex geological features occur in the Neoproterozoic rocks (Warden and Horkel (1984)). The metamorphic grade of the Neoproterozoic rocks in the study area shows characteristics of the almandinediopside-hornblende subfacies of the amphibolite facies (Turner, 1948, pp.87-88). Differentiated alluvial deposits form part of the regolith. These deposits are the dominant sedimentary sources for much of the clastic sequences deposited during the Neogene (Feibel, 2011). They include buff-colored arkosic, channelized fluvial pebbly minor conglomeratic grits and exhibit a wide scatter of palaeocurrent directions to the west, north and east suggesting a generally northerly directed flow (Morley et al., 1992).



Figure 1.2 Topographical Map of Ikanga showing the location of the Study Area. Source: Directorate of Overseas Surveys (D.O.S) 423 (Series Y731), Edition I-D.O.S., Published by the Directorate of Oversea Surveys for the Kenya Government, Sheet 164/1 (1965).

### **1.4 Climate**

The climatic conditions in the study area are varied. Annual rainfall patterns show a maximum in March-April-May and a lesser peak period in November-December. Like some parts of Kenya, the study area is a semi-arid region with daily temperature variation occurring between 24 and 38 degree Celsius. The rainfall ranges approximately between 120mm and 300mm per annum. At times the seasonal variations occur producing more and less cold and warming temperatures starting at the beginning, and also in the middle up to the end of the year. The dry season is the longest and has a negative effect on the plants and animals. One of the effects of less rain fall is that the soils are less fertile in natural nutrients and this causes the destruction of plants and animals. The long term dry season also creates dry river beds and channels. During this period, waters seep below the water table and leave behind dry river channels with no water. The western parts of the study area where there are low elevations receive more runoff during the rainy season and finally develop flourishing vegetation. The rains usually occur under the influence of the southeastern and northeastern Monsoons, which originates over the India Ocean and are relatively cool and moist and at times bring torrential rain. Further, the distribution of rains in the area is also controlled by the land masses and topography (Olang, 1979).

### **1.5 Vegetation**

Vegetation in the study area mainly consists of scattered acacia bushes and a cover of herbaceous plants. The density of the acacia bushes increases in the peneplains. This pattern is repeated until it becomes invariant. The vegetation is therefore geologically controlled (Joubert, 1966). On the western side of the study area where there is a flood plain, the vegetations are classified as shrubs. Sparse bushes occur in parts of the area with thin soil cover and poor nutrients, especially in the highland areas to the east.

### 1.6 Land Use

The people in the study area can utilize the land in many applications depending on the needs of their livelihood. Generally, the land is mostly used for cattle grazing and agriculture activities. The land is also used to provide safe drinking water from hand dug wells. Agricultural activities are mostly concentrated in the lowland areas which comprise of nutrient alluvial deposits. These agricultural activities include: mellow farming; maize farming and mallet farming. Local bricks are also produced from the soils for construction purposes.

Due to the aridity conditions of the soils, only few plants are grown on the land such as; corns, melons, papaya, millet, carrots, hibiscus and creeping seed producing plants which include beans, etc. The most common food producing garden plants are maize. Typical farms (see Figure 1.3) are located in the low land areas within the floodplain of the north-south trending Nzeeu River. Oil producing plants like palms, cocoanuts, breadfruits, etc are not grown.



Figure 1.3 Field photograph showing a partial view of one of the maize farms visited in the project area at the time.

### 1.7 Physiography and Drainage

The physiographical overview of the study area is divided into two natural regions in which the types of relief and drainage patterns are varied. The floodplain to the west is one part of this physiography and is the low land areas. The second part of this physiography is the highland portion on the east which is higher in elevation than the floodplain areas. The northsouth trending Nzeeu River in the study area is here referred as the major River on the erosion surface. However, during this study the Nzeeu River was dried in its beds. Streams in the study area are seasonal, not perennial. They can become dried during the dry season and flooded during the rainy season. On the surface of the study area gullies are developed in the regolith and are the channels for runoff through which sedimentary materials are transported to the lowland areas during the raining season. The entire study area is gently undulating ranging from 600m to 1000m high. Tors of low angle limbs formed low level synclinal folding on the surface in which the soil erosions crosscut the tors crest orientations.

### **1.8 Literature Review**

Iron formations have been classified on the basis of mineralogical composition (James, 1954). The tectonic setting of iron formation was also proposed by (Gross, 1965) and depositional environment by Kimberley (1978). The large variety of available classification schemes undoubtedly reflects our limited understanding of iron formation. According to James (1954), the original facies concept of iron formation included oxide-, silicate- and carbonate and that the facies iron formation thought to correspond to different water depths. A fourth so-called sulphide-facies, containing pyrite [FeS<sub>2</sub>] and/or pyrrhotite [Fe<sub>1-x</sub> S], was once regarded as being syngenetic in origin (Fripp, 1976) but has subsequently been suggested to be epigenetic (Phillips *et al.*, 1984; Groves *et al.*, 1987) with a replacement rather than primary sedimentary origin for sulphide mineralization.

Gross (1983) infers a tectonic setting of iron formation deposit on the basis of size and lithologic associations. He proposed that the *Algoma*-type iron formations are relatively small, and associated with volcanogenic rocks. Iron formation has a primary iron content that rarely exceeds 10<sup>10</sup> tons (James and Trendall, 1982). Typical lateral extents are less than 10 km, with thicknesses in the range 10-100 m (Goodwin, 1973; Appel, 1980; Condie, 1981). Many workers have favored depositional environments for this type of iron formation to include island arc/back arc basins (Veizer, 1983) and intracratonic rift zones (Gross, 1983). Beukes (1973) provided a geological overview of Precambrian iron formations of the Southern Africa region. Beukes (1983) further discussed the paleoenvironmental setting of iron formations in the depositional basin of the Transvaal Supergroup in South Africa. Beukes and Klein (1992) provided models for iron formation.

Past field work in the Ikanga area has shown that pebbles of lava are found up to twenty four (24) kilometres (15miles) from the most prominent plateau across a watershed in the area west of Kitui Township (Schoemann, 1948, p.6), and that these pebbles are weathered from the exposed Precambrian rocks which are associated with the iron formation in Ikanga. Where hills are common particularly to the end of the Tertiary surface and on the pediment among the hills and sub-Miocene surface, the possibility of iron mineralization in those hills is common. These hills can take the form of tors and inselbergs and usually mark outcrops of

steeply-dipping strata that may probably serve as catchment for iron mineralization in the study area (Walsh, 1959).

It has been reported from preliminary results of magnetic survey in the Nyanza area that several trends on the Kanga grid appear to be associated with large, and deformed iron formation, a mineralization type that is reported from the greenstone belt elsewhere in Kenya as well as in Tanzania (e.g. AngloGold, Ashanti's Geita and Barricks Golden Ridge Mine). Further to the Kwoyo grid, located to the northwest (NW) of Ikanga area, a ground follow-up of Au-As-Sb-Cu-Zn soil survey has also discovered a similar anomaly that is generally underlain by a large deformed iron formation sequence (Stockport Exploration, Nyanza Sotik Project overview, Kenya). These deposits may probably extend to the Research Area since they are adjacent and occur in the same Mozambique Belt. The section of the Neoproterozoic Mozambique Belt in which Ikanga is located in southeastern Kenya, where this research has been conducted is predominantly composed of remobilized and recrystallized Precambrian rocks. Among these rocks, some exhibit iron formation inclusions in their fabric and bedding (Warden and Horkel, 1984). More detailed geological accounts of part of the Neoproterozoic Mozambique Belt which underlies the study area are well treated by various reports and research papers documented by Nyamai (1999), Nyamai et al. (2003; 2000; 1999), Mathu (1992), Mathu and Tole (1984), Mathu et al. (1994), Saggerson (1957), Dodson (1953, 1955), Baker (1954), Sanders (1954), and Schoeman (1948). It has been documented by these authors that southern Kenya is comprised of an overlying Kurase- Kasigai Groups of sediments that show facies change eastwards from shallow water shelf lithofacies to deep water sediments which can be probably associated with sedimentary iron formations.

