

**THE EMERGENCE OF ABAGUSII DIASPORA IN KENYA'S SOUTH RIFT,  
1895-2007: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

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Degree of Master of Arts in History of Masinde Muliro University of Science and  
Technology**

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## DECLARATION

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

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HIS/G/09/15

## CERTIFICATION

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my late father Peterson Achoki my mother, Jemimah Moraa, and my beloved husband Prof. Kennedy Bota together with my children for their encouragement and support.

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## ABSTRACT

Migration is a spatial phenomenon involving movement of people between distinct places, locations imbued with meaning and power. It explicitly refers to people changing their places of residence, where they live on a habitual basis, embracing not only their actual physical structures, but also in some sense the wider community in which they live. The study focused on the Abagusii migration patterns from their ancestral land specifically to the South Rift (SR), Kericho County. It acknowledges the fact that their emergence in the diaspora just like any other ethnic group in Kenya, came to existence in the pre-colonial, colonial and post-independence period. The aim of the study was to trace their movement, settlement, challenges, and opportunities they encountered in South Rift between 1895 and 2007. This research addressed four objectives, namely; to examine the emergence of Abagusii before colonialism, to evaluate the migration of the Abagusii into South Rift in colonial era, to assess the migration of Abagusii into South Rift in Post-colonial era, and lastly, to explore the challenges and opportunities they encountered in the South Rift. The study focused on the period from 1895 as it was the genesis of the British colonial policies which witnessed forceful movement of the Abagusii as well as other Kenyan communities. The study stretches up 2007 because it marked one of the darkest periods in Kenya's history; the post-election violence period, which had widespread killings and destruction of property in many parts of the country. South Rift, specifically Kericho County, was a battle zone between different ethnic groups. Thus, most people were internally displaced due to the crisis that resulted from the violence. The study adopted the Materialist Interpretation of History theory. This theory uses methodological approaches of Marxist historiography that focuses on human societies and their development over time, claiming that they follow a number of observable tendencies. The study adopted qualitative research design where non-probability sampling techniques (such as opportunity sampling, snowball sampling, and, purposive sampling) were used. Data was analyzed through content analysis of documents obtained from the Kenya National Archives (KNA) that were collaborated with information from field observations and interview schedules. The study found out that the main challenges encountered by the Abagusii in the Diaspora were politics of exclusion, community hatred and animosity experienced after the re-introduction of multiparty democracy, incitement from the Kipsigis politicians who advocated for the explosion of the Abagusii from their land among others. The research found out some of the opportunities to include; the provision of social amenities, trade, intermarriage with the Kipsigis, adoption of mixed economy and availability of job opportunities among others. The study recommends that, peaceful initiatives need to be undertaken to realize peaceful co-existence between the Abagusii and the Kipsigis. The study also recommends that Abagusii in the diaspora and the Kipsigis should be educated on the importance of peace and encouraged to interact with each other peacefully. The researcher further recommends that, a study should be carried out on Abagusii who migrated to other parts of the diaspora in order to draw comparisons of the challenges and opportunities they encountered.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

AU	African Union
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
DO	District Officer
FGDs	Focus Group Discussion
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GEMA	Gikuyu Embu Meru Association
IBEACo	Imperial British East African Company
KAMATUSA	Kalenjin Maasai Turkana and Samburu
KANU	Kenya African National Union
KII	Key Informant interviews
KNA	Kenya National Archives
KNCHR	Kenya National Commission on Human Rights
NACOSTI	National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
OI	Oral Interview
PEV	Post-Election Violence
SR	South Rift
SPLA	Sudanese People`s Liberation Army

## **GLOSSARY**

<b>Amakongiro</b>	A type of drought resistant weed among the Abagusii.
<b>Chinderu</b>	A place in Gusii called beards of a person named Osiemo
<b>hia siemo</b>	
<b>Ebisareti</b>	Cattle enclosures
<b>Embogo</b>	Tsetse fly
<b>Gusiiland</b>	The territory/land occupied by Abagusii. Currently, it consists of two counties namely, Kisii and Nyamira
<b>Kabianga</b>	A place not good for settlement
<b>Mogusii</b>	This is a man who is believed by Abagusii to be their ancestor/ progenitor
<b>Omogambi</b>	This term was used to refer to a village elder or chief.

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

<b>Diaspora</b>	Any gathering of vagrants forever settled outside their place of starting point.
<b>Historical materialism</b>	Is a theory that was articulated by Karl Marx in 1818 to 1883 as the materialist conception theory which explains the origin and development of a society from materialistic perspective
<b>Host community</b>	Community which received people who were staying far from their homeland.
<b>Migration</b>	This is the temporary or permanent change of residence by people as they move from one region to another. The movement may involve individuals and their families or all members of a community.
<b>South Rift</b>	All the area currently covered by Kericho and Bomet counties.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

This Chapter presents the background of the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, assumptions, justification, and significance of the study. It also highlights the scope of the study, limitations of the study, theoretical framework, literature review, and research methodology used in the study.

#### **1.1 Background to the Study**

Various scholars have attempted to define the term migration and diaspora including: Brown, (2007); Cohen, (2005); Sheffer, (1986), and, Prothero, (1986), Brown, (2007) indicates that people live in an age where transnational immigration, border crossing, heterogeneous nationalities, multiple identities, dual citizenship, acculturation in more than one nation space has assumed new paradigms.

Prothero, (1986) portrays migration in Africa as involving three successive stages: movements which took place in the past but which have ceased to exist; movements that have persisted from the past to the present; and movements that have developed in the recent past. The latter of these instances directly concerns this study as it includes permanent rural-rural migration initiated in colonial Kenya as one effect of the British colonial economic system. Notably, human migrations have been there since the beginning of civilization. These migrations were necessitated by various factors such as social, political, and economic. These migrations have not only brought changes to the world politically, economically, socially and culturally but also redefined boundaries, compressed ideas of space and reinterpreted the perception of nation, home



and identity.

Prothero further asserts that recent spurt in migration globally, has been facilitated by improved technology, transportation and communication facilities and a multicultural environment. Immigrants in the 1990s were less contained inside the physical and cultural boundaries of their host country than ever before.

There is travel to and from homelands and on-going communication with family and friends who remain there. Social networks promote and support immigration. These phenomena carry important implications for the maintenance of relations between immigrants and their homelands and for the persistence of traditional cultural patterns, on-going separatism and processes of merging into the mainstream of the host society. People who live in close physical proximity may share less on a cultural level than they do with dispersed people elsewhere in an increasingly interconnected world (Shuval, & Leshem, 1998).

The term diaspora means any group of migrants permanently settled outside their place of origin. Cohen (2004) proposed a typology of diasporas each of which has been caused by a different set of precipitating circumstances. These result in a variety of social contexts, mythologies, and definitions of solidarity. He named them as; Victim diasporas (Africans and Americans), Labour and imperial diasporas (Indentured Indian and British), Trade diasporas (Chinese and Lebanese), Homeland diasporas (Sikhs and Zionists), Cultural diasporas (Caribbeans) and Globalization diasporas (International migration).

Cohen furthers that, these types may overlap and may change their character over time. While referring to Modern Diasporas, Sheffer (1986) has proposed another definition

of diaspora which he categorized as modern. He describes them as ethnic minority groups of strong, sentimental, and material links with their countries of origin their homelands. Concurring with Brown (2007), he notes that diaspora is a social construct founded on feeling, consciousness, memory, mythology, history, meaningful narratives, group identity, longings, and dreams, allegorical and virtual elements all of which play a role in establishing a diaspora reality.

It is misconstrued that Diasporas are always a result of exile. Indeed, they are often initiated by processes of uprooting, pogroms, political, religious or racial oppression. However, some people may opt for migration because of political domination and repression, economic inequality, powerlessness or minority status. In many, cases (perhaps most) migrants seek to become part of the host society and culture and many relegate their previous cultural baggage to the past. In this respect diaspora, migration does not differ inherently from other types of migration. What distinguishes diaspora people is their on-going or re-awakened attachment and loyalty to their earlier culture and specifically to the homeland, which they feel they have left (Kearney, 1995).

Wickramasekara, (2009) postulates that Africa had long been affected by forces associated with slavery, colonialism and globalization creating a situation in which African persons were dispersed in different regions of the world. It is therefore important to distinguish between the old (traditional) and the new diaspora, who are more in the nature of transnational communities as mentioned above. The African Diasporas can be classified broadly into two categories: Africans in America, the UK, Brazil, Latin America, and Caribbean because of involuntary migration. There are also the new African immigrants, mainly in North America and Europe and to a smaller extent in Australia and Japan, among others, because of voluntary migration for

education or employment.

According to the World Bank (2007), the official estimate of documented ‘voluntary’ African immigrants in North America and Europe is about three million (one million in the United States, 282,600 in Canada and 1.7 million in Europe). The figure for Europe does not include immigrants from North Africa. Nevertheless, this study focuses on the migrations and settlement of the Abagusii in South Rift (SR).

The diaspora phenomenon has existed globally, regionally and locally due to migrations. Some studies have for instance noted that the Indian diaspora came about in the mid twentieth century that saw a change in the migration pattern (Lal, 2007). It grew in the colonizing nations of Europe and the United States and was more versatile and innovative. For the first time, people moved not to their colonial periphery, but to the metropolitan center at the heart of the Empire-Common wealth. Initially, this movement was to the urban centers in England. The migrants came from India itself, some from colonial diasporic communities to take advantage of labouring or service opportunities in Britain’s post-war economy. While at its peak in the early to mid-1960s, the first migrations were directed to Britain because Asian and African immigration into the white settler Dominions (Australia, Canada and New Zealand) loosened and migration to the Dominions picked up, in part to ease the plight of Indians settled in East Africa (Lal, 2007).

The transportation of enslaved Africans through the Middle Passage is often considered one of the largest forced migrations in history. Along the west coast of Africa, about sixty trading posts brought in Europeans to trade their riches for human cargo. In these slave trades, the people were often abducted in raids or wars against their enemy African tribes (PBS, 2015). The kidnappings led thousands of potentially enslaved

Africans to walk over many miles shackled and starved throughout these marches. Today, people of African descent are present all over the world. This is mostly due to the slave trade that was active from the sixteenth century until the end of the nineteenth century. The dispersion of Africans and their descendants across the world (the African Diaspora) aroused interest in archaeology in the 1970s. The most studied regions today are the Caribbean and both Americas. Substantial investigation has also been conducted in western and southern Africa (Kusimba, 2005; Orser, 1998).

In Kenya, not much has been investigated on migrations hence the reason as to why this study was undertaken. According to Ochieng' (1974), the study of the migrations of ancient people cannot be confined to our present-day national or provincial boundaries. It is also characterized by population disorders that crisscrossed the whole area in all directions, such as those who moved from Mozambique, Malawi, and Zambia into Tanzania and beyond. Others moved from the North into East Africa, others from Indian Ocean coastlands into the interior, while others moved from present day Uganda into Western Kenya.

