THE ATTITUDES OF MAASAI PARENTS TOWARDS ALTERNATIVE RITES OF PASSAGE OF GIRLS IN CENTRAL DIVISION, NAROK COUNTY, KENYA

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OCTOBER, 2014
DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for an award of a degree in any other university.

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(N50/66382/2010)

This thesis has been submitted for examination with our approval as the university supervisors.

Signature…………………………….. Date…………………………

Stevie M. Nangendo (Ph.D.)

Signature------------------------------------------ Date-------------------------------

Owuor Olungah (Ph.D.)
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my dear mother for her unwavering support as well as the brave uncircumcised Maasai girls who never gave up even when the odds were against them.
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Last but not least, I acknowledge my mother for being my inspiration, her understanding, and unwavering support that has seen me through these hard times. Finally, I would want to thank a special person in my life Miss Zila Aziz Juma.
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# ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>ARP</td>
<td>Alternative rites of passage</td>
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<tr>
<td>FGC</td>
<td>Female genital cutting</td>
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<tr>
<td>FGM</td>
<td>Female genital mutilation</td>
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<tr>
<td>KDHS</td>
<td>Kenya Demographic and Health Survey</td>
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<td>MYWO</td>
<td>Maendeleo ya Wanawake Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOH</td>
<td>Ministry of Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organizations</td>
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<tr>
<td>PATH</td>
<td>Programme for Appropriate Technology in Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nation Children’s Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPSS</td>
<td>Statistical Package for Social Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>KNBS</td>
<td>Kenya National Bureau of Statistics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FGD</td>
<td>Focus Group Discussions</td>
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<tr>
<td>GTZ</td>
<td>German Technical Corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non Governmental Organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLE</td>
<td>Family Life Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICF-MACRO</td>
<td>Inner City Fund-Consulting Company</td>
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ABSTRACT
This study sought to investigate the attitudes of Maasai parents towards the alternative rites of passage (ARP) of young girls as opposed to female genital cutting. The study had three objectives: To establish the influence of cultural practices on attitudes among parents about alternative rites of passage of young Maasai girls; to investigate the impact of the formal education of parents on alternative rites of passage and also to establish the influence of the community on the attitudes of parents on alternative rites of passage of young Maasai girls. The objectives were guided by the social bond theory which attempts to explain why individuals choose to conform to conventional norms.

Data were collected using unstructured interviews, key informant interviews and focus group discussions. A total of 50 individuals were drawn from three sub-locations, namely, Siabei, Ilmashariani and Olopito, and were subjected to unstructured questionnaires. The research also conducted three Focus Group Discussions consisting of 10 participants each (with men, women and girls) and conducted indepth interviews with 10 key informants. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used in the analysis of the quantitative data generated from the questionnaires while the qualitative information was analysed thematically along the lines of the study objectives. The information has been presented in the form of tables and percentages in relation to the research objectives and in verbatim quotes where necessary to amplify the voices of the informants and focus group discussions participants.

The study found that firstly, parents are well versed with the alternative rites of passage but they feel that the program is too formal and that the spearheaders have not involved them actively. Secondly, the community has extensive attachment to the cultural values in which FGM/C find acceptance and processes of instituting ARPs are not easily acceptable. In terms of the distinction between the educated and uneducated parents, the study reveals that educated parents have a positive attitude towards alternative rites of passage compared to their uneducated counterparts.

The study concluded that members of the Maasai community are key in the fight against female genital cutting since their input is significant in the abandonment of the practice. According to the research, parents are not being engaged actively in the alternative rites of passage programmes by both the government and other agencies. The government together with the non-governmental organizations need to be friendlier in their alternative rites of passage outreach programmes.
CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1 Introduction

Over 150 million children in 28 countries worldwide have been subjected to female genital cutting, also known as female genital mutilation or female circumcision (Lax, 2000). Female genital cutting is a traditional practice that involves cutting or altering the female genitalia as a rite of passage or for other socio-cultural reasons. The practice occurs mainly in Africa and Asia. The prevalent rates in Kenya stood at 37.8 percent in 1998, 32.2 percent in 2003 and 27.1 percent in 2008 (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) and ICF Macro, 2010), although, the health implications and ramifications of this practice are becoming manifest worldwide (Epstein et al., 2001). This global number of 150 million hides the many variations observed in the practice. According to the World Health Organization (2008), there are three main categories of female genital cutting. Type I, or clitoridectomy, also often referred to as Sunna, involves the partial or total removal of the clitoris, while Type II, also known as excision, involves the partial or total removal of the clitoris and labia minora, the Maasai practice type II. On the other hand, Type III, similarly called infibulation or Pharaonic circumcision, involves the excision of the entire clitoris, some parts or all of the labia minora and some or all of the labia majora. What tissue remains is stitched together leaving a very small vaginal and urethral opening (Chege et al., 2001).

In Kenya, the Ministry of Health issued a National Plan of Action for the Elimination of Female Genital Cutting in 1999 (1999-2019), which set out broad goals, strategies, targets and indicators (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) and ICF Macro, 2010). In 2001, Kenya also adopted the Children’s Act which made female genital cutting illegal for girls under the age of 18. The potential penalties under the Kenyan laws for anyone subjecting a child to female genital cutting is twelve months imprisonment and/or a fine of up to Kshs. 50,000 (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics). However, this law, which aims to protect girls and women against harmful cultural practices, has had little if any, effect on the customs of the Maasai and other ethnic communities of Kenya. An act of parliament put in place a law against female
genital cutting on September 30, 2011, however, it was not until the fourth of October that the law was commenced (Government of Kenya, 2011). Unlike the previous law on the same which protected girls from general harmful cultural practices, the new law specifically targets female genital cutting for girls below the age of eighteen and above. It defines female genital cutting by distinguishing it from medical sexual re-assignment procedures, surgical procedures connected with childbirth and surgery that is essential for the physical or mental health of a woman as well as surgeries performed for therapeutic purposes (Wangari, 2011). The law further stipulates that culture and religion cannot be used as excuses to perform the procedure and will also not be considered as a defence under this new law. Offences and penalties are also outlined in this law. For instance, anyone who is found guilty of a crime under this law will be fined a minimum of Kshs. 300,000 and a maximum of Kshs. 500,000, while a jail term will range from three years to a maximum of seven years (Wangari, 2011).

The idea of alternative rites of passage, as conceptualised by PATH and MYWO, is to work with local communities in order to develop and support an initiation process that excludes genital cutting but which is still relevant to the cultural beliefs and behaviours of each ethnic group (UNICEF/PATH, 2010). The first alternative rites of passage program developed by MYWO and PATH took place in 1996 in Meru and since then these rites have taken place in Kisii, Narok and Tharaka Nithi Counties.

Fourteen years after the first ceremony, an annual alternative ritual ceremony takes place in female genital cutting affected areas and the number of families who choose this option instead of FGM continues to grow (UNICEF/PATH, 2010). The program collects the wisdom imparted to girls when they are circumcised and this involves a combination of activities that include: (i) Education to young girls and women about growing up and making the transition to womanhood. Some alternative rites of passage programmes also cover the health risks of female genital cutting, its illegality and violations of the rights of girls and women and, (ii) a publicly recognised ceremony that includes feasting, gift giving and the presentation of graduation certificates (Evelia et al., 2007).
In Narok County, The Taasaru Girls Education Centre is actively trying to eliminate female genital cutting through education, awareness campaigns, legislative lobbying and advocacy for alternative rites of passage. The alternative rituals that this organization conducts include education by community elders, public ceremonies and retreat-style seclusion of young girls for several days (Prazak, 2007). Sensitisation through peer educators is a key activity, where field staff train selected community members on abandoning the practice. During their interactions, the field staff aims to identify Maasai community members who show support for the eradication of female genital cutting and are suitable to receive training as voluntary peer educators.

In some cases, community leaders assist in the identification of members of the community (Muteshi and Sass, 2005). Both men and women are recruited, although most peer trainers are women. The youth are girls who have decided not to be circumcised and are used as role models. The peer educators are expected to undertake one-to-one and group meetings so as to identify parents and girls willing to participate in the alternative rites training and to assist field staff in group sensitisation workshops. Despite these interventions, none of the alternative rituals to counter female genital cutting has been successful because these programs have failed to change the social norms underlying female genital cutting (Muteshi and Sass, 2005). The research therefore set out to find out the attitudes of Maasai parents towards the rites of passage activities in the community.

1.2 Problem statement
Despite harbouring less favourable attitudes regarding female genital cutting, a significant number of educated parents opposed to female genital cutting have had or intend to have their daughters circumcised. According to UNICEF/PATH (2010), the educated community members may have been forgotten in the female genital cutting abandonment programs, which have traditionally focused on the youth, and rural uneducated communities, thus, drawing a lot of questions regarding the perceptions of educated parents toward alternative rites of passage (UNICEF/PATH, 2010).
Since a Maasai girl is considered mature only after female genital cutting has been performed, this usually occurs between the ages of 7 and 14 years. To these women, being circumcised has social, psychological, economical and health benefits. For them, marriage and reproduction are the only guarantees for a woman to gain economic security and social status (Chege et al., 2001).

Despite intense lobbying by the government and private sector to eliminate the practice, there has been low reception towards the alternative rites of passage. Therefore, this study investigated the attitudes of members of the Maasai community regarding alternative rites of passage program and specifically the parents of the girls who go through this program. This was in order to grasp their views and recommendations regarding the program since alternative rites of passage affect this community directly with regard to values attached to the traditional rites of passage.

On the other hand, female genital cutting is still rampant among the Maasai and very little has changed over the years with regard to its abandonment. There is no study that has sought to assess attitudes among Maasai parents on the alternative rites of passage of girls (Evelia et al., 2001).