According to Dodson (1953), granitoid gneisses in the Neoproterozoic Mozambique Belt of Kenya contain magnetite. Biological mechanisms can potentially account for the precipitation of iron out of solution in a variety of environments, ranging from an oxygenic photic zone to a locally oxygenated sub-photic zone (Konhauser et al., 2002). Report by Van Straaten (1984), Kuhn et al. (1990), and Kuhn (1984) disclosed that during the emplacement of the Mozambique Belt, it was accompanied by mineralization fluids in which massive base metal sulphide and sedimentary iron formation deposit may have occurred. Iron formation deposits in the Mozambique Belt were probably formed from a hydrothermal vent system, but its distal position for now can be indicated by a very fine-grained laminated tuffs underlying and intercalated with the iron formation (Konhauser et al., 2002). Due to the increasing

availability of effective and relatively less expensive metallurgical processes for the treatment of lateritic ore deposits, such class of deposits can be treated to extract the needed iron metal (Kennedy, 1989).

The lateritic class of ore deposits similar to the Ikanga deposit has become an important source of gold, base metals, and iron formation in other parts of Africa, Australia, South Africa and India (Lyoon, 1957; Bowell el al., 1991; Davy and El-Ansary, 1989) and are now the focus of detailed exploration work. It is documented by Windley (1984) that early iron formations are about the same age on many continents, but reached their peak of development in the early Proterozoic basins or geosynclines near the boundary of the Archaean. The Mozambique Belt in which the Study Area is located, in Kenya is a Neoproterozoic Segment (Schlüter, 1997). The possibility of iron formations occurrence in Kenya is sure. The project area is located in the Neoproterozoic Mozambique Belt terrain and which, it is believed, probably contains some iron formations. Current work on the geochemical characterization of iron ore deposits of the Mozambique Belt in the Ikutha area, in the southern portion of the study area indicates the existence of iron ore bearing rocks consisting magnetite and hematite and including apatite and phosphate concentrations which are worth further exploration (Nyamai, 2013). The proximity of this research project area to where the current information has emerged of iron ore bearing rocks may very well indicate that such geological formations may extend beyond to form other deposits elsewhere and also in the research area.

### **1.9 The Main Objective of this Research Project**

The main objective of this research project is to assess and ascertain the geologic nature of the Ikanga iron deposit and to ascertain whether it has some economic value and can be utilized for the development of the Ikanga Community and the Republic of Kenya in general.

### **1.10** Specific Objectives of this Research Project

The specific objectives of this research project are given below.

### **Specific Objective One (1):**

The first objective is to collect geological, geochemical, and geophysical information and data on the Ikanga iron deposit in order to characterize its nature.

#### **Specific Objective Two (2):**

The second objective is to establish the geological setting, host rocks, composition, mode of occurrence and origin of the Ikanga iron deposit.

### **Specific Objective Three (3):**

The third objective is to assess and ascertain whether the Ikanga iron deposit in the study area has economic value or not and to make appropriate recommendations.

### 1.11 The Research Question of this Project

How does the Ikanga iron deposit occur in the study area, and what relationship does it have with pre-existing iron formations ?.

### 1.12 Justification and Significance of the Research Project.

Iron is globally the predominant metal in the constructions and manufacturing industries. The ore from which iron is derived is the geological material that can be extracted from beneath the surface and exploited for benefit of man. In this research project the Ikanga iron deposit is investigated to ascertain and whether it has potential for economic value and whether this deposit can, therefore, be utilized, and if so, what approach should be followed in the utilization of this resource in future.

### **CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY AND MATERIALS**

In order to achieve the objectives of this research project, the following methods, approaches, materials, and software were applied in addressing the research question for this project.

### 2.1 Remote Sensing Method

Remote sensing was used in this study to show a broad pictorial view of the study area and to identify areas in which the iron deposit is concentrated before the start of the field work. The basic concept is to enhance recognition of the areas of concentration in the study area and surroundings, for better planning of the field work and for optimal selection of sampling sites.

### 2.2 Geological Field Mapping, Sampling and Data Collection

Geological field mapping and sample collection of rock and iron rich samples in the Ikanga area were undertaken along pre-planned and pre-selected traverses in order to investigate the geological setting and mode of occurrence of the Ikanga iron ore deposit.

### 2.2.1 Petrographical analysis of rock samples

Petrographical analysis of rock samples in thin section (Griffen and Phillips (2004)) was carried out under plane polarized light and under crossed nicols in order to identify the mineralogical composition of the host rocks of the Ikanga iron deposit. The characterization of the mineralogic composition facilitated identification of the host rocks in the project area.

### 2.3 Ground Magnetic Method

Ground magnetic survey in mineral exploration is a geophysical technique that is applied to map subsurface formations. The basic principle is to determine magnetic ore minerals including various combinations of induced and remanent magnetization that perturb the earth field (Reynolds et al., 1990; Hanna, 1969; Criss and Champion, 1984). Measurements are made using fluxgate, proton-precession, overhauser, and optical absorption magnetometers.

### 2.4 Magnetic Surveys and Instrumentation

Magnetic surveys for minerals usually involve the use of a total field magnetometer. The magnetometer most commonly used is the proton precession magnetometer whose basic principles are briefly outlined below.

#### 2.4.1 Proton precession magnetometer

The proton precession magnetomer which is designed to measure the total magnetic field of the earth. Its sensor comprises a cylindrical bottle filled with a liquid rich in protons (hydrogen atoms) (Figure 2.1 (a)). Each of these protons possesses a magnetic moment which acts as a small magnet. The magnetic moments align themselves in the direction of the earth's magnetic field, Be (Figure 2.1 (b)). On applying a stronger magnetic field (Bp) through a coil wound round the bottle, the protons are realigned in the resultant field (Figure 2.1 (c)). However, when Bp is switched off, the magnetic moments return to be aligned once again with the earth's magnetic field, Be. As this takes place, the magnetic moments precess at a characteristic frequency,  $\omega$ , that is proportional to Be, expressed as

$$\omega = \gamma_{\rm p} \mathbf{B}_{\rm e}$$

where  $\gamma_p$  is an an accurately known constant known as the gyromagnetic ratio of the proton (Figure 2.1 (d)). The frequency  $\omega$  is measured by a weak radio signal emitted by the precessing protons.



Figure 2.1 Principle of the proton precession magnetometer

The proton precession magnetometer measures the total magnetic field of the earth and, therefore, the alignment of the instrument is not required. Consequently, it is admirably suited to airborne and submarine measurements. Its disadvantage is that it measures the magnitude of the total ambient field and not its direction.

### 2.4.2 Data acquisition, processing and interpretation

Data acquisition, processing and interpretation involve the components of ground survey followed by data processing and interpretation. These components involve the following approaches.

#### 2.4.2.1 Ground surveys

To carry out a ground survey, first, a survey grid is established by staking out a baseline parallel to the geological strike and traverse lines normal to the baseline. Measurements are taken on reading stations located along the traverse lines. A reference or base point is identified in the vicinity of the survey and readings are taken at this point at certain intervals during the survey, normally at intervals of 1-2 hours. It is mandatory that the day's survey must start off and close off with a reading at the base point. The base point is usually located in the area where the magnetic field has approximately the value of the undisturbed main field of the earth.