Dattoo (1979) notes that, the main African stocks that inhabit Eastern Africa had already entered the region before 1500, in what might be referred as primary waves of migration. There was a great deal of absorption of people and in filling of areas in the subsequent centuries. During this time, the establishment of colonial rule was packed with events that reinforced each other and resulted in the overall decline of population. There were man-made calamities, which resulted from the colonial policies. These sets of factors gave rise to a series of famine that depopulated the areas.

The East African diaspora is traced under three spheres namely: the migration of ethnic groups like the Zulu, the slave trade and to climatic changes, which caused wars and

forced ethnic groups to abandon certain areas (Kusimba, 2004; Lovejoy, 1983; Manning, 1990). Due to the slave trade, which reached its peak in the nineteenth century, East Africans are now present on the Arabian peninsula, the Persian Gulf, Pakistan, India and even as far as Bengal (Harris, 1971).

Even though slaves were dispersed around the Indian Ocean, most of them remained in Africa. The slaves were brought from the coast's hinterland to towns on the coast, like Zanzibar, Malindi and Mombasa. They worked on plantations, in craft shops or the docks. They were used as administrators, soldiers, eunuchs, concubines or domestic slaves (Cooper, 1977; Lovejoy, 1983 & Manning, 1990). Thus, the East African Diaspora is mainly associated with the dispersion of different ethnic groups within Africa.

Odhiambo (1979) on the other hand argues that the movement of the Negro and Cushitic descents into East Africa with their knowledge of food production and iron working was a long drawn out process. He adds that, though it marked the beginning of a permanent settlement in the region, there is still a great deal to be learned about migrations of individual groups, and one cannot expect to find definite answers or fixed dates for every stage in the period of migration and settlement. Kenya as a country has experienced this diaspora phenomenon up to the present day. For instance, externally, various groups of people have found their way into Kenya. This is demonstrated through historical records as contained in the 1962 Census during the colonial period. These external groups include Europeans, Asians and Africans who were already in diaspora in Kenya (Kenya Population Census Report, 1962).

Internally, Kenyan ethnic communities have been in constant migrations making them to be in diaspora. Because of these on-going migrations within Kenya, Abagusii people

have not been spared either. Just like any other ethnic group, the Abagusii did not stop migrating from their ancestral land to other areas like the South Rift, Molo, Kitale, Kimilili, and Trans-Nzoia among others. Very scanty information exists about Abagusii who migrated and settled outside Gusii land. However, available information does not focus on their migration, challenges, and opportunities where they are in diaspora. It is in the light of the above, that this study traced and examined the migration, spread, challenges, and opportunities of Abagusii diaspora in Kenya from 1895 to 2007 with special reference to the South Rift.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The pre-colonial history of Kenya is dominated by migrations and settlement of various Kenyan societies. This phenomenon continued in the colonial and post-colonial Kenya. In the colonial period, the British colonial land and labour policies drove some people from their ancestral land to new lands (the reserves). The post-colonial political economy also contributed to further migrations into new areas as well as occupation of the lands that belonged to the colonial masters.

The historiography of Kenya provides a well-documented migration history of the pre-colonial Abagusii. However, Abagusii did not stop migrating to other parts of Kenya. Very scanty information is available on Abagusii migration and settlement in colonial and post-colonial Kenya. Consequently, there is an urgent need to historically examine and reconstruct the colonial and post-colonial Abagusii migration and their eventual settlement outside Gusii land, notwithstanding the opportunities and challenges they have ever encountered. It is in the light of the above that this study has endeavored to unravel the history of the emergence of Abagusii diaspora in the South Rift, Kenya.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

The specific objectives of this research were:

- i. To examine the emergence of Abagusii before colonialism.
- ii. To evaluate the migration of the Abagusii into South Rift in Colonial era 1895-1963.
- iii. To assess the migration of the Abagusii into South Rift in Post-colonial era 1963-2007.
- iv. To explore the challenges and opportunities of the Abagusii diaspora in South Rift.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

The study sought to answer the following research questions:

- i. How did Abagusii society emerge before colonialism?
- ii. What caused Gusii migration in the colonial era?
- iii. Were there Gusii migrations into South Rift after independence?
- iv. What were the challenges and opportunities that faced Gusii diaspora in the South Rift?

### **1.5 Assumptions**

This study was premised on the following assumptions.

- i. The pre-colonial Abagusii emerged after several processes of migration, interaction, influxes and influences.
- ii. The colonial economic policies contributed to the Abagusii migration and

settlement in South Rift Kenya.

- iii. The politics of take over after independence contributed to the emergence of Abagusii diaspora in South Rift.
- iv. The Abagusii in diaspora have faced many challenges notwithstanding the various opportunities.

### **1.6 Justification of the Study**

Very scanty information exists about the Abagusii who migrated and settled outside their land. Further, the limited information does not focus on their movement, challenges and opportunities while in diaspora. It is in the light of the above that this study traced and examined the movement, spread, challenges, and opportunities of the Abagusii diaspora in Kenya from 1895 to 2007 with special reference to South Rift.

Despite the conflict between the Abagusii and Kipsigis, some Abagusii were bold enough to move from their land to the area inhabited by the Kipsigis in the South Rift. This scenario prompted the researcher to engage in the critical assessment of the Abagusii living in Diaspora in South Rift; those majorly affected by the 2007/2008 post-election violence. This is attributed to the fact that most Abagusii were living in South Rift as workers in various areas such as the tea farms and estates, tea processing industries, Finlays horticultural farms, and private lands owned by the Kipsigis. Apart from that, other Abagusii in diaspora were entrepreneurs while others were living there after buying their own land and being issued with land title deeds. All these combined, had made the Abagusii in South Rift live there as though it was their second home though they were in diaspora.



There are limited studies concerning the movements and settlement of Abagusii who have moved and settled outside their original home especially the South Rift. The present study, therefore, investigated the reasons behind migration and settlement of Abagusii in the South Rift. The findings of the study are beneficial to the leadership of the two devolved units of government in Gusii land (Kisii and Nyamira County) who may use it for statistical and planning purposes. It is also beneficial to researchers interested to study patterns of migration, reasons behind migration as well as establishment of settlements before, during, and after colonialism in Kenya. Other researchers will benefit from the findings of this study especially concerning the post-election violence 2007/2008.

### **1.7 Significance of the Study**

There is evident lack of research by historians on the movement and settlement of the Abagusii who have moved and settled outside their original homeland, most especially in the South Rift. This study therefore sought to find out reasons for movement from Gusii land to South Rift. The study focuses on places where they are located in diaspora, challenges, and opportunities gained. The findings of the study are likely to be beneficial to the community members, and other researchers who are interested to find out more about other Abagusii in diaspora in other areas.

### **1.8 The Scope and Limitations of the Study**

The study is concerned with looking at the history and activities of the Abagusii who moved from Gusii land and settled in other parts of the country, from pre-colonial time to post-colonial time, that is, between 1895 and 2007. The research concentrated on those Abagusii people who moved to South Rift Kenya, the current Kericho and Bomet

Counties. The research also focused more on the Abagusii who live in the South Rift regions of Kenya especially in some areas of Kabianga, Bureti, Kipkelion, Soin, Chepseon, Roret, Sigowet, Ainamoi, and Belgut and the thirty elector wards. The study begins in 1895 because it was when British colonization of Kenya began. It is also the year when the first resistance against British rule was witnessed, (the Mazrui and the Nandi resistances). The year 1895 also marked the commencement of the construction of Kenya-Uganda Railway and the end of the jurisdiction of the Imperial British East African Company (IBEACo) in the protectorate.

Thus, 1895 is the year that marked the genesis of enhancing the British Colonial Policies that affected not only the entire Kenya, but also the Abagusii community in particular (Chavasu, 1997). The study ends at 2007 because, it marked one of the darkest period in Kenya's history characterized by wide spread killings and destruction of property in many parts of the country including South Rift. Most people were internally displaced due to the crisis that resulted from Post-Election Violence (PEV). Most ethnic groups in Kenya such as Abagusii who were living in diaspora in various parts of Kenya experienced a lot of violence owing to the fact that they were strangers in the new lands. The PEV made these communities to move back to their ancestral land in search of safety and homage (Maupeu, 2008). The PEV triggered another mass exodus of migration of the ethnic groups living in diaspora to perceived safe regions, and the Abagusii community was one of them (Kanyongolo, 1998).

The study on the emergence of Abagusii in the diaspora was limited to the South Rift based on the possibility that the extent of the influence of the identified factors may not be applicable in other regions. Getting accurate and conclusive statistical data during pre-colonial and colonial era of Abagusii was a problem because of limited relevant

information. The field study was only carried out in the areas that were extensively affected by post-election violence and targeted a sample population from the study population, and this may not have generated accurate representative data. As a result, secondary data from the local dailies and documents was used. The language barrier was overcome by the use of research assistants from the area who helped in data collection.

## **1.9 Literature Review**

This section reviews relevant literature in order to link it with previous studies. The gaps in the study on the migration of the Abagusii to South Rift were identified upon this basis. The review was undertaken under the following subheadings; emergence of the Abagusii before colonialism, migration of the Abagusii into South Rift between 1895- 1963, migration of the Abagusii into South Rift in post-colonial era 1963-2007, challenges and opportunities of the Abagusii diaspora in South Rift.

### **1.9.1 Emergence of the Abagusii before Colonialism**

Migration is a central aspect of human existence as it involves diversification of cultures and physical features. Whole communities, clans and groups, continued to migrate throughout millennia. Migrations were the means by which population growth was reduced, empty or sparsely populated land came under cultivation or became the hereditary grazing lands for pastoral people. Indeed, this applies to Abagusii community who moved from their cradle land Misri that was populated to other areas such as Mt. Elgon that was sparsely populated and later on dispersed to Kisumu, Kano plain and finally their present Gusii land.

Ochieng' (1974) indicates that, the reasons for vast movements were varied but

certainly social, economic and political reasons must be among the most important. Sometimes a combination of the two or more of these reasons acted all at once to create an impact enough to cause a mass movement of a group of people from one direction to other. Most of the aforementioned factors triggered the movement of the Abagusii from their cradle land to their present homeland.