This study was guided by the following research questions.

i) What are the attitudes of Maasai parents towards alternative rites of passage in the community?

ii) How does the formal education of parents affect their attitudes towards the alternative rites of passage of young Maasai girls?

iii) What influence does the community have on parents’ attitudes towards the alternative rites of passage of young Maasai girls?

1.3 Research objectives

1.3.1 General objective
To explore the attitudes of Maasai parents towards the alternative rites of passage of young girls.
1.3.2 Specific objectives

i) To establish the attitudes of Maasai parents towards the alternative rites of passage of young Maasai girls.

ii) To investigate the impact of formal education on parents’ attitude towards the alternative rites of passage of young Maasai girls.

iii) To establish the influence of the community on the parents’ attitudes towards the alternative rites of passage of young Maasai girls.

1.4 Justification of the study

There is limited information regarding the alternative rites of passage approach. The findings of this study will help form a crucial basis for further research in this area. It will also help the government and other key stakeholders to understand that stringent laws on female circumcision cannot work alone and may not be the ultimate solution to eradicating female genital cutting. However, through education of members of the Maasai community by the different stakeholders, the Maasai may be persuaded to acknowledge the harmfulness of female genital cutting necessary in the path to embracing alternative rites of passage, hence, a reduction in the many health complications and social problems associated with the practice. This will also contribute to the pool of existing knowledge on the subject under study.

1.5 Scope of the study

This study was carried out in the three sub-locations, namely, Siabei, Ilmashariani and Olopito sub-locations of Narok township, Narok North Constituency of Narok County. The locations were chosen because of their proximity to Narok Town and the Taasaru Rescue Centre. The researcher felt that the parents in these areas will be privy to information regarding the study. Related data from other studies were used to complement the findings of this study. This study focused on the attitudes of Maasai parents towards the alternative rites of passage. For the purposes of the study only parents based in Central Division, Narok County were studied.
1.6 Limitations of the study

Rites of passage are important and sensitive practices especially with regard to culture and since there is a standing law against female genital cutting in Kenya, there could have been distortions of facts which could have affected the quality of the results. To guard against this bias, the researcher made use of a tape recorder and a local research assistant in order to get accurate and logical flow of information. Further, triangulation of methods ensured that different shades of opinions were sought to validate other opinions. The research was limited to only a small sample in order to counter the problem of funds and time constraints.

1.7 Definition of key terms

**Alternative rites of passage:** These are initiation processes that exclude genital cutting but which are still relevant to the cultural beliefs and behaviours of each ethnic group.

**Cultural practices:** These are the initiation processes that include genital cutting, male circumcision, tooth extraction and other practices relevant to the cultural beliefs and behaviours of each ethnic group.

**Female circumcision:** According to this study, it refers to a friendly and non offensive use of the term female genital cutting.

**Family life education:** In this study, it refers to the training that girls are exposed to as part of alternative rites of passage.

**Female genital cutting:** In this study, it refers to a traditional practice that involves cutting or altering of the female genitalia as a rite of passage or for other socio-cultural reasons.

**Female genital mutilation:** In this study, it refers to the removal or infibulation (or both) of the whole or part of the clitoris, the labia minora or the labia majora.

**Traditional rites of passage:** These are the rites which involve the complete or partial removal or alteration of the external genitalia for non medical reasons.
1.8 Study Assumptions

i) Parents of Maasai girls have a negative attitude towards the alternative rites of passage in the community.

ii) Education enhances a positive attitude of Maasai parents towards the alternative rites of passage in the community.

iii) The community through the social norms theory negatively influences the attitude of Maasai parents towards the alternative rites of passage.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This section reviews the existing literature on female genital cutting, alternative rites of passage and the attitudes of various societies towards this practice. This review is done with the purpose of providing a theoretical framework and assumptions that enabled the answering of the research questions.

An alternative rite of passage in Kenya is used differently in various places with varying degrees of success. In the Kuria and Abagusii communities, for instance, it is seen as an approach to be used in combination with other activities as part of a holistic programme encouraging the abandonment of female genital mutilation (Evelia et al., 2007). However, Evelia et al., (2007) felt that it was unlikely that either the Kuria or Abagusii would adopt the alternative rites of passage events and sponsor them from their own resources in the future.

An alternative view sees neither education nor legislation or medicalisation as central in the attempt at eradication but argues instead that a decline in the incidence of female genital cutting will be the consequence of larger social changes (Morrison, 2009). Further, it is posited that improvements in the socio-economic status and education, particularly for women will have a far reaching social effects (Morrison et al., 2009).

In Narok County, The Taasaru Girls Education Centre is actively trying to eliminate female genital cutting through education, awareness campaigns, legislative lobbying and advocacy for alternative rites of passage. The alternative rituals that this organization conducts include education by community elders, public ceremonies and retreat-style seclusion of young girls for several days (Prazak, 2007). Sensitisation through peer educators is a key activity, where field staff train selected community members on abandoning the practice. During their interactions, the field staff aim to identify Maasai community members who show support for the eradication of female genital cutting and are suitable to receive training as voluntary peer educators. In
some cases, community leaders assist in the identification of members of the community (Muteshi and Sass, 2005). Both men and women are recruited, although most peer trainers are women. The youth are girls who have decided not to be circumcised and are used as role models. The peer educators are expected to undertake one-to-one and group meetings so as to identify parents and girls willing to participate in the alternative rites training and to assist field staff in group sensitisation workshops. Despite these interventions none of the alternative rituals to counter female genital cutting has been successful because these programs have failed to change the social norms underlying female genital cutting (Muteshi and Sass, 2005).

2.2 The attitudes of parents towards the alternative rites of passage worldwide

The practice of female genital cutting derives from varied and complex belief systems. The rationalizations for this practice and slow acceptance of alternative rites of passage include the beliefs that it is a "good tradition" (Gruenbaum, 2003), a necessary rite of passage to womanhood, that it ensures cleanliness or better marriage prospects, prevents promiscuity and excessive clitoral growth, preserves virginity, enhances male sexuality and facilitates child birth. The degree of fixedness over female genital cutting varies widely. For example, in some settings like the Maasai, it persists essentially as a rite of passage whilst in other settings such as the Ameru; the focus is on the preservation of virginity, chastity and fidelity. The cultural keepers of the practice vary as well. Among the keepers in different settings may be excisors, older women in the family or culturally designated groups of women in the community and in some cases even male barbers, therefore, making it almost impossible to accept any other foreign practice such as the alternative rites of passage programs (Prazak, 2007).

An un-circumcised girl in the Maasai community is seen as an outcast who cannot keep secrets and will have loose morals; she will not be able to maintain good hygiene at home; being a coward, she remains a child, and thus cannot be respectable and lacks self-esteem and confidence. Among the Kuria society an un-circumcised girl is regarded as less than mature, a social anomaly, and unable to participate fully in adult relationships. Given these beliefs, it is unsurprising that parents are ambivalent about encouraging their daughters not to undergo genital cutting. An element of confusion
arises from the continuing promotion of male genital cutting at the same time that female genital cutting is being agitated against (Ahlberg et al., 1997; Caldwell, et al., 1997; Soori et al., 1997). For a people who see the two as equivalent in the functions they serve, promoting one at the same time as dissuading people from the other makes no sense (Murray, 1974).

Ahmadu (2000) posits that, female genital cutting served a special function because uncircumcised clitoris and penis are considered homologous aesthetically and hygienically: Just as the male foreskin covers the head of the penis, the female foreskin covers the clitoral glands. Both, lead to build-up of amegma and bacteria in the layers of skin between the hood and glands. This accumulation is thought of as odorous, susceptible to infection and a nuisance to keep clean on a daily basis. Further, circumcised women point to the risks of painful clitoral adhesions that occur in girls and women who do not cleanse properly and to the requirement of excision as a treatment for these extreme cases. Supporters of female circumcision also point to the risk of clitoral hypertrophy or an enlarged clitoris that resembles a small penis (Ahmadu, 2000).

Female genital cutting is generally regarded as a traditional custom. It remains central and highly valued. It marks maturity and the inception of womanhood in a way that has yet to be replaced. Just as the conflict that arose about its banning in 1929 was a real conflict, and no mere pretense for a larger political agenda, so its survival, even as a relic, gives proof of its continuing importance to self-identity (Murray, 1974:366). The debate has a political dimension, but it is a real issue to most who are affected by it (Murray, 1974).

For these reasons, many circumcised women view the decision to circumcise their daughters as something as obvious as the decision to circumcise sons: why, one woman asked, would any reasonable mother want to burden her daughter with excess clitoral and labial tissue that is unhygienic, unsightly and interferes with sexual penetration, especially if the same mother would choose circumcision to ensure healthy and aesthetically appealing genitalia for her son (Ahmadu, 2000).
Oboler (2001) argues that for many in the Maasai community, it is difficult to support a campaign aimed at eradicating female genital cutting and belittles those who practice it, by displaying the tradition as irrational, ignorant and/or backward. And when proponents of alternatives to female genital cutting articulate as cultural insiders, the same deprecating language and attitude toward genital cutting that is leveled by cultural outsiders create an upheaval that stands in the way of community self-determination. Oboler (2001) suggests that these cultural insiders would halt a process of advancing a dialogue between community members who could identify alternatives to fill social functions and satisfy needs now related to genital cutting. Oboler (2001) goes on to posit that non-governmental organizations and the local leaders should support and rethink their efforts in order for change to take place. By doing this, they can integrate a process of community self-determination, which has been used successfully in other Kenyan settings such as among the Ameru and Agikuyu to bring about an end to female genital cutting (Oboler, 2001)

2.3 Impact of formal education on alternative rites of passage

A qualitative research by UNICEF/PATH (1998) among the Agikuyu, Kalenjin, Abagusii, Ameru and Maasai indicate that families with higher levels of formal education, those living in urban areas and those with higher economic statuses as well as Christian oriented-families, were more likely to have more positive attitudes and practices towards abandoning the practice.