The distance between observation points depends on the type and purpose of the survey. For mineral exploration, the distance between the observation points is normally between 5-25 m. The observation points should be sufficiently far removed from disturbing objects such as railways, steel constructions, etc. A safe distance is 150 m. The observer should not carry with him/her any metallic articles such as penknives, watches, keys, etc.

#### 2.4.2.2 Magnetic data acquistion method

Magnetic data were acquired in the field along fifteen (15) profiles at the end of every twenty-meter interval through the use of the proton precession magnetometer. A Brunton compass was also used to accurately direct and control the traverse directions perpendicular to the established baseline on the established grid. For accuracy, GPS was used to mark magnetic data sampling localities and these positions were then recorded as UTM coordinates in a field note book. A total of 500 magnetic data samples were collected on this grid along these traverse lines.

#### 2.4.2.3 Magnetic data correction

The IGRF correction is done by subtracting the average magnetic reading of every station from the regional field of the study area (33, 512.7nT). This correction is made to compensate for the anomalies/noises in the study area during at the time field measurements are made and magnetic data is collected.

#### 2.4.2.4 Data processing and interpretation

The magnetic data are usually corrected for diurnal variations using simple interpolation and correction programs. The processed data are then subjected to any one or more of available automated interpretation software packages such as those involving 2-D or 3-D Euler deconvolution algorithms, among others. The Euler deconvolution algorithms make use of Euler's differential equation to invert the magnetic data to obtain the spatial locations of the magnetic sources in the earth's medium. In the 3-D case which was used in this research project, the Euler deconvolution program gives as output three parameters: the x-, y- and z-locations of the magnetic sources, where the z-location corresponds to depth-to-magnetic source from the sensor.

### 2.5 Geochemical Data Acquisition and Processing

Samples collection in the field for geochemical analysis was done by using a rock hammer for outcrops. The samples obtained weighing at least one kilogramme each were parceled at and sealed up and numbered. Similarly, soil samples were collected, sealed and numbered in the same manner. The both sets of samples, with standards and duplicate samples were transported to the laboratories of the Mines and Geological Department in the Ministry of Mining in Kenya for geochemical analyses using the atomic absorption spectrometric analytical method. Every sample point in the field was located using GPS and the UTM coordinates in the field notebook.

#### 2.5.1 Atomic absorption spectrometric analysis

The technique makes use of absorption spectrometry to assess the concentration of an analyte in a sample (Walsh, 1955; L'Vov, 2005). It requires standards with known analyte content to establish the relation between the measured absorbance and the analyte concentration. To get the weight loss on ignition (LOI), samples were weighed first then heated under high temperature at 1000 C<sup>o</sup> (degrees Celsius) in the furnace, cooled and then weighed again before further processing. LOI was then calculated. Results of the sample analyses were displayed electronically and the readings recorded.

### 2.6 Materials, Equipment, Data Sets and Software Used

The materials and equipment used in this study includes proton precession magnetometer, GPS, compass, geological hammer, camera, maps, satellite imageries, field note books, safety boots, sample bags, permanent markers, pencils and pens, and rock sacks.

#### 2.6.1 Data sets used

Two sets of data (Primary data, and Secondary data) were used to conduct this study.

#### 2.6.2 Primary data

The primary data of this study were acquired in the field and in the geochemical laboratory through mapping, data collection, and geochemical analyses of samples. The primary data include the magnetic data and geochemical data.

#### 2.6.3 Secondary data

The secondary data include geological and topographical maps, and researched papers by other researchers on the study area and its surroundings.

#### 2.6.4 Software used

3D Euler deconvolution, and Arc-Gis 10.0 were applied in this research. The 3D Euler deconvolution was used to analyze the magnetic data. The basic concept of the 3D Euler is to estimate the source location, depth and SI (structural index) simultaneously assuming

constant background (Hsu, 2002; Geroovska et al., 2005). This approach is fully automatic and yields reliable estimates if the background field can be adequately represented as a constant. Estimation is made for both the source location and SI using Euler deconvolution assuming nonlinear background. Arc-Gis 10.0 was also applied to create maps and digitize preexisting ones. The magnetic data acquired in this study are presented in the Appendix.

# CHAPTER THREE: GEOLOGICAL SETTING OF THE IKANGA IRON DEPOSIT

The regional and local geological settings of this study area are discussed in this Chapter in which an attempt is also made to establish a correlation between the geology of the study area and the general geology of East Africa in summary.

### 3.1 Regional Geological Setting

The Neoproterozoic Mozambique Belt in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, represents by far the longest geological segment of crustal mobility of the African Continent (Warden and Horkel, 1984; Schlüter, 1997). During the orogenesis of this belt, rocks of the African continent that were in the radii of this orogenesis were affected by this process and accompanied its evolutional trend. The result of this tectonic evolutional trend, led to the distribution of associated rock types in Mozambique, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia which are the most affected countries in the Belt. The lithologies and tectonic features of this belt varied, and comprised of metamorphic, sedimentary, and volcanic suite, including rifting, sedimentary basins, hills/mountains, etc. The extension of the Mozambique Belt is reflected in these tectonic, lithologic and structural features which formed the largest portions in East Africa.

The study area is located in a fractional segment of this regional Belt. The geological setting of the study area reflects the tectonic processes through which the Mozambique Belt has been subjected to since its emplacement. Some of the areas, for example, have no outcrops. Some contained peneplains, and other areas are rifted, lifted and contain well exposed rock outcrops, domes, valleys and basins. These conditions are fairly regional and variable. Hence, the regional distribution of the Neoproterozoic Mozambique Belt rocks and tectonic features occur in common in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda (see Figure 3.1 below). The detailed theories of the geological evolution of the Neoproterozoic Mozambique Belt in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda in East Africa are outlined in Schlüter (1997).



Figure 3.2 Distribution of rocks associated with the Mozambique Belt in Kenya, N.E. Uganda, and central and northern Tanzania with the study area showing in red dot. (Modified after Shackleton, 1986).

Explanation: 1=Phanerozoic cover; 2=Bukoban system and related formations; 3=Areas where marbles outcrop; 4=Predominantly granulite; 5=Ultramafics, probably ophiolites; 6=Mafic gneisses and schists, probably ophiolites; 7=Late Precambrian granites; 8= Tectonized granites; 9=Undifferentiated rocks of the Mozambique Belt; 10=Mylonitized Archaean rocks; and 11=Tanzanian (East African) Archaean Craton.

#### 3.1.1 Bedrock geology

Bedrock in the study area consists of predominantly undifferentiated Neoproterozoic rocks consisting of gneissic complexes which are overlain by compacted Tertiary to Recent alluvial deposits. These rocks are considered as the dominant sources of much of the lithoclastic sedimentary sequences that are deposited in the study area. The bed rock geology of the South Kitui County where the study area is located was described in detail by Walsh (1959) and Schoemann (1948). The general strike of the rocks in the study area, is generally north-south and is in good accord with many of the other Neoproterozoic Mozambique Belt rocks so far mapped in Kenya (Walsh, 1959).

#### **3.1.2 Pliocene-Recent sediments**

Sediments in the area include alluvial deposits and volcanic ash. These deposits overlie the bed rock. They consist of poorly sorted sandy soils, coarser boulder scattered volcanoclastics and conglomerates on large scale erosional surfaces. These beds have been interpreted in other parts of Kenya as proximal alluvial fan deposits by Morley et al. (1992). Along the course of the north-south trending Nzeeu River occur alluvial deposits consisting mostly of fine sand with the occasional thin layers of grey silts which indicate seasonal flooding. The alluvial composition on the dried Nzeeu River beds consist of poorly sorted gravel-like pebbles derived from the rocks in the area and further afield.