Ochieng' (1974) further notes that, during severe famines like the famine of *Amakongiro* that is estimated to have been at about 1890. During this, the Abagusii would conduct barter trade of their children, particularly boys whom they integrated into their military sets in order to get food from other communities. This information was important to the research since, it was able to fill in the knowledge gap by showing how some of the Abagusii went to live with other communities such as the Kipsigis. Since most of the children were sold to other communities through barter trade when they were youths or children, they then grew up in the foreign land. These children had no option but to submit since they were being sacrificed to save their families in exchange for food. They adopted the new community's culture and married in the foreign land. This shows how some of the Abagusii ended up in foreign lands. In addition to that, the work of Ochieng' (1974) also shows the applicability of the Theory of Historical Materialism that depicts the contemporary economic activity, social reality, the economic structure and relationship played a great role in the way of production.

Odhiambo, *et.al*, (1979) indicate that the movement and settlement of early people was a slow process which took more than two thousand years. People moved in small groups, as clans or families rather than as ethnic communities, moving from one settlement to the next, their movements were backward as well as forward, seasonal as

shown by “transhumance” practiced by the Luo people in search of water and pasture during dry spells, and returning to cultivate their land when the rains came. They further observe that, in the course of migration, there would be frequent meeting and mixing with other groups. This could lead to the adoption of new ideas and customs, and in some cases even to the absorption of one group by another. This experience indeed was manifested too by the Abagusii when they moved to their neighbours the Kipsigis in the South Rift.

Odhiambo, *et.al*, (1979) further indicate that, contacts between groups of migrants were more often peaceful than hostile due to their mutual interdependence; where pastoralists needed grain and crops while the agriculturalists needed to acquire cattle. However, a cattle raiding was identified as one of the main factor behind the Abagusii migration into new lands. Livestock play an important part in most of the African communities. Most African communities attach much importance to livestock and more specifically cattle. This is due to the fact that economically, it is a source of food, and provides skins which were used for cloth making and other uses. Furthermore, oxen were used in ploughing land, and their waste was used as manure on their farms. Livestock also have some cultural importance attached to them too. These among other reasons give a brief background why the Abagusii and other communities reared livestock. However, there were also rivalries and clashes from time to time, which led to assimilation throughout the period.

Odhiambo *et.al*, (1979) continues to argue that the movement the Negroes (dark-skinned race originally native to Africa comprising of Spanish and Portuguese from Latin) and Cushitic lineage brought in their knowledge of food production and iron working into East Africa. This was along drawn out process though it marked the beginning of a

permanent settlement in the region. There is still a great deal to be learned about movements of individual groups, and one cannot expect to find definite answers or fixed dates for every stage in the period of migration and settlement. From the above scholars' contributions, it is noted that some of the Abagusii ended up in new lands because they wanted to satisfy their spirit of adventure, economic, social, and political reasons. Through this, they were able to learn a lot about the new cultures of other communities.

In the same way, Ogot (1976) notes that, migration and settlement has encouraged larger and more settled populations, specialization in crafts, industries and trade, and developments in social and political organization. He notes that during migrations some members are lost, while others are incorporated, through the continual processes of migration and interaction with neighbours who are also absorbed. Ogot further indicates that most migrations were slow and gradual, involving peaceful penetration and settlement but as populations increased and more land was required, so expansion and migration proceeded. However, the problem of reconstructing history became more difficult when one attempts to establish a cultural identity of a particular ethnic group.

Abagusii were not left behind, their tradition that leads to the construction of their history was mixed up and their migration was gradual. During migration people drew on the traditions and cultures of other people when and where it was necessary for survival, growth and dominance. He further says that, their social institutions, their economy, and even their ideas embodied in their religion seem to have absorbed new and different concepts and to have changed to new circumstances. This also applied to Abagusii during their migration.

### **1.9.2 Abagusii Migration to the South Rift (1895-1963)**

In order to get a clear grasp on the evaluation of the migration of Abagusii into South-Rift before independence, some key terms such as colonialism, master, Imperial East African Company, capitalism among others need to be understood. This gives an insight into understanding how colonialism influenced or manipulated the migration of the Abagusii and other communities in Kenya from their original homeland to diaspora.

According to Zig Zag (2014), colonization is the practice of invading the lands and territories, for the purpose of settlement and resource exploitation. Colonialism is the establishment, exploitation, maintenance, and expansion of colonies in the territory by people from another territory. It is a set of unequal relationships between the colonial power and the colony and often between the colonists and the indigenous population. This idea mainly came from the west (Rashid, 2013).

Rockman & Steele (2003) defined colonization as a process by which a central system of power dominates the surrounding land and its component. This draws the example of settler colonies in America or Australia, trading posts and plantations while colonizing the existing indigenous people of styled “new territories”. The duo posit that a master refers to a man or woman who has people working for him especially servants or slaves, or a man in charge of an organization or group in particular and has the ability or power to use, control, or dispose something. Colonial masters therefore, refer to the white settlers who colonized Africans and in this case the Kenyans, particularly the Abagusii and the Kipsigis. The colonial masters were the white settlers who were representing the British government in administration and running of the capitalist economy.

Imperial British East African Company was a commercial association founded by the British to develop African trade in the areas controlled by the British Colonial powers. It was created after the Berlin Treaty of 1884-1885, and was led by William Mackinnon and built upon his company's trading activities in the region with the encouragement of the British government through the granting of an imperial character although it remained unclear what this actually meant. It granted immunity of prosecution to British subjects whilst allowing them the right to; raise taxes, impose custom duties, administer justice, make treaties and otherwise act as the government of the area.

Capitalism refers to an economic system in which all or most of the means of production and distribution (land, factories, communications, and transportation systems) are privately owned and operated in a relatively competitive environment through investment of capital to produce profits. It has been characterized by a tendency toward the concentration of wealth, the growth of large corporations, among others that has led to economic inequality, which has been dealt with by increased government action and control (Avugma, 2000).

Capitalist economy refers to an economic system in which investment in and ownership chiefly by private individuals or corporations especially; as contrasted to cooperatively or state-owned means of wealth. This economy was coined in the mid nineteenth century, when the Industrial Revolution was in full swing and individual entrepreneurs were creating new industries and amassing wealth. Policy, on the other hand refers to a course or principle of action adopted or proposed by an organization or individuals. It can also mean a way of doing something that has been officially agreed and chosen by a political party, a business, or another organization.



From the above definitions it is noted that, the coming of the colonial masters had a lot of impact in the social, economic and political set up of Kenya particularly Abagusii which forced them to migrate. This later on negatively influenced the Kenyan ethnic groups as it disrupted their different systems of life especially owing to the introduction of capitalist economy which was the money economy which replaced indigenous barter trade system.

According to Fedders & Salvadori (1979) migration and settlements make us understand what it is that makes people the way they are. In other words, we understand who they are and why they live the way they do. They also indicate that cultures of people are the manifestations of their total creativity, of their expression, of their concept of themselves in relation to their cosmos, confining them in their sense of a group identity.

They further note that, as they were moving, their industries and cultures flourished and deteriorated, they were diffused and rejected or became arrested in some cases. Some invaded and peacefully penetrated and others either displaced or assimilated by his fellow man in the course of migration. This explanation by Fedders & Salvadori (1979) has helped to situate why some of the Abagusii moved from their home land to settle in the South Rift. The Abagusii, like most Bantu speaking tribes, were farmers in nature and farming was their traditional economic activity. Therefore, they opted to move to the Kipsigis land in search of land for their various farming activities. Fedders & Salvadori (1979) work is relevant to this study in terms of content and methodology. An interview with a key informant revealed the following.

We moved here in South Rift because we wanted a large place for farming. Livestock raiding back at home contributed highly in our migration and spirit of adventure (KII, Administrator, 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2018).

This concurs with what Ochieng'(1974) who indicated that, population increase, political chaos resulting from misrule or tyranny or mass execution of one section of the community by the ruling group would also make the oppressed element relocate to new areas like the Ngoni and the Ndebele who ran away from Zulu tyranny in South Africa. This applies to the reasons that prompted the migration of the Abagusii and other ethnic groups in Kenya during colonization period. Colonization completely changed the political, social, and economic setup of all ethnic groups in Kenya. This was the main factor for mass migration into diaspora in colonial era in Kenya.

Hear (1998) notes that, people migrate for labour market opportunities which are crucially important and are probably most prominent in academic and policy discussions. On the other side, family consideration, educational opportunities and adventure, climate and cultural preference, and very basic and immediate physical and security issues which can also drive migration. Typically, various factors come into play over time in shaping migration decisions, from more structural elements, to predisposing factors, immediate triggers, and intervening factors including social networks and immigration regimes elsewhere.

From the above contributions, it clearly indicates why Abagusii were always on the move as well as the applicability of theory of Historical Materialism where by most material forces are behind the principles of production and reproduction by the societies as clearly brought out in the case of Abagusii. This is because there were several factors that prompted the Abagusii to migrate from their original homeland to Kipsigis land, who were their neighbours as they were trying to better their social, economic, and political life. We conclude that these factors were both pull and push factors that manipulated their migration, giving them the impression and hope of better

production and reproduction out of their original homeland.

The current study agrees with Adepoju (1977) who defines migration as not meaningless amble; often they were a response to economic opportunities although sometimes they were caused by hostile environmental factors such as diseases, droughts, floods, warfare and calamities. Decolonization, labour migrations, imperialism, and social coherence are other factors of migrations. According to Adepoju, people migrate with the hope of improving their living standards, or ultimately those of their children. He asserts that, the volume and direction of migration reflects diversities of opportunities and imbalances in development between and within the various areas in a region. He further notes that other than economic considerations, political oppression, religious considerations, escape from social control, colonization, climatic disasters are also important factors that inform the motives for migration.

In this context, the main reason that brought colonization of ethnic groups in Kenya, Abagusii included, was primarily economic value of land. Land is a very essential factor in social reproduction in human societies; it binds clans and lineages together since its possession provides a base for identity and association with one's kin. It is a link between the living and the dead. This explains why some people are unwilling to leave their ancestral lands and settle elsewhere. However, those families which have since moved out of ancestral home land still have ties and continue to retain control over their ancestral patches of land. Their movement and settlement appear to be permanent in the host communities too and this applies to Abagusii in South Rift.

Levine (1979) notes that, land is so valuable among the Abagusii, that, a family with enough land is considered wealthy. Consequently, during an individual's lifetime; an

individual entirely depended on land for social well-being and economic sustenance. Nyanchoka (1984) asserts that, the Abagusii people believe that their land cannot be inherited or sold out to any outsider because the spirits of those who are buried there will be displeased and will haunt the family and lineage forever.

Ntabo (2006) shows that, land among the Abagusii is owned communally where the entire ethnic community collectively defended their territorial boundaries. The communal defense system was a result of a long identification of people with a certain geographical territory, which was understood to belong to them as a group. The frequent conflicts between the Abagusii and their immediate neighbours, the Maasai and Kipsigis, are classic examples that show how the Abagusii valued land. Although Ntabo's works addressed the importance of land among the Abagusii only, they helped the researcher to find out how the Abagusii were able to move to diaspora, occupy new land, and start settling in foreign land. They also helped the researcher find out whether the importance attached to land among Kipsigis and Abagusii are the same; and some effect on the Abagusii living in diaspora and their new hosts are the same.