A large number of parents in Narok County acknowledge that circumstances in their communities are changing. In their words, as reported in the national media, they regret that Maasai women have been left behind in education and national development as a result of limited educational achievement, genital cutting and early marriages. Some of those willing to eliminate female genital cutting from the culture explain that "the value of bride price has drastically gone down and girls are no longer considered a major source of wealth" (Atieno, 2004). These men interviewed by the media say the girls can stay uncircumcised go to school, and hopefully, gain employment that will help them support their natal families. Empowerment of girls, their self-determination and choices, are not among the issues being considered by most parents as a part of what the genital-cutting controversy is about (Atieno, 2004).
Findings from Maendeleo ya Wanawake reveal that despite high prevalence rate of female genital cutting, young girls are more likely than their parents to oppose the practice of female genital cutting and support alternative rites of passage. This is as a result of the generational gap among other socio-cultural issues. Alternative rites of passage implementers regard adolescents as one of their most critical target audiences (Goldberg, 2009). Outreach program are carried out in schools, and informal means such as youth associations. Similarly, urban and educated parents are more inclined to support alternative rites of passage and disapprove of female genital cutting as compared with their rural and less educated counterparts (Goldberg, 2005).

According to Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) and ICF Macro (2010), there has been a gradual decline in the proportion of Kenyan women who are circumcised from 38% in 1998 to 32% in 2003 and 27% in 2008/2009. The decline rises with the level of the education of the women involved. In particular, girls who have had at least secondary education are less likely to be circumcised (19%) as compared with women with no education, of whom 54% have undergone female genital cutting (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) and ICF Macro, 2010).

### 2.3.1 Attempts to stop female genital cutting

With the colonization of African countries, Europeans made several attempts to stop the practice of female genital cutting. Attempts to stop this practice have continued until modern times with various degrees of success (Prazak and Coffman, 2007). In particular, when colonial governments tried to oppose female genital cutting in Kenya during the 1930s, they found that Kenyans actually increased their circumcision rituals as a response of their rebellion against colonialism. Likewise, in Sudan, during the 1940s, the opposition towards female genital cutting by colonial governments was unsuccessful (Lane and Rubinstein, 1996).

As late as the 1960s, studies of female genital cutting were conducted without condemning the practice. However, in the 1970s, more westerners traveled to Africa and began to openly oppose female circumcision (Lane and Rubinstein, 1996). In 1979, the World Health Organization and the Sudanese government co-sponsored a seminar focusing on female circumcision and its health consequences (Lane and Rubinstein, 1996). More importantly, in 1995 the Women’s International Conference
in Beijing proposed that female circumcision be considered within the category of human rights violations. Overtime, many nations around the world have begun to take actions regarding the damaging health effects of female circumcision (Prazak, 2007). These changes have occurred gradually and the response of each culture to anti-female circumcision campaigns has met varying degrees of success (Prazak and Coffman, 2007).

Alternative rites of passage differ from other rites of passage in that they are a replacement of the traditional ceremony. It is an acknowledgement that the traditional rites of passage is worthy of being kept but the practice of circumcision and other harmful practices need to be changed. To be accepted, the alternative rites should be created and/or organized by the local community in order to meet the needs of the original ceremony. This is because simply exchanging the circumcision operation for another less harmful act, while keeping the rest of the entire ceremony the same, might be culturally acceptable. Still, the alternative rites of passage need to be significant and meaningful to the local community. As a replacement for female genital cutting, the local community might decide that branding and/or tattooing, for instance, are meaningful yet less harmful alternatives (Coulter, 2005).

2.3.2 Government policy on female genital cutting in Kenya
In 1999, the Ministry of Health issued a National Plan of Action for the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation (1999-2019), which set out broad goals, strategies, targets and indicators (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) and ICF Macro, 2010). In 2001, Kenya adopted the Children’s Act which made female genital mutilation illegal for girls under the age of 18. The potential penalties under the Kenyan laws for anyone subjecting a child to female genital cutting is twelve months imprisonment and/or a fine of up to Kshs. 50,000 (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) and ICF Macro, 2010). However, this law combined with others such as the Sexual Violence Act, and the Domestic Violence Act, which aims to protect girls and women against harmful cultural practices, have had little if any, effect on the customs of the Maasai and other communities of Kenya (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) and ICF Macro, 2010).
A new law was put in place against female circumcision on September 7, 2011 (Wangari, 2011). Unlike the previous law on the same which protected girls from general harmful cultural practices, the new one specifically targets female genital cutting for both women below the age of eighteen and above. It defines female genital cutting by distinguishing it from medical sexual re-assignment procedures, surgical procedures connected with childbirth, and surgery that is essential for the physical or mental health of a woman as well as surgeries performed for therapeutic purposes (Wangari, 2011).

The law further stipulates that culture and religion cannot be used as an excuse to perform the procedure, arguing that the women who were circumcised had consented to the procedure will also not be considered as a defence under this new law. Offences and penalties are also outlined in this law. For instance, one found guilty of a crime under this law will be fined a minimum of Kshs. 300,000 and a maximum of Kshs. 500,000 while a jail term will last from three years to a maximum of seven years (Wangari, 2011).

2.3.3 Development of the alternative rites of passage in Kenya

Kenya has a long history of anti-female circumcision campaigns but unfortunately almost all have been unsuccessful. For example, in the Kuria community of Kenya, 289 women were invited to an educational conference by the local non-governmental organizations in collaboration with the local churches at Kehancha town on alternative rites of passage (Rainbow, 1995). During the conference, female circumcision was denounced and the women signed contracts declaring that they would not participate in the practice.

However, eighty percent of the females in attendance went home and they were immediately circumcised, some on their own choice and others because of community pressures. Some of the women reported that the weaknesses of the anti-female circumcision campaigns included: the use of outsiders who were not viewed as part of the community to preach to Kenyan women and the use of educational conferences as alternatives to female genital cutting. These conferences did not resemble the ceremonies associated with traditional female genital cutting (Morrison et al., 2001).
According to Prazak and Coffman (2007), for anti-female circumcision efforts to be successful in Kenya in particular and Africa in general, alternative rites of passage will need to better match the needs of the community.

An alternative rite of passage refers to a structured programme of activities with community-level sensitization for it to first gain support and later to recruit the girls to participate. This is followed by a public ritual that includes training the girls in family life education (FLE) and a public ceremony similar to that found in traditional rites of passage. The intention is to simulate the traditional ritual as closely as possible without actually circumcising the girls (Prazak, 2007).

2.4 Maasai community influence over alternative rites of passage

Among many ethnic groups in Kenya, female genital cutting features as a central component of a traditional rite of passage that girls are expected to pass through in their transition from puberty to adulthood. In these situations, therefore, having made the decision not to cut their daughters, parents are then faced with the dilemma of what to do about the traditional ritual, which allows them and their daughters to publicly announce the transition to womanhood. To address this problem, PATH introduced the idea of an alternative ritual, which excluded genital cutting. However, it maintained the other essential components such as education for the girls on family life and women’s roles, exchange of gifts, eating good food and to wrap the ceremony a public declaration for community recognition (Were, 2007)

Stigmatization of girls that have not undergone the cut is prevalent with older Maasai parents calling young uncircumcised girls names that make them feel out of place and therefore, forcing them to take the cut. Uncircumcised women are considered outcasts and they find it difficult to find marriage partners and when they do sometimes they are forced to go through the cut at old age so that they can fulfill traditional requirements (Goldberg, 2009). The girls undergo the cut at an early stage during which they obey all the orders from their parents. These girls are then forced into early marriages and their education is sometime cut short (Goldberg, 2009).

Communities have put strong enforcement mechanisms into place to make sure that people conform to the practice. These include rejection as marriage partners of women who have not undergone female genital cutting, immediate divorce for
unexcised women, derogatory songs, public exhibitions and witnessing of complete removal before marriages, forced excisions and instillation of fear of the unknown through curses and evocation of ancestral wrath. On the other hand, girls who undergo female genital cutting are provided with rewards, including public recognition and celebrations, gifts, potential for marriages, respect and the ability to participate in adult social functions (Prazak, 2007).

Circumcision basically prepares a Maasai girl and establishes her worth on the marriage market. To prospective in-laws, it makes her a fit and appropriate bride and to the parents, the girl now attracts a high bride-price. For example, she is now worth a substantial 49 goats and 10 cows in the Meru area while among the Maa speakers, it ranges from 5 cows and 7 sheep to 15 cows and 21 sheep depending on the clans the girls are married into (MOH/GTZ and Population Council a and b, 2004). Female genital cutting is also meant to test the courage of a girl by showing how she endures pain. Uncircumcised girls beyond puberty have little value, they are generally ridiculed and ignored (MOH/GTZ and Population Council 2004a, 2004b).

So what are the parents attitudes towards changes introduced through programs such as the alternative rites of passage? The parents are ambivalent. They do not want to be seen as backward which is how national and international media describe them for continuing female genital cutting. The self-appointed leaders of the movement in the direction of alternative rites are using those terms as well. The youths, at least part of their cohort, oppose the idea of female genital cutting and therefore, it would seem that they welcome the opportunity to do something else. But even elders who support ending female genital cutting do not necessarily support the alternative rites of passage (Atieno, 2004).

The range of opinions among parents is more complex. There are resemblances between the current splits in opinion among Maasai parents and the four types of reactions and accommodation to outside interests regarding genital cutting described by Murray (1974) for the Maasai, the first group are the accommodators, people making an open break with the custom of female genital cutting. They have the most contact with Western influences and have summed up the pros and cons of
cooperation with the international world. They are the innovators whose alignment with NGO agendas may be a matter of enlightened self-interest. The second group consists of the well-educated dissidents who actively question the leaving of all things Maasai to be considered progressive. They value Maasai tradition, and are distrustful of the accommodators. The third group are the compromisers who are not yet dissidents; they accept with little question the traditional customs while making a habit of accepting new ideas, especially of development and progress, or of adoption of Christian faith.