#### 3.1.3 Superficial deposits

Surface expression in the study area indicates red-brown soils, usually consisting of sandy deposits which are the weathering products of underlying bedrock. The dispersion of this surface pesolithic laterite is common. In areas of poor drainage, typical black cotton soils are developed which can be hard and fissured when dry and have the tenacity of clay when wet. Discontinuous layer of nodules of secondary kunkar limestones a few centimeters in diameter are localized below the surface. These secondary limestones are buff or pink in color due to iron staining and often include minor angular fragments of quartz and feldspars. The black soil depositional areas are always open grassland which have natural nutrients for vegetation growth.

#### **3.2 Remote Sensing Results from the Study Area**

The geological overall view of the study area was known prior to the start of the field work through the remote sensing application. Figure 3.2 below is a Landsat ETM+Band 3:1 ratio for iron oxide and displays the dispersion of iron oxides in the study area. This method also identified portions of the study area in which the concentrations of iron formation deposits are low and high, and shows parts of the area with bushes and sandy soils, low and high reliefs, drainage patterns, and, finally, the north-south trending Nzeeu River that cuts the study area into two parts as shown in Figure 3.2 below.

#### LANDSAT ETM+ BAND 3:1 RATIO FOR IRON OXIDES



Figure 3.2 Satellite imagery of the study area showing iron oxides in light gray and dark color for vegetation (Source: Howell (2013), http/twitter.com/USGS Landsat images downloaded for free at: http/eros.USGS.gov/image gallery/or http//landsatlook.usgs.gov.).

### **3.3 Local Geological Setting**

Geological samples and primary data representative of the geology of the study area shown in Figures 3.3 were collected. Figure 3.4 shows the geologic landscape. The landscape is jagged with sparse vegetation. The landscape reflects past tectonic activity and is also defined by faulting. From this partial view, a hill in the background and a flat area in the foreground are observable.. Critical samples related to the Ikanga iron deposit are shown in Figures 3.5 to 3.15 below. Gneisses are the dominant local rock types in the study area. Others include marble/limestone, sandy soils, alluvium, lateritic silica-baked-canga, and cutans deposits. The distinctive geological setting and physiographical features which are caused by tectonic rifting and block faulting, which affect sediment deposition and river drainage systems, match the surface and subsurface distribution of rock formations (Rop, 2011). The entire Ikanga area is best known for its Pliocene and Pleistocene strata, Cretaceous, Eocene, Oligocene, and Miocene which are derived from older rocks of the Archaean Age (Brown and McDouglas, 2011). Local outcrops mapped in the study area are presented in Figures 3.5 to 3.15 below. The local rock outcrop units in the study area can be grouped into three.

The three groups are the gneisses, the lateritic ferruginous canga, and the marble/kunkar limestone. Each of these groups exhibits a different profile of weathering. The gneisses form unique widespread outcrops mostly along the Nzeeu River banks to the west. In the gneissic group, weathering produces chemical etching, and pulverization of the outcrops (see Figures 3.5 to 3.8 below).



Figure 3.3 Geological map of the south Kitui showing the study area in the rectangle.



Figure 3.4 Widespread gneiss outcrops to the western front of the study area.



Figure 3.5 A Chemically etching gneissic outcrop that is showing interlocking crystals of brown, red, gray, and white colors with weak exfoliation fabric. The reddish brown-gray colours indicate the growth of iron oxide and the whitish colour exhibits the etching surfaces of the quartz that is set in the matrix of plagioclase feldspars).



Figure 3.6 Quartzo-feldspathic gneiss in which quartz veins are crosscutting each other at right angles.



Figure 3.7 A highly deformed quartz-feldspathic gneissic body showing multiple colours of iron oxide staining and some quartz fragments that are embedded in the deformed gneissic fabrics. Such deformational feature is common in the study area and is the function of prograde metamorphism and deformation.



Figure 3.8 A highly deformed gneissic body in which all primary fabrics have been destroyed.



Figure 3.9 Showing an outcrop of marble.



Figure 3.10

Figure 3.11

Figure 3.10 A well cemented lateritic caga deposit with hematite staining and silica baked contain iron. Canga is known for hosting iron which ranges approximately from 45%Fe to 60%Fe).

Figure 3.11 Lateritic ferrous-quartzite deposit with hematite coating in places on its surface areas. This lateritic ferrous quartzite surface deposit shows that there are some iron enriched bodies within the subsurface rock formations.



Figure 3.12 Cemented silica baked canga deposit.



Figure 3.13 A hematite/magnetite nodular deposit.


Figure 3.14 Remains of a brick kiln in the Ikanga area.



Figure 3.15 Showing heated bricks converted to a cemented iron rich brick mass. These hematitic temperature baked nodules are show that the soils contained a considerable iron content. This condition occurs in few places within the study area and its surroundings.

The granitoid gneisses are resistant to weathering and occur as stranded tors and hills in the study area (Figure 3.4). The weak gneissic fabric on the rock outcrops is distinctly enhanced by the surface weathering effects (Figure 3.5). The granitoid geneisses essentially consist of quartz, plagioclase, alkali feldspar and minor biotite. Presence of reddish brown grains of garnet dispersed in the rock indicate medium to high grade metamorphism. In other instances, blebs of quartz veins were noted to stretched out and folded in the quartzo-feldspathic gneissic rock (Figure 3.6). Fabric is a very useful textural feature in identification of fresh rock in fresh rock. Its value, however, is greatly diminished where the weathering has been intense like in the study area, kaolinite and Fe-oxides are commonly the end products of the weathering of mafic and felsic rocks (Figures 3.6 and 3.7). Quartz which occurs as anhedral strained grains is the only completely unaltered mineral. The whole area is mantled by red, friable sand-clay soil and strewn with multiple component materials with metamorphic cemented laterite outcrops protruding.

The second group of lithologic surface outcrops noted in the study area are the Fe-rich cemented ferrous laterite-canga (Dorr, 1964; Glossary of Geology, 1980) is the cemented metamorphic ferrous which this study seeks to investigate. Cementation in lateritic outcrops as shown in Figures 3.10 and 3.11 is one of the most recognizable features in laterite profile regime that occur in response to the change in modifications in laterite profile regime occurring in response to the change from a humid to an arid climate (Robertson, 1991). In such case, the most common cementing agents are iron oxides (ferricrete); silica (silicrete hardpan); calcium and magnesium carbonate (calcrete); aluminosilicates and gypsum. In summary, By definition, ferricrete is an indurated material formed by the in-situ cementation of pre-existing regolith by iron oxides. The fabric, mineralogy and composition of ferricretes reflect those of the parent material (regolith) and if residual, the underlying lithology. On the other hand, a silicrete, it is an indurated regolith component, commonly having a conchoidal fracture with vitreous lustre. Silicrete in the study area (Figure 3.12) is represented by nearcomplete complete or near-complete silification of an Fe-rich precursor regolith horizon by the infilling of available voids with silica. These iron bearing outcrops are common in the study area. Apart from the cemented lateritic iron caps within the study area, the occurrences of distinct iron mineralization in the form of haematite-magnetite nodules and fragments were also noted (Figure 3.13). The soils in the study area were noted to be enriched in iron content. A case in point where soils were noted to have higher contents of iron was at a locality along R-iver Nzeui where a brick making activity was taking place (Figure 3.14). Due to the exceptionally high contents of iron in the soil, the majority of burned bricks in this kiln fused together to form composite metallic units as shown in Figure 3.15 instead of coming out as single brick units. As a result of this phenomenon, the owner of the brick making kiln incurred a loss on investment. This, however, may be a blessing in the long run in that it provides evidence for possible occurrence of iron mineralization in the study area. It is, therefore, interpreted in this study that the enriched Fe-content in the baked bricks resulted in the fused composite metallic bricks (Figure 3.15). The regolithic soil horizons in the study area are haematite rich, and if concentrated can form a reasonable mineable deposit. It is, however, important to note that for iron formation to become mineable it requires that it must be of reasonable thickness, width and length within the same locality.