In this regard, one of the key informants said that:

The Abagusii were farmers in nature and the white settlers had alienated their land leaving them with small and infertile pieces, this forced them to move to the neighbouring communities such as the Kipsigis to search for more land for cultivation (KII, Village elder, 8<sup>th</sup> July, 2018).

This was possible because they had the knowledge of iron working, good farming tools, and equipment. The knowledge helped the Abagusii in acquisition of land for farming and settlement in the foreign land. They had also migrated with the seeds for planting from their motherland (Ochieng', 1974).

Land alienation by the Europeans was because of Industrialization in Europe whereby the rapid growth of industries needed a lot of raw materials such as the agricultural products and, minerals. The British the resources from the alienated land in Kenya and exported to their mother country to be processed. To better understand this scenario the present study takes a preview on the introduction of British Rule in Kenya following the scramble and partition of Africa by the Europeans. Pakenham (1990) Postulates that by 1885, Britain, Portugal and France, had claimed for themselves vast areas of Africa and Asia, and emerging imperial powers like Italy and Germany had done likewise on a smaller scale. Just before the retirement of Otto von Bismarck, in 1886, the European scramble for Africa began.

The 1885 Berlin Conference, initiated by Bismarck to establish international guidelines for the acquisition of African territory, formalized this "New Imperialism." Between the Franco-Prussian War and the Great War, Europe added almost nine million square miles (23,000,000 km<sup>2</sup>) one-fifth of the land area of the globe to its overseas colonial possessions (Wikipedia on *the Commons* 2018). In 1885 Germany declared Tanganyika (now Tanzania) a protectorate and this coaxed the British to commend the management of Kenya and Uganda to the British East Africa Company in 1888 and later passed into the hands of the British Government in 1894 and declared both a protectorate in 1895 (*Gran Encyclopedia* ,1973).

Shillington (1995) notes that, using approximately 32,000 Indians, Britain started constructing the railway from Mombasa, a sea port of Kenya to Kampala in Uganda at the shores of Lake Victoria. The railway line was to enable the British colonize the interior of Africa. In 1905, the costs to Britain were very high and they wanted to get the economy running quickly in order to start recovering their outlay. It was not until

1900 that Lord Delamare started offering Kenyan land to Europeans and inviting them to settle in Kenya.

Shillington (1995) continues to note that, the European immigration began in the early 1900's by British government policy, which sought to secure not only a typical colonial export economy, but also a settler civilization of large estates worked by forced native labour. This was made possible by a quirk of climate and topography: glorious, well-watered uplands, the future "White Highlands", set in many times larger African area, certain blocks of it fertile. However, the great mass lower-lying, hot, dry country, some of it fit for grazing, with considerable stretches of tsetsefly infested areas and some tropical coastal extends. This is where the great mass of Africans was relegated to "reserves" outside the Highland area. These reserves became congested as population and livestock increased.

The reserves functioned, not as areas of separate existence, but as reservoirs for labour on European property. The labour being drawn out by a double economic necessity: the inadequacy of the reserves themselves and, more importantly at first, a compulsion for the first time to earn cash wages. A "hut tax" was early levied upon African males", and this tax, like the poll tax, which subsequently replaced it, had to be paid in cash. However, as the African had no cash, his only recourse was to earn it either by raising cash crops or by working for the white man. The former avenue was thereupon largely closed to him by prohibitions: he was forbidden by a series of administrative measures to raise the main export crops. As a result, a migratory labour force, its reluctance to leave home indicated by the two and three-fold variation between wages close to the reserves and wages at the greatest distance (Brett, 1973).

In Kenya, the government had gone further and instituted compulsion to work for private employers. The migratory stream, never accurately measured or analysed, consisted primarily men,( Douglas 1965). Thus, the colonial period witnessed the importation of economic practices based on the concept of industrialization and technological development of Britain. Important changes in the structure of the Kenyan economy were made. For instance, the commercialization of the economy created the basis for consumer demand for manufactures; the growth of agricultural production augmented incomes and stimulated the purchasing power of local consumers. It also boosted population growth from 5.4 million in 1948 to 8.3 million in 1960, expanded the internal market; and the creation of a significant labour force facilitated further market penetration and established the basis of an industrial work force. In 1942, there were 179,085 registered African labourers in Kenya. By 1952, the total number of Africans in wage employment had risen to 438,702 with 101,568 engaged in commerce and industry (Swainson, 1980).

The colonial period also saw the development of an industrial base. During the 1920s a number of processing industries were set up with official assistance. Wheat milling benefited directly from tariffs and protective railway rates. Similarly, in 1931, an Ordinance was passed giving the government power to give a sisal bag factory a monopoly in the home market to establish a new industry. Local producers were badly hit by falling world prices (Brett, 1973). The war and decolonization eras witnessed further expansion of this industrial base in the proliferation of import substituting industries. By 1963, Kenya had local factories in a range of sectors including cement, beer, biscuit, confectionary, textiles, shoes, metal, and pharmaceuticals. All these industries are the bases that later on created employment opportunities for many

Kenyans including the Abagusii and thus, were one of the pull factors that caused Abagusii migration during the colonial period, (Zezeza, 1970).

Although there were important changes over this colonial period, the failure to significantly develop the Kenyan population remains one of the most profound colonial legacies. Outside the agro-export sector and the European enclaves, the colonial administration did little to radically transform the native's economy. One striking feature of the colonial period was the deficient level of infrastructural development beyond what was necessary to sustain the system of international trade. Moreover, the alienation of land for European settlers, the system of discrimination against peasant production and forced mobilization of an African labour force to service European agriculture undermined indigenous production. Forced displacement of Africans from the land reduced their capacity for economic activity outside British farms (Zezeza, 1970). Abagusii were also victims of that hence forced to move and look for means to survive. It formed the root of an unemployment problem that would haunt the post-independence government and prove decisive in shaping the direction of policy (Zezeza, 1970).

Another colonial legacy is the conflict-prone internal migration system which pitted migrant labour (and squatters) settlers versus the "host communities", precipitating intermittent conflict. Migration redistributed population from the traditional sector to the modern sector comprising commercial agricultural areas and urbanizing centers. The vast majority of migrants moved from the poorer areas that the colonial land acquisition did not affect. This explains why some of the Abagusii ended up in some areas such as urban centers of Kericho, Litein, and Molo. This was as a result of



migration in search of labour, land for settlement, and other various ways of earning a living (Brett, 1973).

The white farmers embarked on commercial farming in different parts of the country, with a strong foothold in the Rift and associated highlands. Hence, they recruited cheap migrant labour from Nyanza and Western provinces exclusively to work, and some from central Kenya who had the double expectation both to work and to acquire land (Ominde, 1968). There emerged stable in-migration streams that caused rapid urbanization in the Rift Valley Province, the county's most urbanized region. This type of migration never changed much after independence, as the new large-scale farmers still required farm labourers from the established sources where Abagusii found them (Oucho, 1981). Throughout independence, Kenya's provinces have been sharply divided between five net out-migration provinces (Central, Eastern, Northeastern, Nyanza, and Western) and three net in-migration provinces (Rift Valley, Nairobi, and Coast). The colonial migrant system also made provision for squatters who doubled as workers and were granted temporary residence for as long as their employment lasted.

Livingstone, (1975) observes that, the product of labour should remain with the labourer, as it is the way he creates himself and hence it is his essence. Nevertheless, under alienated labour of capitalism, the proletariat does not have any right over his product that is the result of his labour. He does not own the means of production and hence he is forced to exchange the product of his labour, which actually is his own essence for money or wages. Hence, his relationship with the product characterizes alienation. In this case, the money for which he has exchanged became his enemy, as it becomes the symbol of his alienation. The more he worships this money, the more he becomes alienated from himself (Avineri, 1970).

Some of the Abagusii moved from their homeland because the white settlers had alienated most of their highlands. Because of this, those who worked for the white settlers were given a place to live by their employer in his or her land, as squatters. The squatter farms or settlement was just a temporary place for living and not permanent. The wages that they were paid was for their services of the labour force that they offered in the farms (Avineri, 1970).

The indirect rule administered by the British colonialists later turned out to be the “divide and rule” strategy, which polarized the various ethnic groups in Kenya. The colonialists argued that, they tried to make a nation-state out of a hotchpotch of antagonistic and uncivilized African people but they failed in their mission. This was because the ethnic groups had age long hatred for one another and as soon as the colonial power went, the natives descended into barbarism, maiming and killing each other (Vaughan, 2000). This explains why the whites settled between the Abagusii and Kipsigis to act as a buffer. The two communities could not unite as they lived on opposite directions and the Europeans at the center. This in turn contributed to the subsequent incompatibility of these ethnic groups as actors of one nation-state called Kenya.

Rothchild (1997) argues that, colonial powers promoted unity or disunity among ethnic groups depending on the security, economic and political gains to be made. The effect of encouraging these socially constructed identities those in turn were to create an incentive among elites to mobilize support along ethnic lines. The colonial powers used authoritarian rule where power was concentrated in the hands of the few whites. This system of “an economically privileged and politically powerful center” became entrenched. The experiences from the colonial masters made the Africans learn that

ethnic differences could be used to gain, keep power and economy.

Dattoo (1979) notes that the main African stocks who inhabit Eastern Africa had already entered the region before 1500, in what might be referred to as primary waves of migration, there was a great deal of absorption of people and in-filling of areas in the subsequent centuries. During this time, the establishments of colonial rule were packed with events, which reinforced each other and resulted in the overall decline of population. There were man made calamities that resulted from the colonial policies. These sets of factors gave rise to a series of famines that depopulated the areas.

This assertion supports the work of Omwoyo (2000), which notes that, during the colonial period, all the raids that took place along the borders with the Kipsigis, where the Kipsigis were being accused more often as instigators. Equally, the Kipsigis also suffered numerous raids from the Maasai, Abagusii and the Luo though most of these raids were retaliatory in nature. Stock rustling that was formerly regarded rather as a sport associated with manhood, took an economic turn during the colonial period. The commercialization of livestock raids meant that the acquisition of wealth which became the main object behind livestock raids. Livestock raids flourished with time and were even made complicated. It was equally proved that, in a number of cases the Abagusii not only made false identification of cattle but also stole amongst themselves and then sold cattle to the Kipsigis. The Sotik settled area largely inhabited by the Kipsigis squatters acted as a “thief’s paradise”.