For them, the solution offered by the mission-sponsored genital cutting was ideal. The fourth group is small and holds the dogmatic minority stance strongly influenced by an outside perspective. These people are ready to stand against a majority of people in the community who prefer to compromise and virtually pull out of local society to associate largely with likeminded individuals for mutual support. Members of the dogmatic minority are rigid on several issues though totally committed to a cause, separated and alienated from the rest of the community (Atieno, 2004).

2.5 Theoretical framework

2.5.1 Social bond theory

The social bond theory as developed by Hirschi (1969) does not attempt to explain why individuals engage in criminal acts, but rather why individuals choose to conform to conventional norms. It is premised on the postulate that individuals are more likely to get involved in deviant behaviors due to the absence, failure or weakening of societal and family bonds, hence, conformity to societal bond. The theory presents four social bonds which promote socialization and conformity, and these include attachment, commitment, involvement and belief. The theory claims that the stronger these four bonds are the least likely one would become delinquent. This also means that the stronger the bond the more likely an individual is to conform to societal rules, norms and practices. The postulate of Hirschi (1969) is based on an underlying assumption that individuals are potentially delinquents and non-conformist, however, law and order are maintained by the presence of social controls without which everyone has the potential to be deviant (Jones et al., 1999).
The first bond is that of attachment and this is related to one’s interests and connections to others. The acceptance of social norms and the development of social consciousness are conceived to be dependent on attachments to other people in society. Hirschi (1969) proposes that parents, schools and peers are important social institutions for individuals. In explaining these attachments, Hirschi (1969) discovered that adolescents avoid misbehaviors due to the possible consequences that would result from them, possibly affecting the relationships with their parents. This, however, will be largely dependent on the depth and quality of the parent-child relationship.

In terms of attachment to school, Hirschi (1969) discovered that the academic inability of an adolescent has a relationship with delinquent behavior. Therefore, he posited that poor academic performance results in adolescent dislike of a school and a rejection of teachers and school authorities which could result in deviant acts such as skipping school or antisocial behavior like fighting in school. Thus, the attachment of an individual to a school is related to an appreciation of a school and reception of an individual by schoolmates and teachers (Jones et al., 1999).

The second bond is that of commitment, which is related to the time, energy and effort invested in conventional lines of action such as office work and farming. The support and equal participation in societal activities bond the individual to the moral and ethical codes of the society. The social bond theory holds that people who build an investment in life, property and reputation are more likely to conform to societal rules and norms and less likely to deviate as this could affect their level of social interaction and jeopardize their positions in society (Jones et al., 1999).

The third bond is that of involvement, which addresses participation in activities that emphasize societal standards, interests and norms. Hirschi (1969) posits that the active participation of an individual in conventional activities leaves no opportunity for engagement in delinquency. For instance, involvement in school, family and recreation protects an adolescent from potential delinquent behaviours that may be a result of idleness (Jones et al., 1999).
The final bond is that of belief, which deals with acquiescence to norms and values of society. It includes respect for societal laws and the individuals and institutions which act as custodians of these laws, norms and traditions. Hirschi (1969) proposed that people who live in specific societies share similar human values and if their beliefs in these values are weakened, they are more likely to become deviant. He also proposed that if people perceive societal laws to be unfair, this bond to society is likely to become weakened, hence, increasing the possibility for deviance (Jones et al., 1999).

In fact, participation in female genital cutting a lot of times has to do with attachment. The practice is a traditional and cultural one for most girls and a form of expression of ethnic identity. However, the nature and type of the cut showcases ethnic differences and traditions. For some people this is done in infancy, thus, girls have no say in what is done to them; however in a lot of communities, the cutting is done in adolescence or early adulthood. The act of participation has to do with individual and family identifications with their cultural heritages (Toubia, 2000). The more a female is attached to her family, community and culture, the more likely she is to submit herself to the community’s definition of virginity, cleanliness, fertility, sexuality, personhood, beauty, identity and marriageability (Toubia, 2000).

Conforming to family or community norms outweighs the consequences of not conforming. That is, the pain and possible trauma associated with female genital cutting is in the opinion of an individual outweighed by the social and economic costs of refusal. Despite increased levels of educational and community awareness campaigns on the reproductive health implications of female genital cutting and international, national and local level legislations outlawing the practice for over twenty years, there is yet to be measurable changes in prevalence in the areas where the practice occurs (Ross, 1999).

The main issue in the concept of commitment by Hirschi (1969) is that individuals in those communities where the practice persists have strong bonds with their families and communities. These families and communities have what is known as accepted behavior and refusing to be cut will be regarded as deviance, therefore, ostracism may result (Rahman and Toubia, 2000). In some communities, extra steps are taken such
as denial of rights and privileges to the individual or members of their family. In some communities where there is intermarriage, a woman who is from a community that does not cut and marries into a female genital cutting community is denied public privileges of married women unless she consents to be cut. This is in consonance with the postulate of Hirschi (1969) about the likelihood of deviation being correlated with the jeopardizing of the position of a woman in society. Among the people of Sudan, for instance, where the practice of infibulation is common, after childbirth, a woman would chose to be re-infibulated so as to maintain social acceptance rather than leave her vaginal region open, which is better for her health. This is because, the pain and trauma related to genital cutting is exceeded by her social, economic and emotional costs as this action could result in ostracism and divorce (Dejong, 2006).

Involvement addresses participation in activities that emphasize societal standards, interests and norms. This can be related to the time, energy and effort invested in traditional ceremonies. Girls are secluded for between one to six months during which they are cut, pampered, trained in cooking as well as taking care of men physically and sexually. These are seen as parts of rites of passage, coming of age and womanhood initiation rites (Kalev, 2004). There is also the public and the ceremonial presentation of circumcised girls to the community, which involves festivities and provision of presents and gifts by their families and the communities. The ceremony also acts as a marriage mart, where potential husbands attend to pick wives that have been approved and commended by the community. The level of public and community involvement in this activity serves as a deterrent for deviance and results in stigma, ostracism and/or public ridicule for non-conformers. In such situations, non-participation is the exception and not the rule (Jones et al., 1999).

The belief systems that have to do with female genital cutting are so strong that parents ensure they do everything to get their daughters cut. This is because they believe they are protecting their future especially as related to marriageability, chastity, infertility and infant mortality (Tertilt, 2005).
Hirschi’s (1969) approach is appropriate in terms of explaining why female genital cutting persists. For instance, The initial concept of social control and the perception of society attempting to control the sexuality and sexual experiences of women. However, there are also issues, such as the strong bonds to culture and traditions. In particular, even in the face of severe health risks, a woman who has been infibulated and opened up for delivery would insist on being sewn back. This insistence is based on factors related to societal definition of beauty and aesthetics as well as societal beliefs related to fertility and childbirth. Also, this practice is pushed by strong attachments individuals have for their families, communities and traditions. In addition, their cultures ensure the promotion and perpetuation of female genital cutting while their needs and desires for social involvement prevent them from deviating from the norm. An understanding of the historical, cultural and traditional contexts of female genital cutting will help throw more light into how to address its eradication. A key, however, to addressing this practice is to develop interventions that do not seek to attack the practice but to weaken individual beliefs related to female genital cutting as well as to present the practice as being unfair to the girls.

2.5.2 Relevance of the theory to the study

The practice of female genital cutting is premised on different concepts related to social control and depending on which one is analyzed. One key concept related to the practice of female genital cutting is the belief that there is always potential for deviance in every individual. In a lot of the cultures where the practice of female genital cutting is dominant, this seems to be an underlying premise of the practice. A female in her natural uncut self is perceived to have the potential for promiscuity (deviance) so she needs a control factor (genital cutting) prescribed by society to remove that risk (Chege et al., 2001).

Members of the Maasai community have been attached to their culture for a long time now. However, the more they are committed to cutting as it conforms to their belief system which guides and controls their behaviours the more likelihood that Maasai girls will submit to female genital cutting, therefore, making its abandonment and eventual acceptance of an alternative rite of passage impossible. The practice of female genital cutting is pushed worldwide by cultural beliefs and practices some of
which have no relationships with reality, such as the belief that a female will be uncontrollable in her sexual desires if it is not suppressed by circumcision (Chege et al., 2001).

Therefore, from an analysis of the theory as presented, one is able to conclude that conformity to participation in female genital cutting is due to individual attachment to the family, community and cultural relations. The attitudes of members of the Maasai community and the very slow acceptance of an alternative rite of passage could be linked to commitment and involvement by individuals to community activities and life. This makes it impossible to pull oneself from female genital cutting because it will mean stopping being one of the members of the Maasai community. Beliefs in the community, family and traditional norms are also additional factors pushing the practice. The concept of female genital cutting seems to be built on beliefs that are so strong that existing interventions and legislations have not impacted on the communities and individuals involved in terms of translation to reduced incidences and prevalence.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction
This section discusses the following aspects: The study area, study design, study population, sample population, sampling procedures, methods of data collection and data analysis as well as the ethical issues arising during the research process.

3.2 Research site
The research was carried out in three sub-locations, that is, Siabei, Ilmashariani and Olopito in Central Division of Narok County. This division is in the heart of Maasailand and it lays about two and a half hours’ drive from Nairobi, the capital city of Kenya (Map 1). The Maasai refer to Narok as Enkare Narok (literally, black water or dark water) The county is among the top tourist destinations in the country and it is popularly known and respected for its wildlife and especially the annual wildebeest migration, which takes place beginning July August up until September at the Maasai Mara Reserve, about 100 kilometres from Narok town (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS), 1998). Narok County is bordered by Kajiado County to the southeast, Nakuru County to the north and northeast and Bomet, Nyamira, Kisii as well as Migori counties to the north and northwest (Map 2). It covers an approximate area of 15,087 square kilometres and it has a population of around 850,920 people. The elevation of Narok County is 1,827 metres in altitude (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) and ICF Macro, 2010).