The third major group of lithologic surface outcrops are the crystalline marble units (Figure 3.9) which texturally show some banding features and loose kunkar limestone in scattered areas within the study area.

#### **3.4 Structure and Metamorphism**

Like many other areas in Kenya, the sequence of events appears to have been firstly deposition of sediments, secondly widespread folding with accompanying regional metamorphism, and lastly granitization (Walsh, 1959, p.25). Rocks in the study area are folded into a synform with the axis trending N-W to S-E. The dominant foliation in these rocks is marked by the alignment of phyllosicates, hornblende, and pyroxene, and parallels the axis of the synform. Microtextures observed in thin section exhibited co-existence of strained and unstrained minerals. This suggests pre-, syn-, and post kinematic growth of metamorphic minerals resulting from multiple episodes of deformation in rocks (Boadi, 1991). In the study area there are less defined outcropped beds upon which to do accurate measurement of strike and dips on due to deformation and metamorphism of rocks. However, some strikes and dips were measured on available outcrops (see Figure 3.16 below). Little evidence of faulting was also recognized within the study area mainly because of complications in the stratigraphy and poor exposure. The style of deformation indicates that shearing and plastic flow was dominant over brittle failure and, therefore, such indicated faults may be post-metamorphic structures. The general strike trend in the study area also

corresponds to other structural trends mapped in other parts of Kenya within the Neoproterozoic Mozambique Mobile Belt (Walsh. 1959).





Figure 3.16 Showing the structural trends of rocks in the study area and its surroundings. Source: D.O.S 423(Series Y731), Edition I-D.O.S., Published by the Directorate of Oversea Surveys for the Kenya Government, Sheet 164/1, 1965. The schematic stratigraphical column of units forming the Local Geology of the study area is presented above.

#### **3.5 Petrographical Thin Section Analyses**

Thin sections analyses of these rocks from the mainly north-south trending collisional Neoproterozoic Mozambique Mobile Belt defined the temperature/pressure (T/P) metamorphic conditions which the rocks of the study area have been subjected to. The orientation of mineral cleavages in thin sections indicated the rearrangements of the rock fabric as being the results of internal, and external stresses reflecting the tectonic history of the high grade Ikanga area.

#### 3.5.1 Biotite-hornblende schist

This is an intermediate medium grained metamorphic rock with a preferred schistose fabric. It consists essentially of plagioclase, biotite and amphibole.. Most of the plagioclase crystals show some minor alteration to sericite and can be recognized by the presence of multiple laths showing albite or lamellar twinning. Coloured minerals include biotite, pale green hornblende and minor greenish augite. Under plane polarized light (PPL), biotite is highly pleochroic from pale yellow to deep brown (Figure 3.17). Accessory minerals include quartz, magnetite, apatite and muscovite. The approximate mineralogical composition of a representative sample identified as biotite-hornblende schist is presented in Table 3.1.

#### 3.5.2 Biotite-quartz-feldspar gneiss

The biotite-quartz-feldspar gneisses are widespread rocks in the study area. They are medium to coarse grained, mesocratic and well foliated with color banding or mineralogical layering of feldspar and opaque minerals. There is localized occurrence of garnet bearing gneisses particularly along the shear zones. Under the microscope the rock consists of plagioclase, orthoclase, microcline, quartz, biotite, garnet and accessory magnetite and muscovite (Figure 3.18). More than half of the feldspar in this rock is microcline feldspar. The cross-hatched twinning, characteristic of microcline, is visible. The quartz grains, which occupy the intergranular spaces between the alkali feldspars, are easily recognized in Plane Polarized Light (PPL) by the lack of alteration, and in under Crossed Polars (XPL) by its interference colours which are slightly higher than that of the feldspars, and by the non-uniform extinction. Apatite, zircon and titanite (sphene) occur as accessory minerals. The mineralogical composition of a representative sample (GN-03) identified as a biotite-quartz feldspar gneiss, is presented in Table 3.1 above. Also noted to occur within this rock unit are amphibole bearing enclaves, which are possibly disrupted mafic dykes. These enclaves have biotite rich

margins, suggesting that small-scale mobility of alkalis and fluid phases took place during metamorphism and account for the formation of these hydroxyl-bearing minerals. The modal composition of this rock sample (LBD/ 13/GN-03) is presented in Table 3.1.



B. PPL (Magnification X80).

Figure 3.17 Biotite-hornblende schist. (A). Note the tabular brown biotite grains B. (Magnification X80). B. Note the prismatic pale green hornblende with characteristic cleavage intersecting at  $124^{0}/56^{0}$ . (Plane Polarized Light (PPL), Magnification X80).

Table 3.1 The modal mineralogical composition of rock samples from Ikanga area.

SAMPLE/	GN-06	GN -03	PEG-01
MINERAL			
Quartz	5	33	29
Plagioclase	33	23	20
Alkali feldspar	10	29	42
Biotite	18	12	5
Muscovite	3	1	2
Hornblende	25	0.5	0.5
Opaque	2	1	1
Accessories(Apatite,	1	0.5	0.5
Zircon, Sphene			
Total	100	100	100

NB:GN-06 – Biotite-Hornblende schist; GN-03 – Biotite –quartz feldspar gneiss; PEG-01-Pegmatite.



A. Crossed Polars (XPL)(Magnification X20).



Polysynthetic twinning in plagioclase feldspar

B. Crossed Polars (XPL) (Magnification X80).

Figure 3.18 Thin section micrographs of biotite-quartz-feldspar gneiss from the Ikanga area (Sample GN-03).

#### 3.5.3 Pegmatite and quartz veins

Pegmatite is a very coarse grained rock that is interpreted to have been formed during the last phases of magmatism and/or metamorphism in this area. The pegmatites occurring in the Ikanga area are mostly pinkish in colour, and are composed mainly of alkali feldspars (orthoclase and microcline), sodic plagioclase and quartz. Under the microscope, the pinkish feldspar is identified as microcline (Figure 3.19). Apart from the scarce inclusions of biotite and quartz crystals, the rock consists essentially of an intimate intergrowth of potassium-rich feldspar and sodium rich feldspar. This perthitic texture is exemplified by the fairly broad sinuous lamellae of albite that forms a braided pattern in an orthoclase host. Other pegmatite bodies showed graphic texture and abundant mica flakes, and sometimes garnet granules. The graphic texture is interpreted to be as a result of simultaneous crystallization of quartz and feldspar. Quartz veins, which occur in many of the rock, were noted to be lensoidal in shape

or stigmatically folded. The veins are interpreted to be the last products of either felsic intrusions or are simply derived from existing quartzo-feldspathic country rocks during metamorphic differentiation.



Figure 3.19 Thin section micrograph of pegmatite showing (A) microcline, biotite, quartz and muscovite. (B) the characteristic cross-hatched twinning in microcline feldspar.

#### 3.5.4 Biotite gneiss

Thin section of biotite gneiss analysed consisted of phlogopite, biotite, quartz, amphibole, and plagioclase. In thin section, biotite is typically brown, brownish green or reddish brown, and distinctly pleochroic. Intensity of colour increases with increasing iron (Fe) content. Phlogopite is nearly colourless to pale brown in thin section and has less intense colours than biotite because of lack of iron content. Quartz is colourless in thin section and twinning is not observed in thin section because the twin segments have the same c axis orientation.

Amphibole is distinctly coloured and pleochroic, usually in shades of green, yellow-green, blue green, and brown. Plagioclase has low relief, lack of colour, has biaxial character, and exhibits polysynthetic twinning which distinguishes it from other minerals. It is colourless in thin section (Figure 3.20).