Karl Marx Theory of Historical Materialism could be explained by the importance attached to livestock. Livestock seemed to be a scarce but valuable resource between the two communities. This was due to the cultural and economic importance that was attached to livestock between the two communities. On one hand, the Kipsigis felt that

livestock rearing was their preserve; hence the need to get the livestock from their neighbours in whichever manner. On the other hand, the Abagusii felt that it was important for them to rear livestock for their cultural, economic, and even nutritional value. The competition to raid and protect the livestock from raiders made the two communities to develop tension and hatred for each other (Omwoyo, 2000).

Because of this, some Abagusii decided to migrate to Kalenjin land and live within the Kipsigis. This is because they knew the Kipsigis would not attack them or raid their cattle if they lived with them peacefully. Additionally, in the post-colonial period, however, the pattern changed. During the Kenyatta regime, livestock raiding was not rampant. However, during Moi regime, the problem of cattle rustling became more pronounced between the Abagusii and Kipsigis, which led to the outbreak of battles between the two communities.

This made people to believe that, the government was in support of raiding or it never gave the issue the seriousness it deserved as mentioned by focus group discussions during the field study:

The Kipsigis believed that their neighbours such as the Abagusii were supposed to be farmers and not cattle keepers. As a result, they saw that raiding the Abagusii cattle and attacking them was normal just like all the years before. They saw it as way of earning a living and making themselves rich. This is because during the attacks the Kipsigis warriors took away the Abagusii cattle together with their food and also took their women and children captives\_making them part of their property (Accounts of one of the village elders, FGD, 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2018).

The above account directly concerns this study because it shows how the Abagusii came to be found in Diaspora. This as well agrees with the study by Ochieng' (1974), who notes that, after the movement of the Abagusii from the Kano Plains to the highlands; they adopted the communal cattle enclosure system. In this system, the

entire livestock of village/clan were driven for the night to be protected by warriors. This was due to the increasing attacks from cattle raiding Kipsigis, Maasai, and Nandi. It is in these enclosures that the warriors who were aged between 16 and 35 received their training where wrestling, hunting, and military drills were part of life in these so called, “villages”. The military drills given to the Abagusii young men may have contributed to the conflicts between the two communities as they legalized fighting with neighbours in the name of protection.

Most of the wars between the Abagusii clans and their immediate neighbours trace their origin to these cattle villages. Ochieng’ (1974) has tried to relate the cattle enclosures among Abagusii with the wars with their neighbours. However, he has not explained how they contributed to the migration of the Abagusii into the diaspora due to wars related to cattle raiding. Did the Abagusii have to migrate to diaspora yet their enemies were there and eyeing their cattle? Were they running away from cattle rustling or were they running into the hands of the cattle raiders to blend in with them? This research therefore sought to establish whether a cattle raiding between the Abagusii and their Kipsigis neighbours were one of the factors that caused the Abagusii to move into Kericho and live in diaspora with them.

Orchardson (1971) argues that, among the Kipsigis, raiding of cattle was a time sport event and was institutionalized. Cattle theft from outside the community was the objective of their active lives and a test of their military prowess. This meant that, raiding among the Kipsigis had a cultural attachment, a reason that may have legalized raiding on their neighbouring communities. The institutionalization of raiding among the Kipsigis also legitimized the activity as other men went to raid their neighbours because it was acceptable by the society. One was to be a hero and virtuous man in the

eyes of the society for carrying out a successful raid. The prestige associated with successful raids encouraged many men to raid their neighbouring communities.

In the pre-colonial period, raiding activities were however not restricted to the Kipsigis. The Abagusii also carried it out on their neighbouring communities such as the Kipsigis and Maasai. Interestingly, the Abagusii were migrating to diaspora yet their enemies were eagerly waiting to raid off their cattle. They ran away from cattle raiding attacks only to land into the hands of the cattle raiders to blend with them. This research therefore found out that cattle's raiding between the Abagusii and their Kipsigis neighbours was one of the factors that caused the Abagusii to move into Kericho and live in diaspora with raiders. Field data corroborated this information as noted in oral interview with a church elder who said, "...once we stay with them, they do not take our animals'' (KII, 5<sup>th</sup> August, 2018).

In conclusion, not much has been written about outward movements and settlements of Kenya's people during the colonial and post-colonial periods. The existing literature concerning movements and settlements deals with the people of Kenya in the pre-colonial period. A distinguishing feature of migration in this area is the evident link between political and economic change and large-scale migrations.

This study asserts that some Abagusii ended up in diaspora as they were looking for employment to better their living standards. This actually worked for them even though it was after a period of struggling. This is so because from the field the researcher noted that the Abagusii who worked and lived in the white man's land as squatters were able to save some of the money that they were paid as wages and later on befriended the Kipsigis who had land to sell unto them. That is how some ended up living in Kipsigis land even after the colonial period ended (FGD, 25<sup>th</sup>2018).

### **1.9.3 Abagusii Migration between 1963 and 2007**

Nyukuri (1995) notes that, when Kenya gained independence in 1963, the white settlers had to lease the land that they had owned to Kenyans through the Kenyan government. The majority of Kenyans who benefited were the political leaders who were exposed to the colonial government and this meant that their communities benefited too. Those who bought land using their money or shares of joint groups from the white settlers such as the Abagusii also benefited. This made them to migrate into the new lands in Kipsigis area and started living there afresh. Even though this movement of Abagusii and other communities into the new lands (in the case of Abagusii to Kipsigis land) was met with a lot of resistance from the original inhabitants, they managed to settle. They saw them as strangers or enemies who were taking land from them.

According to oral interview data:

The resistance was propagated by some Kipsigis leaders who spread propaganda that the new people on their land were snatching land from them. This was not actually true (KII, church elder, 5<sup>th</sup> August, 2018).

Nyukuri (1995) argues that, at the dawn of independence, African leaders ascended to governmental structures, which had been intended to preserve the colonial administrative legacy. These leaders were armed with the western constitution and ill-trained work force to soldier on and make provisions for the enlarged nation-state, now encompassing diverse ethnic groups with variegated interests. As if this was not enough, Kenya, like most other African countries, inherited from the colonialists' scarce national resources, inadequate infrastructure, inadequate human resource capacity, inadequate capital, segregated education, and health facilities. The scramble for the scarce national resources and facilities intensified and ethnicity became the

main vehicle through which the dominance and preservation of power as well as resources could be achieved. The ruling elites in post-colonial Kenya have often relied heavily on ethnicity to remain in leadership positions or settle a dispute with their perceived enemies.

According to key informants, the Kipsigis and Abagusii were in conflict due to the scarce resources that the post-independence government of Kenya inherited from the British colonialists. The two communities under study were in conflict over resources like the social amenities and infrastructure. This was due to the differential distribution of such resources in the colonial period, which were perfected in the post-independence era. The two communities were also in competition over land. Between the two communities, such resources were formerly communally owned, but the landholding system changed with colonialism. The British demarcated the land by having a boundary between them, which was inherited by the post-independent government. The boundary was to help the colonialists administer the two communities with ease, the reason it was drawn along ethnic line (KII, Administrator, 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2018).

As much as colonialism contributed to the separation and hatred between the two ethnic communities, the post-independence government takes the larger blame in promoting the conflicts between the two communities. It is observed that only the post-colonial government maintained the colonial boundaries and administrative structures but did not solve the problems that were created by colonialism like that of land. Thus, the government of Kenya was reluctant in addressing issues to do with inter-community relations and cross-border co-operation (Ominde, 1968).

This assertion was in support of what Nzomo (2002), emphasizes on the existing governance, institutions, policies and ideologies. Nzomo argues that these, have not



adequately been responsive to the diverse social identities and instead tend to encourage social fragmentation rather than social cohesion. This kind of social context becomes a fertile ground that could easily be exploited and ignited by the existing political leadership into a war that serves only the hegemonic elite interests.

On his part, Huntington (1973) noted that, any attempt to explain migration in Kenya must contend with the ecological as well as cultural diversity within the country. These ecological conditions are often incorporated into economic models under the label of rural incomes. Higher rural incomes produce a substitution effect, which raises the attractiveness of remaining in the rural area. He continues to note that the strength of the income effect would depend upon the spread of the cash economy among other factors. This brings to a scenario that the Abagusii diaspora resembles rural-rural migration.

A report of the Judicial Commission (1999) posits that, in the 1991 clashes, non-Kalenjin and non-Maasai ethnic groups were “attacked, their houses set on fire, their properties looted and in certain instances, some of them were killed or severely injured with traditional weapons like bows and arrows, spears, *pangas*, swords and clubs.” According to the brink of the precipice: a human rights account of Kenya’s post-2007/2008 election violence witnesses told the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, (KNCHR), that violent clashes between the Kalenjin, on one hand, and the Kikuyu and Kisii on the other began in 1992. These clashes pitted these groups along ethnic lines as well as on political lines. The chief of the area pointed that this is one of the challenges faced by the Abagusii during their stay in South Rift.

Following the clamour for the restoration of multiparty politics in early 1990s, violence broke out in the Rift Valley province especially in Molo District targeting the Luo, Kikuyu, Luhya, and Abagusii communities who were perceived as opposition supporters. Rift Valley is predominantly home to the Kalenjin and Maasai communities whose members in the 1990s supported the then President Daniel Arap Moi (Karori, 2014). The violence was preceded by threats by politicians allied to the then President Moi that members of communities seen as sympathetic to multiparty politics would be expelled from the Rift Valley province if the agitation for reforms did not stop (National Christian Council of Kenya 1992). In 1992, the Kalenjin were overwhelmingly members of the then ruling party, the Kenya African National Union, (KANU). President Moi belonged to KANU and was opposed to the introduction of multiparty politics in the country and the existence of opposition political parties particularly in the Rift Valley. Many non-Kalenjin and non-Maasai\_ otherwise referred to as KAMATUSA (Kalenjin, Maasai, Turkana and Samburu) communities in the Rift Valley supported the then budding opposition parties.

According to a report by, Directorate of Immigration and Refugee Board on the 1992 clashes, the provincial administration was partisan in its support of the then KANU government and against those considered to be opposed to KANU in the Rift Valley. In 1992 the provincial administration also showed open partisanship in favour of KANU.

To this end, one of the chiefs from the area asserted that:

In the 2007-2008 post-election violence, the provincial administration and the police showed partisanship by their inaction as various ethnic groups were forcefully and violently evicted from their homes in various parts of the central Rift including in Kuresoi, Narok, Molo, Nakuru and Naivasha (KII, area Chief, August, 2018).

The study noted that inter-ethnic clashes occurred in the central Rift in 1997 which was a general election-year. Thus, the ethnic clashes in 1992, 1997 and 2007/2008 had the common feature of having occurred preceding or following a general election. The pattern of attacks particularly in Molo in 1997/1998 showed that Kalenjin raiders first attacked and killed the Kikuyu community before burning their homes. In retaliation, the Kikuyu community organized themselves and launched counter attacks in which they killed the Kalenjin and burnt their homes. In these attacks, the Abagusii were not spared but still went back to South Rift after the conflict.