Narok County has three constituencies, namely, Narok North, Narok South and Transmara. Narok North is the study area and it is divided into three administrative divisions, namely, Central, Olokurto and Mau. According to the 2008/2009 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey, Central Division is the most urbanised amongst the three divisions in the constituency. However, the population of the County is concentrated in the rural areas (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) and ICF Macro, 2010).
The Maasai people are the original inhabitants of the study area but most of the businesses in town are owned by people from other ethnic groups who migrated into the region from other parts of Kenya (Government of Kenya, 2009). Narok town has several public and parochial schools. Central Division has two rescue centres for girls.
who have escaped female genital cutting and any other girl who wants to go through the alternative rites of passage. These centres are Taasaru Girls Rescue Centre and Maasai Education Discovery. Taasaru Girls Rescue Centre is located within the town vicinity while the Maasai Education Discovery is 15 minutes’ drive from Narok town at a place called Eur–ekule. Narok has been identified as having one of the highest prevalence rates of female genital cutting in the country (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) and ICF Macro, 2010).

Map 2: Location of Central in Narok County


3.3 Study design
A cross-sectional study design was used and it combined both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. Qualitative data were gathered by the use of
unstructured interviews, focus group discussions and key informants which were audio recorded by the use of a digital recorder.

3.4 Study population
The people residing in Narok County formed the study population and they included parents, peer educators, children from the ages of 13 years to 18 and adults from the ages of 18 years to 50 years.

3.5 Sample population and unit of analysis
The study drew its sample from Narok Division. It consisted of a sample of 50 individuals who were subjected to the survey questionnaire, 10 key informants and 3 focus group discussions (Men, women and girls) each consisting of ten participants. The unit of analysis was the individual parent in the study.

3.6 Sampling procedures
Sampling frame was used to get the initial number of parents from three sub-locations namely Siabei, Ilmashariani and Olopito. The sampling frame had a total of 300 individuals all sourced from the three sub-locations and all the sourced parents had teenage daughters either their own or adopted. The parents were selected using systematic random sampling, therefore, out of the three hundred individuals 200 were women and 100 were men, The names of the 300 individuals were copied in a common list with each name having a corresponding number, the numbers were listed from 1 to the 300 and every 7th number was marked. Therefore, a final sample was achieved by picking 50 out of the 300 individuals. The systematically picked numbers were then used to check against the corresponding names in the sampling frame and a sample of 50 respondents against a sampling frame of 300 individuals was achieved. Focus group discussants and key informants were chosen using the purposive sampling method. The focus group discussion and key informant interviews were used in order to grasp interviewees’ views regarding the subject of discussion to conclude correctly on the exact driving force behind the Maasai attitudes towards alternative rites of passage.
3.7 Data collection methods

3.7.1 Secondary data

These were used to complement the primary data and they included national population census records, demographic and health surveys reports, books, theses, dissertations, journals, web based publications as well as private records of rescue centers in Narok County.

3.7.2 Unstructured interviews

These were used to collect information on the attitudes, views and perceptions of members of the Maasai community and specifically parents, towards alternative rites of passage. The perceptions of parents regarding issues surrounding the abandonment of female genital cutting, rescue workers and volunteers who receive and conduct the alternative rites of passage ceremony were also sought. All questions were translated into the Maa language by a research assistant for respondents who could not grasp either Kiswahili or English languages.

3.7.3 Focus group discussions

These were carried out separately for girls and parents of both genders. In total, three focus group discussions were conducted. The first group was for men only while the second group consisted of women who either have their own or adopted children and the last group was for girls who had gone through the alternative rites of passage. Each group consisted of ten participants. This kind of arrangement was appropriate because the topic was sensitive to all genders. All the discussions were held in Narok town at a convenient place to all participants. The research mainly used a tape recorder to collect the focus group discussion proceedings (Plates 2, 3 and 5).

3.7.4 Key informant interviews

These were carried out in order to understand the true determinants that influence the attitudes of the community towards alternative rites of passage of girls. The interviews were carried out with a high ranking officer of Taasaru Girls Rescue Centre, a representative of Maendeleo ya Wanawake, three rescue workers from Taasaru Girls Rescue Center, four prominent and influential alternative rites of passage spear headers from Maasai Education Discovery and girls rescue centre of
the locality and the Chairman of the Maasai Council of Elders Association (Plates 3, plate 4).

3.8 Data processing, analysis and presentation
Before processing the data, the completed questionnaires were checked for confirmation and comprehensibility to ensure consistency. Descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviations and frequency distributions were used to analyze the data. These data have been presented by the use of bar charts, graphs, percentages and frequency tables.
The qualitative information has been analyzed thematically along the study objectives. The presentation has included verbatim quotes from the focus group discussions participants and key informants.

3.9 Ethical considerations
Before going to the field, a research permit was duly sought from the Ministry of Education Science and Technology through the National Council for Science and Technology. Also, a letter of introduction from the Institute of Anthropology, Gender and African Studies was obtained. In addition, introductions and comprehensive explanations were made to the informants about the importance of the research and then they were asked for their consent and permission to go ahead and participate in the interviews and focus group discussions.

The study strived to make sure that the spirit of informed consent prevailed and that the identity of the informant was only known to the researcher. The informants exercised their rights throughout the research process including the right to terminate an interview and focus group discussion if they felt obliged to do so without necessarily giving any notice. Confidentiality was key during the research work, thus, the research findings were not and will not be released to any other person not concerned with the study. The names of participants were also protected by the use of numbers.
CHAPTER FOUR

ATTITUDES OF MAASAI PARENTS TOWARDS ALTERNATIVE RITES OF PASSAGE

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings on the attitudes of Maasai parents towards alternative rites of passage, their levels of awareness regarding alternative rites of passage, demographic patterns as well as the feelings of girls who have gone through the alternative rites of passage. The analysis provides a good base upon which the attitudes of the members of the Maasai community towards the alternative rites of passage can be assessed.

4.2 Socio-demographic characteristics of the study sample

The data indicated that out of the 50 community members interviewed, a majority was aged between 40 and 45 years while a minority occurred in the age bracket of 35 to 39 years. The sample consisted of more females (30) than males (20).

Regarding education attainment, 35 percent of the respondents did not have any kind of formal education. However, six of the respondents who previously lacked formal education were at the time of the field work enrolled for adult classes with a local non-governmental organization (NGOs) based in Narok Town. These classes were to start in early September 2012.

Respondents who had finished primary level of education formed 35 percent of the sample population while those who had attained secondary education comprised 20 percent. Lastly, respondents who had reached the tertiary level formed 5 percent of the sample. Out of the 5 percent who had reached the tertiary level, two had already cleared their courses while the rest were still studying. Also, 35 percent of the parents had not had any form of formal education. Regarding the marital status of the parents, the data revealed that 98 percent of them were married while two percent were widowed with one of them planning to remarry. The data also revealed that all of the parents had children (adopted or their own). In particular, ninety percent of the
respondents had more than four children while 10 percent had less than four children but more than one.

Forty percent of the respondents were small-scale farmers, 10 percent were primary school teachers and another 10 percent were County Council employees. Lastly, ten percent were employed as farm hands while 30 percent were business persons in Narok town.

4.3 Rites of passage
The research wanted to find out whether traditional rites of passage were important to the Maasai. The data revealed that 90 percent of the respondents strongly agreed, 5 percent neither agreed nor disagreed while another 5 percent disagreed. These informants stated that people no longer attached strong meanings to traditions because these did not add value to life as much as formal education does.

Sixty percent of the respondents strongly disagreed that it was of critical importance for girls to go through the traditional rites of passage. However, Thirty percent strongly agreed stating that traditions are an important cycle of a Maasai girl because they are a way of life while another 10 percent neither agreed nor disagreed. The data revealed that 65 percent of the respondents strongly disagreed to recommending traditional rites of passage for their girls while 30 percent strongly agreed stating that it will help their girls appreciate culture and secure them marriages. However, five percent neither agreed nor disagreed.

As a follow-up to the attitudes towards the rites of passage, a 70 year old key informant noted thus:

As a community, we value the rites of passage so much since it make us what we are.

A 37 year old female informant stated the following:

Outsiders want to impose alternative rite of passage on us, they believe that if they keep at it we are eventually going to give in, never are we going to stop circumcising our children.
The research found that all the respondents agreed that the traditional rites of passage for girls normally involved a virginal cut, seclusion from the rest of the community and education of girls regarding their future roles as mothers and wives.

With regard to alternative rites of passage, the data revealed that 90 percent of the respondents had a basic understanding of what alternative rites of passage were and what they entail. However, ten percent had no understanding of what alternative rites of passage were even though they have heard about them from friends and neighbours.

A 46 year old female key informant interview noted that:

*We do not clearly understand what takes place during the alternative rites of passage seclusion, but we have heard that girls are taught not to consent to female genital cutting.*

The data moreover showed that 60 percent of the respondents thought that friends and neighbours supported alternative rites of passage, 30 percent thought that they do not, citing that friends and neighbours would want to go on with female genital cutting because traditions demands so. Ten percent did not know what the views of their friends and neighbours were regarding the matter.

The research further revealed that 50 percent of the respondents would recommend their daughters to go through alternative rites of passage, while 25 percent would not. However, another 25 percent neither agreed nor disagreed stating that it will depend on their daughters on whether they wanted to go through alternative rites of passage or not.