Figure 3.20 Thin section micrograph of biotite gneiss showing biotite, amphibole, quartz, and phlogopite.

# CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS OF THE GROUND MAGNETIC SURVEY AND GEOCHEMICAL DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter presents the results of the ground magnetic survey and the geochemical data analysis of the Ikanga area in Kitui, southeastern Kenya.

## 4.1 Magnetic Data Acquisition

Acquisition of magnetic data was achieved along fifteen (15) traverses at the end of every twenty (20) meter interval in the study area as shown in Figure 4.1 below.



Figure 4.1 Showing profiles along which the magnetic data were collected.

## 4.2 Field Surveys and Results

The survey involved the use the MP II Proton Precession Magnetometer from Syntrex Ltd of Toronto, Canada. The data were corrected for diurnal variations and then sujected to a 3-D Euler deconvolution process using Oasis Montaj software from Geosoft Inc. of Canada. Figure 4.2 shows the resulting total magnetic field image (TMI). The total magnetic image in Figure 4.2 indicates a major magnetic high centred on the south eastern side of the area. From here, it spreads outwards in following a southwest and northeast trend but with a lesser magnitude. Another magnetic high appears on the southwestern side of the area trending nearly north-south. A major magnetic low that trends northeast to north occurs in the near

cetral part of the area. It appears to occupy a shear zone that trends generally southwestnortheast.



Figure 4.2 Total magnetic image (TMI) of Ikanga area.

Figure 4.3 shows the same total magnetic field image given in Figure 4.2 but with magnetic source depth location symbols superimposed on it. The depth symbols simply mark the lateral location of the magnetic source and the value of depth at which it occurs underneath the ground surface. The symbols and the corresponding values they represent are shown as a legend below the map. From the map, the magnetic source symbols are seen to follow a general southwest-northeast direction. They occur at a general boundary between the main magnetic high to the east and the main magnetic low to the west.

#### **4.3 Discussion of the Results from the Magnetic Survey**

From the two figures, magnetic source symbols mark the locations and orientations of linear structures at depth caused by shearing and subsequent mineral alterations. The areas occupied

by the magnetic highs may coincide with the locations of the iron formations. Ground truth investigations should be conducted to verify this assumption.



Figure 4.3 Total magnetic image (TMI) of Ikanga area with depth symbols.

### 4.4 Geochemical Data Analyses

The geochemical sampling localities superimposed on the generalized geological map of the area are shown in Figure 4.4. Further, these sampling localities referenced to the UTM Coordinate system are shown in Tables 4.1 below. A total of twenty four (24) samples representing the main lithological units in the project study area were collected for geochemical analyses. The characteristic lithological units sampled in this study ranged from ferruginous hematite, limestone, gneisses, soil to pegmatite and quartzite units. Geochemical analyses for this study were done at the Mines and Geological Department of the Ministry of Mining using the atomic absorption spectrometric (AAS) method. Analyses of the geochemical data from the study area showed predominantly oxide facies mineralization in

which  $Fe_2O_3$  is the main iron oxide (see Tables 4.2 and 4.3 below) with low range percentage composition figures varying ranging from 0.05% Fe to 16.5% Fe, and the high range composition figures ranging from 72.4% Fe to 86.3% Fe in few places.

Table 4.1 Locality data for geochemical samples collected from the Ikanga project area referenced to the UTM Coordinate Map System.

Sample Ref. No.	X	Y	Elevation
	UTM	UTM	( <b>m</b> )
HEM-01	393648	9817335	917m
HEM-02	393554	9818273	918m
HEM-03	393466	9815390	910m
HEM-04	393975	9817226	913m
Lim-01	391713	9817542	892m
Lim-02	392451	9816332	892m
Lim-03	393359	9815845	900m
Lim-04	393006	9816420	903m
Lim-05	393989	9817240	902m
GN-01	393617	9817147	921m
GN-02	393520	9817517	910m
GN-03	393548	9817536	917m
GN-04	393362	9817904	908m
GN-05	393835	9817349	902m
GN-06	393617	9817147	921m
GN-07	393520	9817517	910m
S0-01	393006	9816420	903m
S0-01	393105	9817048	875m
SO-02	393119	9817060	784m
SO-03	393133	9817076	892m
SO-04	393105	9817048	782m
SO-05	393105	9817048	875m
PEG-01	393800	9817060	920m
PEG-02	393648	9817000	918m
QT-02	393737	9817148	901m

Key:
HEM=Hematite
Lim=Limestone
GN=Gneiss
SO=Soil
PEG=Pegmatite
QT=Quartzite



Figure 4.4 Geochemical sampling localities superimposed on the generalized geological map of the study area.

Table 4.2 Chemical composition of first set of rock and soil samples from Ikanga project - area. Major elements in weight %.)

1Sample#	SiO <sub>2</sub>	Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	CaO	MgO	Na <sub>2</sub> O	K <sub>2</sub> O	TiO <sub>2</sub>	MnO	Fe <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	LOI
Lim-01	1.92	0.09	54.7	0.42	0.04	0.07	ND	0.03	0.26	41.3
Lim-02	14.53	0.35	47.8	0.8	0.06	0.04	ND	0.1	1.95	34
Lim-03	8.64	ND	46.9	5.94	0.02	0.01	ND	ND	0.21	37.5
GN-01	44.97	8.07	23.7	1.22	0.52	1.76	0.35	0.06	4.03	14.2
GN-03	47	8.04	22.8	0.97	0.58	0.28	0.33	0.07	3.83	15.1
GN-04	51.78	8.97	20.6	0.96	0.66	0.1	0.27	0.04	3.38	12.4
QT-02	82.2	4.68	0.28	0.19	0.86	0.8	0.45	ND	5.79	1.47
S0-01	59.4	9.55	0.28	0.25	0.1	1.8	0.44	0.12	19	8.39

NB: Key: LIM = limestone, QT = Quartzite; GN = Gneiss, SO = soil; ND = not detected.

Table 4.3 Chemical composition of rock and soil samples from the Ikanga project area. Analysis done by using the atomic spectrometric method (AAS). Major elements in weight percent (wt%).

Sample #	SiO <sub>2</sub>	Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	CaO	MgO	Na <sub>2</sub> O	K <sub>2</sub> O	TiO <sub>2</sub>	MnO	Fe <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	LOI
HEM-01	9.79	0.44	0.08	0.34	0.16	0.06	1.11	0.2	86.3	Nil
HEM-02	20.59	0.44	0.66	0.32	0.14	0.04	4.7	0.2	72.4	Nil
HEM-03	10.07	3.4	4.91	0.54	0.3	0.04	2.02	0.2	76.3	Nil
HEM-04	23.67	0.42	0.1	0.31	0.2	0.07	0.89	0.14	72.9	0.57
			1							
Lim-01	1.92	0.09	54.7	0.42	0.04	0.07	ND	0.03	0.26	41.3
Lim-02	14.53	0.35	47.8	0.8	0.06	0.04	ND	0.1	1.95	34
Lim-03	8.64	ND	46.9	5.94	0.02	0.01	ND	ND	0.21	37.5
LIm-04	4.58	ND	34.4	18.7	0.14	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.05	41.3
LIm-05	1.17	ND	52.2	0.73	0.15	0.16	ND	0.1	0.47	43.1
GN-01	44.97	8.07	23.7	1.22	0.52	1.76	0.35	0.06	4.03	14.2
GN-02	68.16	6.58	0.16	0.36	0.25	0.79	0.5	0.2	16.5	5.91
GN-03	47.23	8.04	22.8	0.97	0.58	0.28	0.33	0.07	3.83	15.1
GN-04	51.78	8.97	20.6	0.96	0.66	0.11	0.27	0.04	3.38	12.4
GN-05	53.82	16.42	5.22	3.74	4.31	1.69	1.29	0.15	10.14	2.22
GN-06	68.81	12.97	2.8	1.07	4.09	3	0.69	0.02	4.35	1.25
GN-07	53.68	12.06	5.95	5.14	3.39	1.1	1.65	0.2	14.1	2.16
S0-01	59.4	9.55	0.28	0.25	0.1	1.8	0.44	0.12	19	8.39
SO-02	7.37	1.67	0.25	0.38	0.38	0.3	9.72	0.2	79.6	Nil
SO-03	61.9	21.8	0.09	0.14	0.19	1.4	0.74	ND	3.89	8.69
SO-04	64.55	18.64	1.57	1.17	2.27	3.6	1.22	0.06	5.8	Nil
SO-05	64.27	13.9	2.19	0.91	2.95	3.3	1.1	0.09	4.96	6.13
PEG-01	83.63	4.27	0.84	0.32	1.56	0.34	0.46	0.01	6.5	0.57
PEG-02	82.43	8.78	1.76	0.44	3.04	0.79	0.17	0.01	1.03	0.88
	÷	-	÷	-		•	•		-	
QT-02	82.2	4.68	0.28	0.19	0.86	0.8	0.45	ND	5.79	1.47