According to Africa Human Rights Watch (1993) the violence that began in 1991 left an estimated 1500 Kenyans dead and about 300,000 internally displaced by the time it abated in 1994. The violence recurred in smaller dimensions during and after the 1997 elections, this time spreading to the coast Province. As in the Rift Valley, the 1997 coast Province violence, targeted members of ethnic communities perceived to be hostile to President Moi and his ruling party KANU. Parliamentary Select Committee, (Kiliku Committee 1992) concluded that the violence in the Rift Valley had been planned and instigated by senior politicians in the government (Report of the Parliamentary Select Committee, 1992). Similarly, the Akiwumi Commission, (1999) in its report concluded that the violence was the work of senior politicians. Other inquiries by civil society groups had reached a similar conclusion. Nevertheless, no one was ever prosecuted and punished for the violence (Karori, 2014).

Apart from the above, grand corruption in the acquisition, registration, and administration of land matters has been a major problem in Kenya. The Ndungu Report noted that throughout the 1980s and 1990s public land was illegally and irregularly allocated in total disregard of the public interest and in circumstances that were against

the law. Land grabbing and the allocation of public land as political patronage were part of the gross corruption of this period. Those involved in these allocations were senior public servants, local land boards, the courts, and a range of officials including members of the provincial administration, politicians, and others. Land allocations were therefore used to reward “politically correct” individuals, and became heavily politicized. Given that the recommendations of the Ndungu report were never implemented, this increased the sense of frustration in attempting to deal with land tenure disputes. The fact that institutions which could have been used to resolve land disputes were not impartial instead encouraged individuals to take matters into their own hands and to use violence to resolve them (Ndungu Report, 2004).

Land being an emotive issue, politicians capitalized on issues surrounding it, including encouraging violence during elections. In discussions of post-election violence, many Kalenjins argue that it is a product of longstanding anger over land distribution following independence. They argue that land was alienated by the colonial government and then unfairly parcelled out to Kikuyu, Abagusii and other groups whom they view as outsiders. Many Kalenjins believe that issues relating to land were the reason for the pre-electoral violence in the 1990s and the post-election violence after the 2007 (Karori, 2014).

The Akiwumi Commission concluded that, there were three underlying reasons for the election violence, “ambitions by Kalenjins of recovering what they think they lost when the Europeans forcibly acquired their ancestral land. Secondly, the desire to remove “foreigners”, derogatorily referred to as *madoadoa* or “spots” from their midst. The reference was mainly towards the Kikuyu, Kisii, Luo and other communities who had found permanent residence in the Rift Valley and finally, political and ethnic loyalty.

The Akiwumi Commission also came to the conclusion that the security forces and the provincial administration were negligent and unwilling to take firm action to prevent the clashes from erupting or once these erupted, to bring a quick end to them. Tribal leaders and politicians were also found to have instigated the clashes. Amusingly, after post-election violence, the Abagusii went back to South Rift.

Recommendations were made to prevent the future recurrence of violence including recommendations for the investigations of named individuals suspected to have had a hand in the violence. But the findings and recommendations of that Commission were rejected by sections of the government of the day and there followed no further visible action on the report. The 1999 report of the commission was finally made public in October 2002. It confirmed that prominent ruling party politicians fuelled multiple incidents of so-called ethnic clashes in Kenya since 1991.

Akiwumi Report dismisses the land explanation factor, pointing out that individuals from different groups lived side by side for many years until the advent of multi-party democracy when violence was used to kill and displace opposition party voters to keep them from voting. Hence, the Report argues that even though the promise of getting land from those who were displaced was used to entice youth into violence, the desire for political power and not land hunger was the causal factor. While grievance based issues like ethnicity, poverty, land and relative deprivation are at the core of the process that led to election violence; in the absence of immediate tangible benefits, greedy leaders tend to lose their incentive to continue the protest. Greed motives were covertly in play while protesting under the cover of grievances.

#### **1.9.4 Challenges and Opportunities**

A challenge is a difficulty to someone or something. There were several challenges that emerged during the migration, spread, and settlement of Abagusii in diaspora. They came to either work in the white settlers' farms or seek land to settle on. These challenges can be categorized into two namely; political and socio political challenges.

Fedders and Salvadori (1979) opined that migration and settlement of the early people makes the expression of their concept in relation to their cosmos, confirming them in their sense of a group identity. Even more important, migrations were the conduct through which techniques and skills, new ideas and beliefs, and new crops and products were channelled into the more far-flung regions. When people moved into lands already occupied by indigenous populations, their response was usually to adapt themselves to unfamiliar ways rather than to adopt those ways wholesale in turn. The indigenous population borrowed and adapted new ideas and skills from immigrants in this case the Kipsigis, borrowed and learned new things from the Abagusii in diaspora and vice versa. Migrations were thus important agencies through which culture, technology literature, and cosmology were diffused widely across the African continent.

Ogot (1976) notes that, migration and settlement has encouraged larger and more settled populations, enabled specialization in crafts, industries and trade, and lead to developments in social and political organization. He further notes that during migrations, some members are lost, others are incorporated, through the continual processes of migration and interaction with neighbours, they are also absorbed. He continues to observe that most migrations were slow and gradual, involving peaceful penetration and settlement but as populations increased and more land was required, so

expansion and migration proceeded. However, the problem of reconstructing the migrations became more difficult when one attempts to establish a cultural identity of a particular ethnic group. During migration, people drew on the traditions and cultures of other people when and where it was necessary for survival, growth, and dominance. He further asserts that, their social institutions, their economy, and even their ideas embodied in their religion seem to have absorbed new and different concepts and to have changed to new circumstances.

Apollos (2010) observes that refugees and the internally displaced persons often tend to live with stigmatization or marginalization that tends to be associated with their status. Thus, in the process of struggling for security and group survival, the Kipsigis and Abagusii came into conflicts. As a result, some of them were displaced by the members of their perceived enemy group; owing to the group mythologies that justified enmity between the two communities. The idea of displacing their “enemy group” was all aimed at their survival as a community. This could be achieved by sending their opponents away from them as they considered them hostile or evil.

When the resistance to Moi’s leadership grew over the years, civil society became increasingly vocal and donors increased demands on him, including the use of financial sanctions, to democratize. In the end, he reluctantly agreed to allow multi-party democracy in 1991 and he presided over two multi-party elections during his rule, one in 1992, and another in 1997. Although he agreed to multi-party democracy, President Moi did not accept the idea that through this he might lose the presidency. Thus, it was in this period in the 1990s that violence became institutionalized during presidential and parliamentary elections (Mohamed, 2015). This was a challenge to Abagusii in Diaspora as they were attacked during every election and their properties destroyed.

Various reports covering elections held during this period alleged that high-ranking political figures, civil servants, and others close to the heart of the Government organized and used violent gangs to intimidate people in areas of potential opposition support, most of whom were Kikuyu, Luo, Luhya, and Kamba. The strategy was to keep opposition supporters away from voting. The plan was to hire goons in the Rift Valley and elsewhere to kill people and displace individuals from their home areas so that KAMATUSA candidates could win. Through this, President Moi could be assured of obtaining 25% of the vote in five provinces, the majority of the votes cast for the President, and the majority of elected Members of Parliament.

Violence became a means of securing political power and winning elections. In spite of the death and destructions that these methods caused, no one (including the civil society such as Kenya Human Rights Commission, Human Rights Watch and parliamentary committees like Kiliku and Akiwumi Commissions) ever pointed a finger on these atrocities. Those *adversely mentioned* were contained in the reports of both Commissions but no action taken against them. This led to a culture of impunity whereby those who maimed and killed for political ends were never brought to justice. This changed Kenya's political landscape with regard to elections, a point noted by Human Rights Watch. Others were promised parcels of land and jobs after evicting up country dwellers. However, from testimony in the Akiwumi Report (1992) it is not clear if they got the land or jobs either.

This culminated in an informal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) before the 2002 election between the then opposition coalitions under which the coalition agreed to introduce the post of Prime Minister after the election. However, once elected, discussions continued concerning constitutional change and the devolution of power.



The Kibaki government then came up with a draft constitution that was put forward by Attorney General, Amos Wako. This watered down some of the provisions in the draft that had been agreed to during the *Bomas discussions*. The turn of events thereby increased the presence of institutionalized extra-state violence both during and after elections, a pattern that continued to increase up through the 2007 elections, even after President Mwai Kibaki took over power in 2002 (CIPEV, 2008).

It was not surprising that post-election violence erupted in settlements of varying sizes in western Kenya, especially in Rift Valley where, as the Kiliku Report (1992) stated, the Chui (Kiswahili for leopards), Kalenjin, had been braying for the blood of *madoadoa* (spots), [referring to the non-Kalenjin] in the province. Nyukuri (1997) notes, those children born of parents from the warring ethnic groups identify them with either the paternal or maternal side depending on where the pressure is most.

As much as colonialism contributed to further separation and hatred between the two ethnic communities, the post-independent government takes the larger blame in promoting the conflicts between the two communities. Though they were faced with many challenges in Diaspora, they also enjoyed some opportunities on the other hand which, some of them could not be accessed or got in their ancestral land. These opportunities have been discussed in two categories; that is the socio-economic and political opportunities.

Adepoju (1977) wrote that, people migrate with the hope of improving their living standards, or ultimately those of their children. He asserts that the volume and direction of migration reflects diversities of opportunities and imbalances in development between and within the various areas in a region. He further notes that other than economic considerations, political oppression, religious considerations, escape from

social control, colonization or climatic disasters are important factors that inform the motives for migration.

The researcher asserts that some Abagusii ended up in diaspora as they were looking for employment to better their living standards. This actually worked for them even though it was after a period of struggling. Some Abagusii who worked and lived in the Whiteman's land as squatter were able to save some of the money that they were paid as wages and later on befriended the Kipsigis who sold to them land. That is how some ended up living in Kipsigis land even after the colonial period end.

Laurel, & Phillipson (1978) indicated that, during migration, people may find themselves together not necessarily people of the same household. Small groups of people leave their old settlements, moving on to new areas, where they perform mutually supportive and meaningful activities together and for each other like planting new fields and introducing their technological and economic practices into areas in which they had previously been unknown. Equally, significant family relationships may go well beyond the narrow definition of the nuclear family. In relation to this study, this was crucial in analysing the results that emerged in the process of the Abagusii migration that was in this case categorized under opportunities and challenges. The opportunities showed the benefits that the Abagusii gained in the new lands like acquisition of land and establishment of settlement among others, while the challenges portrayed the problems they faced such as external conflicts, loss of properties among others.