A majority (90 percent) of the respondents had gone through a rite of passage while 10 percent had not. The data further revealed that 90 percent of the parents who reported going through a rite of passage had actually undergone a traditional one (complete with a cut). They noted that they had consented to the said rite of passage.
The female genital cutting with girls revealed that quite a number of the current generation are now resisting circumcision and preferring to go through the alternative rites of passage. Out of the 10 girls, six indicated that they have undergone alternative rites and not the actual cut. One of them noted thus: “We are nowadays refusing to be cut because we understand the dangers. The traditional cut is very harmful to one’s health and we have opted not to go through it”.

4.4 Level of Parents support for the alternative rites of passage

Data were sought regarding what the respondents thought were the views of the community about alternative rites of passage and the level of support among friends and neighbours. The information indicated that 65 percent of the respondents thought that friends and neighbours supported the alternative rites of passage while 15 percent supported female genital cutting. Five percent believed that some friends supported alternative rites of passage while others female genital cutting. However, 5 percent of the respondents stated that friends and neighbours did not support any rites of passage because they were Christians while another 5 percent did not know what the views of their friends and neighbours were with regard to the question. Lastly, five percent stated that their neighbours did not disclose what rites of passage they actually supported (Table 1).

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<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
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<td>1. Did not support any rites of passage</td>
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<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Supports FGC</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Did not know</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Did not disclose</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Some support ARP and others support FGC</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Support ARP</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>46.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4.1 Parents views regarding alternative rites of passage
The research sought to understand the views of the Maasai parents about their attitudes and perception with regard to alternative rites of passage. The study revealed that 60 percent of the respondents stated that culture was important to them but female genital cutting as a tradition was not beneficial. Thirty five percent of the respondents stated that they fully supported their culture because it guides them in life through its customs and values and that female genital cutting is critical as a cultural rite of passage for girls. Five percent did not disclose what they felt about the subject.

4.5 Education and alternative rites of passage
With regard to education key informant interviews and focus group discussion revealed that most educated parents prefer alternative rites of passage over female genital cutting. However, a small number would rather their daughters go through female genital cutting. Others stated that they would leave the choice of going through a rite of passage or not to their daughters.

One 70 year old male informant stated thus:

If my daughter comes over to tell me that she does not want to undergo female genital cutting, I will not object to her request because I care about my daughter and she can choose for herself whether to go through alternative rites of passage or female genital cutting.

A male focus group discussant voiced the following position:

I would not allow my daughters to go through the cut as it serves no purpose in today’s world I would rather they study hard in order to better their lives in future.

A 70 year old female focus group discussant stated that:

I support the alternative rites of passage, and would allow my daughter to attend the ceremony, I know that through that she might get lucky and get awarded a scholarship to further her studies thus relieve me from carrying the burden of educating her.
A 59 year old male key informant expressed that:

*My daughter pleaded with me not to let her mother circumcise her, I let her have her way, this turned out to be a good decision on my part, because she now is educated and supports the family. If I had let her get circumcised I would have lost her to another man. She thanks me every day for sparing her from the knife.*

4.6 The views on who should take responsibility in FGM/C and ARPs in the community

To understand the current feelings of community members towards alternative rites of passage, the research sought to establish what their views were. The data indicated that 50 percent of the respondents fully supported the alternative rites of passage. On the other hand, 15 percent wanted the churches, and not non-governmental organizations, to be given the mandate to sensitize the community on the need to support alternative rites of passage and the harmful effects of female genital cutting. Some of such harmful effects consisted of hemorrhaging and difficulties while giving birth.

The data further revealed that 5 percent of the female respondents did not support alternative rites of passage and they did not want them conducted on their daughters. Another 5 percent of the female respondents mentioned that fathers and male relatives should be given priority on the education of the harmful effects of female genital cutting so that they could support the alternative rites of passage. On the other hand, 15 percent of the respondents wanted the government to actively consult the community and which should be given a full mandate to spearhead the process with little interference from outsiders. The study results also indicated that 5 percent of the respondents thought that some parents did not allow girls to go to the various camps for the alternative rites of passage programme in Narok because they did not think it is proper. Another 5 percent stated that the Maasai community is slowly embracing alternative rites of passage.

For instance, one 60 year old female key informant stated the following:

*The government should talk to our fathers, husbands and brothers since these are the decision-makers of the Maasai community. We do get involved in the*
rites of passage but the male members of our community make all the decisions.

Ninety five percent of the respondents reported that they do indeed participate in the alternative rites of passage ceremony as observers while five percent stated that they do not.

A 37 year old FGD female participant

*When we are called to attend these ceremonies, we do participate when we are not busy because normally we just sing and feast, we are not allowed to give our views regarding alternative rites of passage.*

Regarding the extent to which the community is in support of the alternative rites of passage, 40 percent of the respondents strongly supported it while 35 percent supported it to a large extent. Furthermore, the data indicated that 15 percent of the interviewed parents did not know about alternative rites of passage while 10 percent did not support it at all (Graph 1).

**Graph 1: The extent to which the community supports the alternative rites of passage**
The research probed further to understand the main determinants of the attitudes of members of the Maasai community towards alternative rites of passage. The data showed that 35 percent of the parents thought that girls who had gone through alternative rites of passage were immoral and should, therefore, be kept away from the other girls. On the other hand, 25 percent thought that these girls were brave, 20 percent stated that these girls were smart while 10 percent believed these girls were courageous.

One 52 year old female informant stated the following:

*When these young girls are taken to Taasaru Rescue Centre, they come back carrying with them foreign ways which are disrespectful such as answering back when talked to by an adult and applying make-up to look beautiful to the opposite sex.*

Five percent thought these girls were brave and smart while an additional five percent supported girls who had gone through the alternative rites of passage and would willingly take their daughters for the ceremony if the church was involved. The data further indicated that five percent of the respondents fully supported these girls (Graph 2).

**Graph 2: Attitude of the community towards girls who have gone through ARP**
4.6.1 Community feelings towards non-governmental organization initiated alternative rites of passage

The data revealed that 30 percent of the respondents supported non-governmental organizations that run the alternative rites of passage programmes. Similarly, 30 percent supported these non-governmental organizations but wanted them to involve the community more in the programmes. However, 20 percent of the respondents did not support the programmes at all arguing that the programmes did not understand the dynamics of the Maasai culture. On the other hand, 20 percent thought that non-governmental organizations were there to only make money and not to educate the Maasai community to embrace alternative rites of passage (Table 2).

Table 2: Feelings towards non-governmental organizations working to educate the community regarding the alternative rites of passage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons advanced</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supported NGOs programme of ARP</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supported NGOs but want them to involve the community</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not support at all because they use programmes not initiated by the maasai community</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using the community to make money</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In order to understand the feelings of rescue workers towards the Maasai community, the data revealed that 50 percent of them did not trust the parents of girls who had been taken to the rescue centers. This is because the parents can turn on them and take back their daughters or even become abusive towards them.

A female informant aged 60 years had this to say:

Rescue workers despise us because they think we still practice female genital cutting. We also do not like them; they do not ask for our permission to take our daughters for the alternative rites of passage ceremony, they instead ask the teachers. We are the parents of these girls and should, therefore, get involved in these matters.

A 38 year old male informant stated thus:

Rescue centers add no value to our daughters, they are just here to make money, and they use the community for their own personal gains. They get funds from the westerners by pretending to help us.

The information further revealed that 40 percent of the respondents argued that members of the Maasai community were becoming more cooperative by bringing many girls to the centres. On further probing, ten percent of the respondents disclosed that some parents turn away their daughters from home after going through the alternative rites of passage programme. The parents even denounce their daughters publicly and this has led to the low acceptance of the alternative rites of passage.

A female informant aged 35 years pointed out thus:

My daughter was encouraged by her school teacher to attend the ceremony, and without my consent she went ahead. When she came back home after the seclusion her father made her go back to the camp.

4.6.2 The attitudes of girls towards alternative rites of passage

The findings from the focus group discussion with girls indicated that most of those who had undergone the alternative rites of passage felt no difference from those who
had not. However, others think that they are normally treated differently by other girls who had not gone through the programme. They further thought that their chances of securing a Maasai man for marriage was almost nil, though they do not mind about the perceived implications of not going through the female genital cutting.

On further probing, the girls stated that they felt lucky since some of their friends went through female genital cutting and were immediately married off. The data also revealed that the discussants thought that non-governmental organizations advocating for the abandonment of female genital cutting should work with the church, since the church is readily acceptable and friendly towards youths and the community in general. Others stated that schools should be given the mandate to introduce alternative rites of passage as part of the curriculum.

A sixteen year old focus group discussant stated the following:

“I am so relieved that I did not undergo female genital cutting because a neighbor who is a good friend underwent the cut and had to be married off immediately, therefore, forcing her to drop out of school.

Another girl aged 16 years expressed that:

This subject of alternative rites of passage should be taught in school, so that our friends, who have not had a chance to experience it, may at least learn what it is all about in class.

Another girl aged 17 years pointed out that:

I think the church should handle this matter, my friends tell me that in their areas the church handles matters to do with alternative rites of passage.

4.6.3 Community recommendations regarding alternative rites of passage

Data were sought from members of the community regarding their recommendations for improving participation in alternative rites of passage. The data revealed that 20 percent of the respondents thought that they should be actively involved in the process, 10 percent stated that they should be educated on the alternative rites of passage possibly by the church while another 10 percent said that they just wanted to
be educated about it. Such informants believed that it did not matter who carried out the education because their main intention was to understand the benefits of the alternative rites of passage. However, the data revealed that ten percent of the respondents thought that the Maasai should be left alone to practice female genital cutting and other rites ingrained in their culture.