Key: LIM=limestone, QT=quartz, GN=gneiss, SO=soil, HEM=hematite, PEG=pegmatite, ND=not detected.

The Fe<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> content in the haematite mineralized samples ranges from 72.4 to 86.3 wt% with an average of 76.97 wt%; 3.38 to 16.5 wt% with an average of 8.05 wt% in gneisses; and 3.89 to 79.6 wt% with an average of 22.65 wt% in soils. The geochemical setting of the Ikanga iron deposit in the study area suggests that it is derived from a Precambrian banded iron formation (BIF). When the Ikanga iron deposit data is plotted on diagrams to discriminate global compositional fields of Precambrian BIF and Phanerozoic ironstones (after Patwardhan, 1999), samples from the Ikanga deposit show close geochemical affinity with Precambrian BIF (see from Figures 4.5 and 4.6). Correlation of the Ikanga iron deposit to the Precambrian BIF shows that the Ikanga iron deposit is derived from the Precambrian BIF by chemical weathering. The plot of geochemical data from samples of the Ikanga iron deposit on the global compositional field of the Precambrian BIF, confirmed this relationship (Figures 4.5 to 4.8 below). The plots further confirmed that the Ikanga iron deposit is not derived from Phanerozoic iron stones.



Figure 4.5 Global compositional field of Precambrian BIF, after Patwardhan (1999).



Figure 4.6 Compositional fields of Precambrian BIF and the Phanerozoic iron stones, after Patwardhan (1999).



Figure 0.7 Showing compositional spread of Ikanga iron deposit on the scale of CaO+MgO, SiO<sub>2</sub>, and Fe<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>.



Figure 0.8 Compositional spread of Ikanga iron deposit on the global Precambrian BIF scale of SiO<sub>2</sub>, Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>, and Fe<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>.

The compositional spread of sample data from the Ikanga iron deposit along the Precambrian BIF domain on the  $Fe_2O_3$ -SiO<sub>2</sub> side of the ternary diagram in Figures 4.6 and 4.7 confirms that the deposit was not derived from the more recent Phanerozoic iron stones. The geologic setting of the Ikanga deposit within the Neoproterozoic Mozambique Belt terrane further supports the geochemical evidence deduced from this study. Analyses of the geochemical data from the study area showed predominantly oxide facies mineralization in which  $Fe_2O_3$  is the main iron oxide with percentage composition shown for all samples analysed (see Table

4.3 above). The geological data acquired from the study area indicated predominantly oxide facies mineralization in which  $Fe_2O_3$  is the main iron oxide with the percentage analytical composition varying from a low range of 0.05 to 16.5  $Fe_2O_3$  wt% to a high range of 72.4 to 86.3  $Fe_2O_3$  wt% in few places.

# CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In this Chapter, the results of this study are synthesized and discussed. Conclusions and recommendations are also presented.

#### **5.1 Petrographical Thin Sections Analyses**

Thin sections analyses of these rocks from the mainly north-south trending collisional Neoproterozoic Mozambique Mobile Belt defined the temperature/pressure (T/P) metamorphic conditions which the rocks of the study area have been subjected to. The orientation of mineral cleavages in thin section sections indicated the rearrangements of the fabrics of rocks as being the results of internal and external stresses reflecting the tectonic history of the high grade Ikanga area.

### **5.2 Ferrous Bearing Outcrops**

Iron cap outcrop deposits commonly known as cangas are common in places to the highland portion of the study area mainly in the surroundings of the intersection of the north-south (NS) and east-west (EW) trending. Canga can be defined as a tough, well-consolidated rock consisting essentially of hard blocks and fragments of the rocks of an iron formation, cemented with limonite. Canga forms a valuable ore, which may run as high as 68% iron (Dorr, 2008; Glossary of Geology, 1980). Further, Anand and Butt (1988) and Anand et al. (1993) have provided the terminology and classification of deeply weathered regolith and addressed the issue of geochemical exploration in the complex lateritic environment of the Yilgarn Craton of Western Australia. Besides the metamorphic laterite enriched outcrops in the study area, the general soil also contains iron dispersion in its horizons. Less iron was reported in gneises, limestone/marbles, and quartz based on geochemical data analyses.

#### 5.3 Mode of Occurrence of the Ikanga Iron Deposit

In considering the mode of occurrence of the iron deposit in the study area, it is necessary

first of all to define what iron formation are and how many categories these are divided into. The term iron formation was defined by James (1954), modified by Morris (1993) and reaffirmed by Klein (2002) in relation to banded iron formation as:

"A chemical sediment, typically thin bedded or laminated, whose principal chemical characteristic is an anomalously high content of iron, commonly but not necessarily containing layers of chert".

An original minimum iron content of 15 wt% (James, 1954) is loosely adopted by some researchers today (Ohmoto and Felder, 1987).

In terms of categories, the Archaean-Proterozoic banded iron formations (BIFs) are divided into three main categories. These are termed the Algoma; Lake-Superior and Rapitan-types and range in age from Archaean through to Paleoproterozoic to Neoproterozoic respectively (Gross, 1965; Gross, 1983). The Algoma-type BIFs were deposited during the Archaean (between approximately 3.5 to 2.6 Ga) and exhibit a volcanic arc-greenstone belt association (Gross, 1983). The Algoma-type BIFs are relatively thin (< 100m thick) and of limited areal extent (<100km<sup>2</sup>), and have high iron oxide and silica contents. They are thought to be deposited in association with proximal oceanic hydrothermal plumes (black smokers). In terms of size, the Superior-type BIFs dominate the three BIFs categories. The largest examples of these BIFs have been calculated to contain >  $10^{14}$  Mt of iron (James and Trendell, 1982), with examples on each of the five main continents (Simonson, 1985; Smith et al., 2000). These thick (>100m thick), and laterally extensive (>1000km<sup>2</sup>) BIFs were deposited during the Paleoproterozoic (approximately 2.2 to 1.8 Ga) and represent the major period of iron deposition in the Earth's history.