### **1.10 Theoretical Framework**

This study is guided by the Historical Materialism theory that was first articulated by

Karl Marx (1818-1883). It is a methodological approach to the study of human societies and their development over time. It is the extension of the principles of dialectical materialism to the study of social life. The application of the principles of dialectical materialism to the phenomena of the life of society, the study of society and of its history is relevant to this study.

According to Marx, it is important to understand that human reality is essentially historical and is driven by material forces. Historical materialism is an attempt to explain the origin and development of the society from a materialist perspective. It deals with the most general laws of social development, where it identifies material forces playing crucial roles in the formation and evolution of human societies. The most important aspect of social reality is the economic structure of a particular society; the ways in which different groups of people are related to economic resources of the society and their respective production relationships (Avineri, 1970).

The material conditions of a society's way of producing and reproducing the means of human existence or in Marxist terms, the union of its productive capacity and social relations of production, fundamentally determine its organization and development. It easily explains the causes of development and change in human society as human beings collectively produce the necessities of life. It also involves social classes and relationship between them along with the political structures and ways of thinking in society, which are founded on and reflect contemporary economic activity (*entry in/history/historic figures/marx\_karl.shtml*, 2018).

The Materialist Theory permits us to view the present historically and hence scientifically so that we can penetrate beneath the surface and perceive the profound historical forces behind the happenings of human events (Livingstone, 1975). This

theory is relevant to the study because it focuses on the social reality and the economic structure of a particular society, in this case Abagusii society. It goes further and explains how different groups of people relate to economic resource of their society and ways of production. This is true since, the Abagusii who moved into diaspora were an aftermath of the change of economic and social interaction from pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial era. That is to say that, the coming of the British colonialists into Kenya (who are associated with the capitalistic economy and land policies) that led to land alienation and displacement of people contributed greatly to the major migrations and settlement of Abagusii in the new lands “schemes”.

Historical Materialist springs from a fundamental underlying reality of human existence which avers that, in order for human beings to survive and continue to exist from generation to generation, it is necessary for them to produce and reproduce the material requirements of their life (Wood, 2005). This theoretical framework is relevant to the understanding of the circumstances that facilitated the emergence of the Abagusii diaspora in South Rift. Some of the outstanding factors include; drought and famine, internal and external conflicts, population increase and diseases.

The Marxian Materialist approach tries to trace the dynamics of migration by examining the factors that propel the development of human societies from their pre-historical days. Marx says that human societies develop in accordance with certain laws that are independent of the wishes and desires of people. He argues that the development of the society can be seen as a process of social production. The different stages of human evolution from simple to complex society formations are examined in order to develop his theory. Marx continues to say that, in the process of social production, human beings come together and enter into different relations that are

indispensable and independent of their will and desire (*entry in/ history/historic figures/marx-karl.shtml*, 2018). Consequently, the mode of production, embraces both the productive forces of society and men's relations of production, and is thus the embodiment of their unity in the process of production of material values.

Historical Materialism upholds the following principles, that; the basis of human society is how humans work on nature to produce the means of subsistence. This society moves from stage to stage when a new emerging class displaces the dominant class by overthrowing the political shell that enforces the old relations of production. There is a division of labour into social classes (relations of production based on property ownership where some people live from labour of others in a society. The system of class division is dependent on the mode of production and this mode of production is based on the level of the productive forces of the society (Livingstone, 1975). In regard to this study, this helps us to explain how the Abagusii in Diasporas' economy was changed. This was mainly due to political changes that were before, during and after colonization.

In this theory, precise judgment on the capitalist social system is given, to unmask capitalist society throughout the class struggle of the proletariat, where the Abagusii in diaspora were not left behind. In some societies, the order of production has acquired such complete mastery that functions well and without conflict by virtue of its own immanent laws. In other societies as the result of a conflict between different modes of production or the failure to achieve the stabilization of the shares apportioned to the various classes within a system of production, the use of naked, extra economic, violence must be the rule (Marx, & Engles, 2018).

According to Marx, labour is the fundamental activity of man. In simple terms, by labouring, man gets subsistence because of his interaction with nature. In the case of living creatures other than humans, there is no interaction between them and nature. Man's interaction with nature is labour and it is an instrument for man's self-creation. Nevertheless, under capitalism the worker and the product of his labour are separated, which ultimately leads to alienated labour (Wheen, 1999). In relation to this study, it guides us in elaborating the issue of land alienation by the white settlers who came to Kenya because of their British colonial government. Their economy forced most Kenyans and in this case, some Abagusii to be pushed to being squatters and in the schemes since their fertile land had been grabbed for colonialist economic exploitation.

It is evident that a society that is based on the simple exchange of commodities is already in one sense, close to the capitalist system while in another sense it exhibits a qualitatively different structure. In some societies, the order of production has undergone changes so that a materialist interpretation feeds on the existence of contradictions at the class level and within the capitalist system itself (Livingstone, 1975). The Abagusii in diaspora were not exempted from the economic change since initially their economic organization was simple and not as concrete.

Historical Materialism Theory is strong in that, it looks for the causes of historical events in the economic, social, and material interests of social classes and people. It was developed as an alternative to idealistic conceptions of history that viewed the causes of historical events as the results of supernatural, philosophical or teleological causes. In many ways, this has been a highly beneficial development, because it imposed the methods of science on research in history and humanities. It led historians and sociologists to look for material causes rather than trying to impose an external

system. This initiated research into economics, social history, and one might even say the entire field of sociology developed out of historical materialism (Williams, 2018). Marxism is designed to do away with poverty, that is, the state controls the means of production and allocates these according to one's needs. Everyone is supposed to work hard and contribute to society life and this is supposed to be a type of utopia (Enotes, 2018).

The weaknesses of historical materialism have unfortunately led in exactly the opposite direction. Marx was attempting to create a guideline for humanistic research in opposition to a theory of history. However, these ideas were often used to impose a dogmatic *Marxist* (class-oriented) system without any regard to facts or serious research, exactly the opposite of the original intention. As the benefits have been almost incorporated into the standard methodologies of historical and sociological research, we seldom hear about them and assume it was always this way. The misapplication of historical materialism as dogma is still popular today as an excuse for sloppy, ideologically oriented "research" and is unfortunately more visible, hence, our cultural bias against historical materialism (Williams, 2018). In reality, Marxism has the capacity to be corrupted. This means that Marxism is designed to create a utopia, but it fails to consider human nature and one of its greatest weaknesses is that it seems impossible to truly implement (Enotes, 2018).

Marx's ideas on Historical Materialism is important to this study, as it enabled the researcher to understand that human reality is essentially historical and is driven by material forces which from this study can be seen as either pull or push or even both in some cases that made the Abagusii move to diaspora. This emanates from the fact that the most general laws of social development, is that it identifies material forces playing

crucial roles in the formation and evolution of human societies and in this case the Abagusii living in diaspora. The most important aspect of social reality is the economic structure of a particular society; the ways in which different groups of people are related to economic resources of the society and their respective production relationships (Avineri, 1970).

## **1.11 Research Methodology**

This section describes the research design, area of study, study population, sample size and sampling procedures. It also covers the techniques, data collection instruments, data collection procedures, data analysis, and the ethical considerations.

### **1.11.1 Research Design**

Kothari (2010) describes research design as the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure. A research design can be perceived as the conceptual frame within which the research is conducted. It is the process by which the topic is turned into a researchable project (Hayes, 2010). It is useful to classify research design according to three perspectives namely, the number of contacts with the study population, the reference period of the study and the nature of the investigation (Kumar, 2014). This study accommodates the last two options. The study adopted qualitative design and non-probability sampling techniques where by knowledgeable persons on the topic of study were identified.

Mukherji, *et.al*, (2018) noted that in qualitative studies, the population is likely to be relatively small because the findings of these studies are often designed to apply to a restricted group. This fitted in the study because they were very few Abagusii and



Kipsigis who were aged (Forty years and above) and knowledgeable about the topic of research since many of them had died.

In non-probability sampling, the researcher applied opportunity sampling, snowball sampling, and purposive sampling. Opportunity sampling involves the researcher choosing anyone who is available and willing to take part in the research from a particular population and had knowledge of what was to be researched (Emerson, 2015). Opportunity sampling was suitable in the study because the individuals who fitted the criteria were identified from gotten from those church and chief's meeting.

Snowball sampling was used too, where participants recruited into the study were asked to identify others who may be appropriate or willing to be a participant in the study and had knowledge about the research (Mukherji, *et.al.*, 2018). Those people who were identified in the church and chief's meeting helped to identify others. On the other hand, Johnson & Christensen (2012) indicate that purposive sampling involves choosing of individuals who can provide the information needed for the purpose of the research. Setia (2016) notes that purposive sampling is often used in qualitative studies involving focus groups where participants are chosen on the basis of who can give information on specific study. Purposive sampling was found useful in the study because participants aged (forty and above) and knowledgeable Abagusii and Kipsigis people were selected. These three techniques were chosen because, they were ideal for collecting data in social research that is concerned with the description and identification of the state of the variables and detailed description of the phenomena. The design was economical and allowed the collection of information from a large population at a minimal cost.