The information further indicated that 10 percent of the respondents did not support any rites of passage while another 10 percent thought that men play key roles in the Maasai community and, therefore, should be sensitized in order to understand the harmful effects of female genital cutting. Conversely, 10 percent of the informants thought that non-governmental organizations should sensitize the Maasai community on the benefits of alternative rites of passage to the girls including escaping early marriages. They should also be taught about the harmful effects of female genital cutting such as difficult childbirths. Equally, another 10 percent said that they preferred a Maasai community-initiated alternative rites of passage programme. However, 10 percent thought that for community-initiated alternative rites of passage to work effectively, key leaders should be fully sensitized regarding both alternative rites of passage and female genital cutting (Table 3).

Table 3: Recommendation to improve community participation in alternative rites of passage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active participation</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To be left alone to practice their culture</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not want to support it</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education by church and leaders</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government should lobby for ARP</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men to be given priority in sensitization</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO's should be the one to sensitize the community about ARP</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach programmes should be through the church</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community to initiate ARP and not NGOs</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The research sought information about whether an alternative rite of passage was an effective programme or not. Sixty five percent of the respondents stated that it was but it should borrow more from the Maasai culture. The data further indicated that alternative rites of passage ignore culture; therefore, 35 percent thought that alternative rites of passage should be initiated and implemented at the grassroots level.

A 40 year old female key informant stated that:

*Our people should be allowed to organize an alternative rite of passage ritual without interference from outsiders, maybe this will change the mindset of members of the community towards abandoning female genital cutting.*
CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSIONS

5.1 Introduction
This chapter covers the main issues arising from the study findings. The discussion is embedded in scientific findings that preceded this study as well as the emergent discussion beyond the study objectives.

5.2 Discussion
The findings in this study indicate that Maasai parents are aware of the alternative rites of passage programme. However, it emerged that parents have made no efforts of their own to initiate alternative rites of passage programmes and normally, even when invited to such ceremonies, they do not participate actively. Atieno (2003), in her report, posited that Kenyan parents are ambivalent and some do not want to be seen as backward, which is how national and international media describe them when carrying out female genital cutting. The self-appointed leaders of the movement in the direction of alternative rites are using those terms as well. The youths, at least part of their cohorts, oppose the idea of female genital cutting and, therefore, they would seem to welcome the opportunity to do something else. But even elders who support an end to female genital cutting do not necessarily support alternative rites of passage (Atieno, 2003).

It was evident from the analysis that parents value religion and it plays a major role by preaching against female genital cutting. Parents trust the church because they believe that it has their needs at heart and it would not preach falsely. Throughout the interviews, the church featured a lot as an institution which the respondents would want as key with regard to educating the community about the harmful effects of female genital cutting. Churches have diverse positive impacts on communities, ranging from increased trust, decreased practice of cultural rituals such as female genital cutting, decreased crimes and enhanced levels of voluntary and community outreach. Churches also contribute to important components of successful societies (Andrew, 2008).
From the data gathered, it was noted that parents felt that the government has not been effective in making sure that alternative rites of passage are fully accepted and female genital cutting is abandoned. The findings further indicated that respondents felt that the government was mostly using an inadequate approach in its sensitization campaigns, thus, the sustained resistance towards female genital cutting from the community. This is because the government does not fully engage the community in the sensitization program on female genital cutting and alternative rites of passage. Buse and Mays (2005) argue that this kind of approach sees policy formation and execution as distinct activities. Specifically, policies are set at higher levels in a political process and then communicated to subordinate levels which are then charged with the technical, managerial and administrative tasks of putting these policies into practice (Buse and Mays, 2005).

The Maasai parents want the government to work with them when it comes to issues that impact directly on their lives, they asserted that the top-down approach has been used by declaring female genital cutting as being illegal, and not following up with intensive grassroots sensitization which involves educating members of the Maasai community on why there is a law against female genital cutting and may be recommend alternates to female genital cutting. The parents felt that the government should use a friendlier approach, which involves community members actively in lobbying for alternative rites of passage and in the fight against female genital cutting from its initial process to its conclusion. This, they say, may soften the stand of the people who, in spite of the laws put in place against female genital cutting, still practice it.

The research found out that educated parents prefer their daughters to go through alternative rites of passage as opposed to female genital cutting. They viewed female genital cutting as being retrogressive and harmful to the health of their children, while alternative rites of passage were viewed as educational, and something which their girls will benefit from immensely in future. Similarly, the research found that parents who are educated and staunch Christians are supporters of alternative rites of passage and some even condemn female genital cutting openly and instead lobby for alternative rites of passage. These parents believe that female genital cutting is not

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biblical and should not be given importance as not going through it will not subject one to any kind of divine punishment such as death or madness (Oboler, 2001).

The findings established that members of the Maasai community value their culture which plays a big role such that female genital cutting as a ritual is deeply ingrained in the culture of the these people. Separating female genital cutting from culture has over time proven to be a hard nut to crack for the lobbyists and other interested stakeholders, therefore making it even harder to embrace the alternative rites of passage option (Brown, 1998). Despite cultural obstacles to female genital cutting the Maasai are slowly abandoning the practice. This is because of culture change, occasioned by more girls who are now going to school and delaying getting married as a result. By extension, this is slowly displacing the culture of female genital cutting. According to Brown (1998), indigenous activists and anthropologists have often argued for cultural relativism, that every culture should be understood according to its own terms. Each culture should not be judged by the criteria of outsiders and members of each culture should be able to enjoy the right to self-determination, and they should have the principal say with regard to their own practices and traditions. However, conflicts over values can arise not only within the community but also within an individual (Brown, 1998). According to the parents, times have changed and that the children of the Maasai community have gone to school and are coming back to develop their community. The community has, therefore, learnt to slowly disregard negative cultural practices such as female genital cutting and to embrace alternative rites of passage because of their educational aspects (Fernandez, 1999).

Several non-governmental organizations have managed to penetrate deep into the grassroots and have effectively involved members of the Maasai community, by educating them on the harmful effects of female genital cutting and why they should instead embrace alternative rites of passage. The community acknowledges these non-governmental organizations but questions are being raised by the community, as to whether these people are using their vulnerability to get funds to enrich themselves or they are truly aiming at helping members of the Maasai community by educating them on the harmful effects of female genital cutting. The research has also established that these non-governmental organizations use predesigned programs that
have been used in different settings (like the Ameru rites of passage program) and do not work hand-in-hand with the Maasai community in order to find out how rites of passage rituals for girls were held in the past and how best to duplicate these rituals without the cut.

This study also revealed that in the Maasai community men have powers and they play crucial roles because they are the overall decision-makers and, therefore, they preside over matters concerning rites of passage. Change may be achieved if these men are given priority by educating them on the harmful effects of female genital cutting and the benefits of alternative rites of passage. Also, empowering, women and girls towards greater participation in development is crucial in achieving more balanced and equal power relations between the sexes.
CHAPTER SIX
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction
The study set out to investigate the attitudes of members of the Maasai community towards alternative rites of passage of young girls in Narok County.

6.2 Summary
The members of the Maasai community exhibited knowledge and insights into the subject matter. They also expressed willingness to be part of the alternative rites of passage programme if given an opportunity. Parents cited different stakeholders as key in the initialization of the alternative rites of passage program. The church was mentioned severally as a body that the parents want to use in the outreach program regarding alternative rites of passage. Parents who are educated to a large extent embrace alternative rites of passage; others would rather leave the choice in the hands of their daughters, a small percentage still practice female genital cutting in hiding.

6.3 Conclusions
Members of the Maasai community are key in the fight against female genital cutting since their input is significant in the eventual shift towards alternative rites of passage. However, parents are not being engaged actively in the alternative rites of passage programmes by both the government and other agencies. The roles of parents need to be acknowledged and harnessed in order for an attitudinal change and eventual shift towards an acceptance of alternative rites of passage.

The Maasai community needs to be made aware that culture is dynamic and that it does change. Therefore, it does not add value to cling to a cultural practice which is harmful in nature because of upholding cultural traditions. An alternative rite of passage programme, that is purely cultural in nature except for the cutting aspect, can be developed and adopted by a community such as the Maasai. Similarly, such a programme may be easily accepted as opposed to the very formal alternative rites of passage programmes which are rigid in nature, using complex language, therefore, making it hard for illiterate community members to understand what the programme
is all about. This has made it hard for the community to fully embrace the alternative rites of passage programme in Narok County.

6.4 Recommendations

- Non-governmental organizations operating in Narok County need to be friendlier in their alternative rites of passage outreach programme, and allow a bottom-up approach in the programmatic interventions for example, agencies in their advocacy for the alternative rites of passage programmes need to be actively engaged by inculcating the whole community from its initial stages to its logical conclusion. Priority should be placed on key decision-makers of the community such as the males, church leaders, elders and women leaders.

- There is a need to create awareness amongst Maasai men and women on the socio-economic and health risk factors associated with female genital cutting. Similarly, the awareness should be extended to cover the domains of Prohibition Against Female Genital Mutilation Act (Wangare, 2009). This is because female genital cutting has predominantly been a women affair in the Maasai culture, the decision of when and where to carry out the rituals lies squarely with the men. Only after intense and rigorous awareness creation through education is achieved for the whole community should the alternative rites of passage programme come in.

- Education, through the government with the help of teachers, is crucial in the acceptance of alternative rites of passage in the Maasai community. For instance, alternative rites of passage programs can be introduced into the curricula and these will help girls resist the social pressures to undergo female genital cutting. This will nurture a generation which will be fully aware of the harmful effects of female genital cutting, thus, harnessing a positive attitudinal change towards the alternative rites of passage approach.

- More research is needed on other approaches which are alternate to female genital cutting including, the health risks approach, female genital cutting as a harmful traditional practice approach and education of traditional circumcisers through providing them with alternative forms of income approach.
REFERENCES


University Press.