The Superior-type BIFs generally consist of fine-grained iron oxides, carbonates or sulphides, and occur in planar form in mm- to cm- scale bands, usually alternating with similar scale bands of chert. The Rapitan-type BIFs are generally thin, usually restricted, and chert-poor bodies. Most are of Neoproterozoic age (approximately 0.8 to 0.6 Ga) and are thought to be the result of iron precipitation caused by oxidation after the retreat ice-sheets from previously covered, anoxic water bodies. The major global distribution of selected banded formations is presented in Figure 5.1 below. The mode of iron formation occurrence has been disputed. Both continental (e.g. Albert and McCulloch, 1993) and hydrothermal (e.g. Holland, 1973;

Simonson, 1985; Dymek and Klein, 1988) settings have been put forward as likely Fesources. In terms of source, older sedimentary iron bearing formations could be a source of iron. The Ikanga iron deposit which is the focus of this study may very likely have occurred as the result of the chemical weathering of older Precambrian banded iron formations (BIFs). If this is the case, therefore, it is a secondary deposit in which all of the banding and primary fabrics have been destroyed due to intense metamorphism and deformation over a prolonged geological period.



Figure 5.1 Global distribution of major and selected banded iron-formations and districts, modified after Klien (2002).

With such a prolonged geological history of the reworking of the Ikanga iron deposit, it became more granular and thinner and was dispersed in the regolith where it was localized within the upper most horizon in coexistence with other associated minerals. Its mode of occurrence can also be related to the Neoproterozoic iron bearing sedimentary deposits as reworked materials of Precambrian origin and may be described as marine iron bearing sedimentary deposit in this landmass. However, debate supporting the Archaean-Paleoproterozoic setting of iron formations cannot be ignored in this study. Ohmoto and Felder (1987) argued that Archaean-Paleoproterozoic iron formations are the precursors for secondary iron formations of which the Ikanga iron deposit is an example.

# 5.4 Discussion of Magnetic Data and Analysis of the Magnetic Signal Source Depth

Consideration of Figure 4.2 and Figure 4.3 indicates that the magnetic source symbols mark the locations and orientations of linear structures at depth caused by shearing and subsequent mineral alterations. The areas occupied by the magnetic highs may coincide with the locations of iron formations. Ground truth investigations should be conducted to verify this assumption. The reflections of magnetic analytical signals approximated the various depths from zero (0) meters on the surface to over one hundred (100) meters in the subsurface in which the Ikanga-type iron formation occurs. The variability of these depths indicates that the Ikanga iron deposit is scattered within the regolith. The movement of this iron formation is influenced by rain waters that seep downwards into the subsurface.

However, near surface secondary iron formation may also occur directly due to the conduction of high temperature heat (Hamade el al, 2003), or at lower temperature in the presence of water. For this reason dehydrated zones may repeat lower down in the hydrated and mottle zone and below where water may gain selective access through faulting and permeability to carry and deposit iron and associated minerals. Hence, Similar processes have been recognized in several ore bodies in the Hamersley Province of western Australia (e.g., Paraburdoo 4 East), where the upper most dehydrated layer is 10 m thick and, successively, lower levels become thinner (Clout, 2003).

#### 5.5 Geochemical Data from the Ikanga Iron Deposit

The geochemical data analyzed from the project area indicated predominantly oxide facies mineralization. In this oxide facies domain, the  $Fe_2O_3$  wt% is the main iron oxide. The  $Fe_2O_3$  wt% in the hematite mineral analyzed rangers from 72.4 to 86.3 wt% with an average of 79.98 wt%; in gneisses the  $Fe_2O_3$  content ranges from 3.38 to 16.5 wt% with an average of 7.97 wt%; and in soils the  $Fe_2O_3$  content ranges from 3.89 to 79.6 wt% with an average of 22.65 wt%. These analytical results exceed an original minimum exploitable iron content described by James (1954).

#### **5.6 Conclusions**

This project was carried out within the stipulated time. The full understanding of the project area was accomplished through the field mapping work, field observations and data collection, and in the applications of remote sensing, geophysical and geochemical methods, and usage of approaches, materials, and software given in Chapter 2 of this dissertation. The conclusions were deduced from this research project-:

- Rocks of the project area are Neoproterozoic in age commonly known as remobilized rocks of Precambrian origin. These rocks have been subjected to strain and stress associated with the high grade metamorphism of the north-south trending Neoproterozoic Mozambique Mobile Belt.
- 2. It is concluded that the study area corresponds to a particular geologic environment in the Neoproterozoic Mozambique Belt of Kenya, characterized by end of Neogene/Tertiary surface of gently and undulating elevations showing reworked Neoproterozoic rocks of Precambrian in origin with various litho-clastic sediments containing dominant oxide facies mineralization., Fe<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> is the main iron oxide among the non-iron oxide domain of SiO<sub>2</sub>, CaO, TiO<sub>2</sub>, MgO, K<sub>2</sub>O, MnO, Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>, Na<sub>2</sub>O and SiO<sub>2</sub>.
- 3. The analysis of the total magnetic image (TMI) of the area indicates a major magnetic high centred on the south eastern side and spreading outwards with lesser magnitude along a southwest-northeast trend. A major magnetic low trending northeast to north in the central part of the study area appears to occupy a southwest-northeast trending shear zone.
- 4. The analysis of the total magnetic image (TMI) of the study area and associated magnetic source symbols indicate that the depth symbols follow a general southwest-northeast direction and occur at a general boundary between the main magnetic high to the east and the main magnetic low to the west.
- 5. The magnetic source data mark the locations and orientations of the southwest-northeast trending linear structures at depth caused by shearing and subsequent mineral alterations. The areas occupied by the magnetic highs are interpreted to coincide with locations of the iron formations and these require ground truthing and follow-up.
- 6. The Ikanga iron deposit occurs at various depths (0 to over 100 m) in the regolith, scattered, and shows no indication of well defined and concentrated portions in the

subsurface which makes it very difficult to recommend its exploitation until further work and ground truthing is done.

- 7. The Ikanga iron deposit is a residual deposit derived from a Precambrian banded iron formation (BIF) by chemical weathering processes. Plots of the geochemical data confirm this conclusion. The BIF from which the Ikanga iron deposit is derived occurred in along the Neoproterozoic Mozambique Belt with destruction of primary fabrics correlated as due to prolonged polycyclic deformation and metamorphism.
- 8. This deposit is considered to be of low economic value until more work is done to prove economic viability. More resources will be required to conduct further tests and to pilot extraction to find out whether this deposit can pay for itself.

#### **5.7 Recommendations**

This deposit is a scattered one, and so it requires detailed exploration. The following are the recommendations arising from this study:-

- 1. That ground truthing and follow-up of the magnetic anomalies be carried out to further define in more detail the nature and extent of the mineralized zone.
- 2. That soil grids be established at least two hundred meters apart, six hundred meters total as base line and with three intersecting cross traverse lines, each two hundred meters (m) long on either side of the base line perpendicular to it. It is further recommended that two trenches on both sides of each cross line be dug at the spaces of fifty (50) meter (m) intervals for more detailed sampling..
- 3. The length of each trench should be ten (10) meters (m), width two (2) meters (m), and depth two (2) meters (m). At this depth it is possible to approach the saprocks. Geochemical data will then be collected for analyses in these trenches. This method is less expensive than drilling but labor intensive. This approach will be appropriate since the magnetic method at times does not give a total picture and identity of some iron ore bodies and may yield false anomalies. Following the trenching phase, drilling may then follow to confirm the nature of the magnetic anomalies in the Ikanga area.
- 4. The soil composition in the study area is also good for bricks making, and can be used for building brick houses. The soil bricks are good because they are rich in iron content which make them hold together. The tenacity of the bricks will give the buildings long life times.

5. Finally it is strongly recommended that geological professionals should conduct further research in the study area to confirm the results of this study as this area definitely has potential for occurrence of economic mineral deposits.

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# APPENDIX

The following sections are appendix. Magnetic data acquired during the ground geophysical mapping in the field are presented

# Appendix : Magnetic data from Ikanga area

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	7			393976	9	33580
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393180	9	33630			8	
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393660	9	33367			8	
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