APPENDICES
Annex 1: Informed consent guide statement

My name is Sarah Kassim and I am a student at the University of Nairobi, Institute of Anthropology, Gender and African Studies (IAGAS) in a programme leading to the award of a degree in Masters of Arts in Anthropology. I am conducting a research on the attitudes of parents towards alternative rites of passage for girls among the Maasai of Central Division, Narok County. Any information provided will be treated with utmost confidentiality and if there is any question you are not comfortable with you are free not to answer. Also if at any point of this interview you wish to terminate it for any reason, your decision will be respected and there will be no consequences for this decision. If you wish to participate in this study you will be required to circle below. Thank you.

Do you agree to be interviewed? 1) Yes 2) No
Interviewer………………………………signature…………..date…./…./….

Interviewee………………………………signature…………..date…./…./….

A  Biographical data
A1. Name………………………………………………………………………
A2. Age………………………………………………………………………..
A3. Sex………………………………………………………………………..
A4. Do you have children? (Please circle)
    1) Yes
    2) No
A5. If yes, how many? ……………………………………………………………
A6. What is your level of education? …………………………………………
A7. Are you employed? (Please circle)
    1) Yes
    2) No
A8. If yes, what form of employment are you engaged in? ..............................
..................................................................................................................
A9. If no, what is the source of your livelihood? .................................
.....................................................................................................................
Annex 2: Survey Questionnaire

A: Evaluating the attitudes of community members on alternative rites of passage

A1. I will read to you the following statements and please I want you to answer sincerely using the following.

1) Strongly agree
2) Agree
3) Neither agree nor disagree
4) Disagree
5) Strongly disagree

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>agree</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B2. The traditional rites of passage are important to the Maasai ethnic group.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3. Is it of critical importance for girls to go through the traditional rites of passage?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4. I recommend that Maasai girls go through traditional rites of passage.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B5. I do not recommend any rite of passage for Maasai girls.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B6. I recommend traditional rites of passage for girls without the cut.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B7. I recommend the alternative rites of passage for Maasai girls.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A8. How do you perform your traditional rites of passage for girls? (Please circle)
   1) Through a virginal cut
   2) Through education of girls on their future roles as wives
   3) Through number 1 and 2
   4) Through other means (specify please)

A9. Do you know what alternative rites of passage are? (Please circle)
   1) Yes
   2) No

B10. If yes please name a few

A11. What is your opinion on the alternative rites of passage? (Please circle)
   1) They should be fully adopted
   2) They should be adopted with caution
   3) Community should be actively involved
   4) They should be encouraged
   5) They should be burned
   6) We should stay with our traditional rites of passage

A12. To what extent do you advocate for alternative rites of passage as opposed to female genital cutting? (Please circle)

   1) Great extent
   2) Moderate extent
   3) I do not advocate for the alternative rites of passage
   4) I don’t know

A13. Do you think that genital cutting present immediate and future health risks to young girls?

   1) Yes
   2) No

A14. If yes, what do you recommend be done?

A15. What do you think are people’s views about alternative rites of passage?
B: Level of support for alternative rites of passage among parents

B1. Have you ever gone through any kind of rites of passage?
   1) Yes
   2) No

B2. If yes, was it?
   1) Was it traditional rite of passage complete with female genital cutting?

B3. If answer is 2, did you consent to this rite of passage?

B4. Did both of your parents’ consent to the alternative rite of passage?

B5. Do you recommend the alternative rite of passage or the traditional rite of passage for young girls?

B6. Do you think your fellow friends and neighbors support the alternative rites of passage or the traditional rites of passage for young girls?

B7. What are your community views on alternative rite of passage for girls?
B8. To what extent do you think your community supports the alternative rites of passage? (Please circle one)

1) Large extent  
2) They strongly support it  
3) I do not know  
4) They do not support it at all

B9. How does the community regard girls who have gone through the alternative rite of passage?

B10. Does the community participate in the alternative rite of passage?

1) Yes  
2) No

B11. If yes, how do they do this? (Please circle)

1) By initiating and planning the training procedures  
2) By participating in the actual training  
3) By providing food and gifts for celebrations after training  
4) By being part of the participants  
5) By providing homes for the girls and their trainers during the training process

B12. If no, what do you recommend to be done to improve community participation?

B13. Is the alternative rite of passage an effective method as a rite of passage?

1) Yes  
2) No
B14. If no, what do you think should be done to improve it for a wider acceptability by the community (probe)?

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

C: Evaluating Rescue workers roles and attitudes towards community with regard to alternative rites of passage.

C1. Do you have children? (Please circle)
   1) Yes
   2) No
C2. If yes, how many? .................................................................
…………………………………………………………………………………………
C3. What is your level of education? ..............................................
…………………………………………………………………………………………
C4. Are you employed?
   3) Yes
   4) No
C5. If yes, what form of employment are you engaged in? ..............
…………………………………………………………………………………………
C6. How did you become a rescue worker?
…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………
C7. What do you do?
…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………
C8. How do you reach out to girls at the grassroots (probe)?
…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………
…………………………………………………………………………………………
C9. How do girls reach out to your organization?

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

C10. How do you deal with parents of girls who have run away from home (Probe)?

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

C11. Do some parents bring their girls willingly?

1) Yes
2) No

C12. If yes, from what community circles are they?

1) Wealthy
2) Educated
3) Town-people
4) All of these
5) Any other (please specify)

C13. Probe

……………………………………………………………………………………
……………………………………………………………………………………
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C14. What are the procedures of your training?

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C15. How do you involve the community in this training (Probe)?

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C16. Is the community receptive to the alternative rite of passage (Probe)?

C17. Amongst which circles are the alternative rites of passage fully accepted in the Maasai community (Probe)?

C18. Amongst which circles are the alternative rites of passage totally rejected (Probe)?

C19. Do you integrate girls who run away from their community back into their community?

C20. What are some of the problems that you encounter with the community in the course of your duty?

C21. What do you think can be done to make alternative rites of passage more accessible to a wider population of girls in Narok County (Probe)?
C22. What other comments and recommendations can you make in order to improve community participation in this process?

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C23. Do you know anyone else I should talk to in order to shed more light on how to improve community acceptability of alternative rites of passage?

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Thank you very much for your time.
Annex 3: Focus Group Discussion Guide

A: Evaluating feelings of girls who have gone through the alternative rite of passage.

A1. What do you understand by the word alternative rites of passage?
A2. What happens during training while going through the alternative rites of passage? (Probe)
A3. How do you feel while going through this training (Probe)?
A4. Do you think that the alternative rites of passage are better than the traditional rites of passage?
A5. Do you feel like you are different from other girls who have gone through the traditional rites of passage (Probe)?
A6. What are the views of other girls of your age who have gone through the traditional rites of passage regarding the alternative rites of passage?
A7. Do you think by going through the alternative rites of passage your chances of securing a husband from your community have considerably narrowed down? (Probe)
A8. What are your siblings views regarding the alternative rites of passage?
A9. Do you think that people’s behavior have changed towards your family after you went through the alternative rites of passage? (Probe)
A10. What do you recommend to be done in order to improve community participation in the training process of alternative rites of passage (Probe)?
A11. What do you think should be done to reach out to girls who are still unaware of the alternative rites of passage?

B. Attitudes and recommendations of parents and community leaders concerning the alternative rite of passage.

B1. What terms do you use to refer to the alternative rites of passage?
B2. What terms do you use to call a girl who has not been circumcised?
B3. What is the community perception towards the family of a girl who has not gone through genital cutting? (Probe)
B4. What are your views on the rescue centers that take up girls who have run away from being cut? (Probe)

B5. What do you think are the attitudes of rescue workers towards parents of runaway girls? (Probe)

B6. Would the parents of girls who have gone through the alternative rites of passage receive them back?

B8. What do you think are the community views on parents who have willingly given out their girls to go through the alternative rite of passage programme (Probe)?

B9. Does the community feel that it is adequately involved in the alternative rites of passage process? (Probe)

B10. What do you think are the community’s view on how to improve the programme? (Probe)

Thank you very much for your time.
Annex 4: Key Informant Interview Guide

A: Level of support for alternative rites of passage among parents

A1. Have you ever gone through any kind of rites of passage?
   3) Yes
   4) No

A2. If yes, was it?
   3) Was it traditional rite of passage complete with female genital cutting?
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   4) Was it alternative rite of passage without genital cutting?
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A3. If answer is 2, did you consent to this rite of passage?
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A4. Did both of your parents’ consent to the alternative rite of passage?
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A5. Do you recommend the alternative rite of passage or the traditional rite of passage for young girls?
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A6. Do you think your fellow friends and neighbors support the alternative rites of passage or the traditional rites of passage for young girls?
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A7. What are your community views on alternative rite of passage for girls?
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A8. To what extent do you think your community supports the alternative rites of passage? (Please circle one)
   5) Large extent
6) They strongly support it
7) I do not know
8) They do not support it at all

A9. How does the community regard girls who have gone through the alternative rite of passage?

A10. Does the community participate in the alternative rite of passage?
   3) Yes
   4) No

A11. If yes, how do they do this? (Please circle)
   6) By initiating and planning the training procedures
   7) By participating in the actual training
   8) By providing food and gifts for celebrations after training
   9) By being part of the participants
   10) By providing homes for the girls and their trainers during the training process

A12. If no, what do you recommend to be done to improve community participation?

A13. Is the alternative rite of passage an effective method as a rite of passage?
   3) Yes
   4) No

A14. If no, what do you think should be done to improve it for a wider acceptability by the community (probe)?

Thank you very much for your time.
PLATES

Plate 1: Women participants after a focus group discussion session

Plate 2: Showing women who participated in the research after an unstructured interview
Plate 3: FGD session with Men
Plate 4: A key informant in her office

Plate 5: Part of the focus group discussion participants