### 1.11.2 Study Area

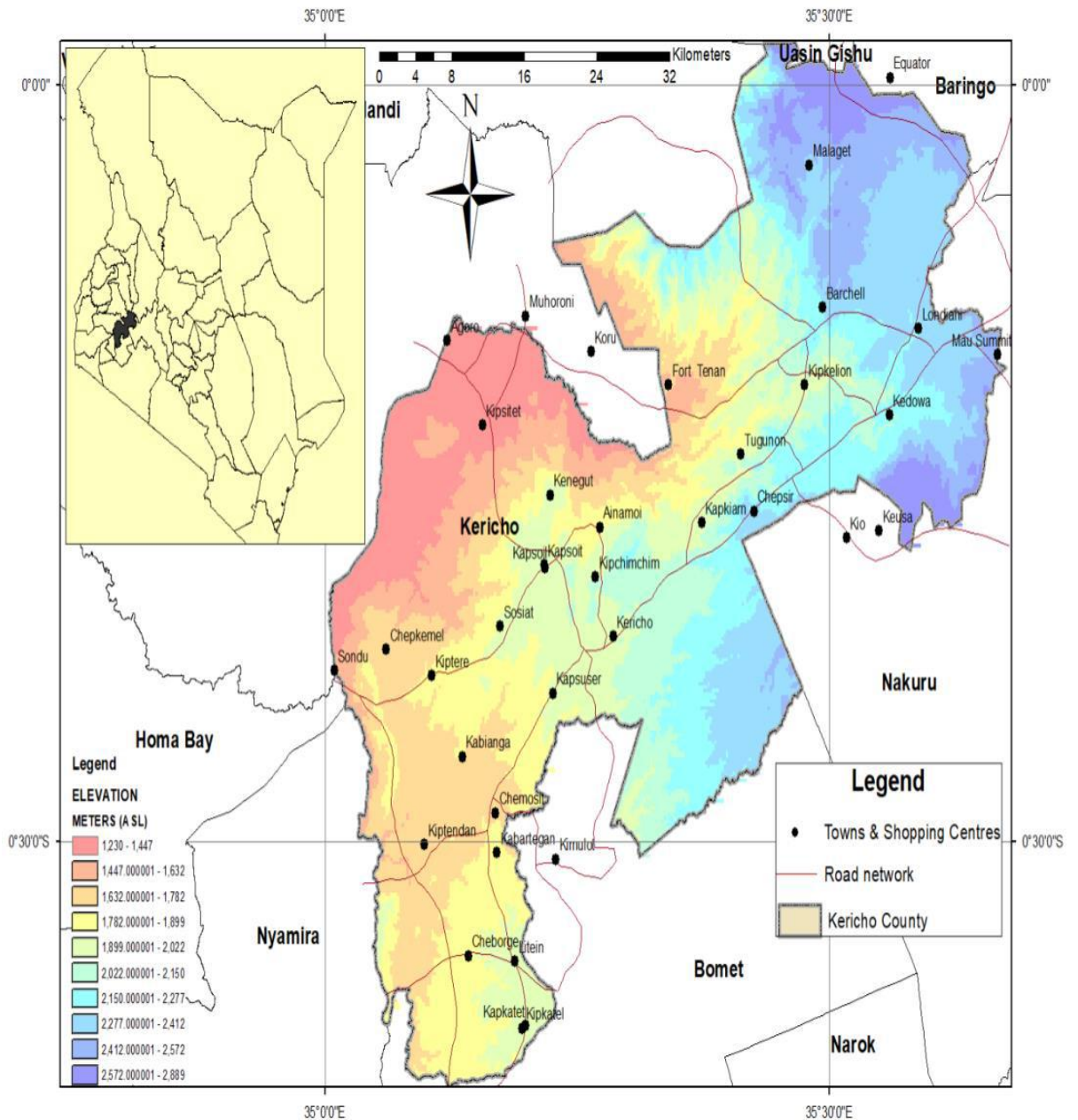
The study was undertaken in South Rift, Kericho and Bomet Counties (see Appendix D). Kericho county lies between longitude 35° 02 and 35° 40 East and between the equator and latitude 0 23 ° South. The county borders Uasin Gishu County to the north, Baringo County to the northeast, Nandi to the northwest, Nakuru County to the east and Bomet County to the south. It also borders Nyamira and Homa-Bay counties to the Southwest, and Kisumu County to the West. The County covers an area of 2,479 km<sup>2</sup>. The county comprises of six sub-counties, namely; Kipkelion East, Kipkelion West, Kericho West/Belgut, Kericho East, Sigowet/Soin and Bureti. It is also divided into thirty electoral wards. The major part of Kericho County is characterized by undulating topography (County Yearly Report 2018).

Because the county's topography slants towards Kisumu County, consequently the drainage system flows towards the west, where Kisumu is located. The County is well drained with a number of rivers that; include Chemosit, Kiptaret, Kipsonoi, Timbilil, Maramara, Itare, Nyando, Kipchorian and Malaget. Rapids and falls characterize some of the rivers, which could be harnessed for hydroelectric power generation. Some of the rivers with the waterfalls include Maramara, Itare and Kiptaret. Kericho County lies in the Lake Victoria Basin. Volcanic as well as igneous and metamorphic complexes characterize its geology. Tertiary lavas (phonlites) and intermediate igneous rocks predominantly underlie the county. Undifferentiated basement system rock (granites), volcanic ash a mixture and other prolific rocks dominate a small part of the county. The hilly nature in some parts of the county encourages soil erosion. This problem is however minimized by the presence of a dense vegetation cover, except in a few areas like Sigowet in Belgut, Chilchila in Kipkelion and partly the lower zones of Ainamoi

Division covering Koitaburot in Ainamoi Constituency  
(Countyrak.infotrakresearch.com).

The county receives relief rainfall, with moderate temperatures of 17° C and low evaporation rates. The temperature ranges between 29 ° C and 10 ° C. The rainfall pattern is such that the central part of the county, where tea is grown, receives the highest rainfall of about 2,125mm, while the lower parts of Soin and parts of Kipkelion receive the least amount of rainfall of 1,400 mm. The county experiences two rainy seasons: the long rainy season occurs between April and June whereas the short rainy season occurs between October and December every year. The driest season is mostly from January to February. The altitude of the place mainly determines the variations in the temperatures and rainfall.

Horticulture is the vital source of food and income in a population of about one million residing in the zone. The main economic activity is tea growing in large plantations. The study area was also of special interest because of its cosmopolitan nature since it had attracted many immigrants who came for trade, employment in the civil service, education in schools and colleges and tea picking. Figure 1.1 shows the study area.



**Figure 1. 1: Map of Kericho County**

*Source: Foundation Primary School Atlas (2016)*

### 1.11.3 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

Non-probability sampling technique was used where by opportunity sampling or convenience sampling was applied first. This is where a group of people were found together, for example in chief's meeting or Church gathering and requested if they could accept to participate in the research so long as they had information needed for

the study. The researcher went to three churches that are; Matrogeni S.D.A, Chepseon Catholic and Nyagacho P.A.G Churches. Snowball sampling technique was also used, where, the participants in the opportunity sampling identified more participants who had knowledge about the subject of research. Finally, purposive sampling technique was used to select specific participants to provide the information needed for the study. Age of the participants and those who had knowledge about the Abagusii in diaspora was highly considered .The researcher found out that they were about five hundred people who moved to the diaspora in South Rift and settle in various places like Kamutengo, Muraoo, Mtaragoni, Nyairobi, Munyanda, Nyagacho and Chepseon.

The research targeted Abagusii people aged forty years and above who had migrated from their ancestral Abagusii land to South Rift and some aged Kipsigis in (Kericho County). During the field study, one hundred and fifty (150) people were interviewed and observed. Kericho County was purposively selected due to the magnitude of the 2007/2008 post-election violence (Mukherji, *et.al.*, 2018).

#### **1.11.4 Research Instruments**

Primary data were collected using semi-structured interview and observations. Government documents and the Kenya National Archives were also resourceful in obtaining the primary data. All these were in order to understand the historical explanation of the emergence of the Abagusii in diaspora in South-Rift and the movement and spread within South-Rift. It also sought to assess the challenges and opportunities of the Abagusii diaspora in South Rift from 1895 to 2007.

Interview schedule was prepared to gather in-depth information from the Abagusii people in diaspora. Best & Kahn (2003) point out that interviewing provides room for

clarification, and is a better method for establishing the verity of the information given by the respondent because the interviewer considers the facial expressions and other gestures as part of the communication. The researcher employed a guided question list to interview the respondents, because some of them were aged and the research wanted to be specific and keep on tract during data collection process. The researcher also used Focus Group Discussions (FGD) to get information from homogenous groups about the research interest. These comprised of small manageable groups of people as guided by Johnson & Christensen, (2012).

#### **1.11.5 Data Collection Procedures**

A pilot study was carried out to assess the appropriateness of the questions in the research instruments. The pilot study was carried out at Mataragoni and Kabianga villages, which are in Kipkelion and Belgut sub-counties, respectively. The researcher did the piloting which was the basis for any necessary revisions and restructuring of the questions to address the research objectives were done.

The researcher obtained a letter of introduction from the University's Directorate of Research before undertaking the research. This letter was then used to seek a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (see Appendix II). During the field research, respondents were carefully selected and appropriate measures put in place to ensure they were willing participants in the study as recommended by (Kathuri, & Pals, 1999). The oral interviews were conducted in Kiswahili and the local languages through interpreters. These comprised of one hundred and fifty (150) participants who included ten (10) chiefs and thirty (30) village elders as key informants, sixty (60) elderly Abagusii people and fifty (50) elderly Kipsigis people. The respondents were deemed knowledgeable on the subject under

study and hence gave objective, reliable, and useful information. Mugenda & Mugenda (2003) state that representativeness of all sections of the study gives reliable and accurate information.

According to Kothari (2010), interview schedule is often a powerful research instrument that readily yields the required data. The researcher had the opportunity to weigh the honesty and integrity of the interviewee's information, and sought clarification from the respondent on the information that was not clear. This concurs with Mukherji, *et.al*, (2018) who notes that interview is a method where one person asks questions of an individual or group of people with the expectation of getting answers to a particular questions or a particular topic.

The interview sessions were organized through the village elders and chiefs who identified specific and willing respondents with information who later on identified other respondents. The researcher used these leaders since it was believed that the respondents would likely trust their local leaders. In return, the local administration leaders also knew which respondents would be able to relay the required information. In some occasions the researcher went to chief's meetings (*barazas*) where she was able to get the willing respondents to participate in the interview. Those who agreed to take part were asked to identify other participants and appropriate measures taken to interview the identified informants from their residence.

During the interview, the researcher personally posed and clarified questions while the research assistant was tasked with note taking and audio recording information. In most FGD sessions and the chief's meeting, the interviews were conducted in seated fora (in a semi-circle). In addition to the FGDs and the oral interviews at the chief's *barazas*, the researcher as well held one-on-one interviews with key informants on the location.

Both the Abagusii and the Kalenjin were interviewed. Interviews with the Abagusii people were conducted in Gusii language. On the other hand, an interpreter was used when interviewing Kalenjins respondents.

Secondary data was also used to gather information on the Abagusii in diaspora. Kothari (2010) presents secondary data as the data that has already been collected and analysed by someone else. Before using these data, the researcher ensured that it was reliable, suitable, and adequate. The study sourced for secondary data from published and unpublished sources regarding the emergence of the Abagusii in diaspora. Some of the sources included; archival documents, books, journals, research reports from organizations like UNICEF and UNESCO website, speeches from key informants and other relevant records. These corroborated the information received from primary sources such as one-on-one oral interviews and focus group discussions.

**Table 1. 1: Sampling strategies and data collection instruments**

Study Population	Sampling Method	Sample size	Data collection instrument
Chiefs	Purposive	10	Interview
Village elders	Snowball	30	Interview
Elderly Gusii people	Purposive	60	Interview
Elderly Kalenjin people	Purposive	50	Interview

**Source:** Author, (2019)



### **1.11.6 Data Analysis**

Data analysis in research is crucial because it brings logical and observational aspects together in the search for patterns in what is observed (Baxter & Babbie, 2004). Recorded data was transcribed in verbatim, coded, and thematically analysed. The transcribed data was grouped into major themes and sub-themes based on the similarities and differences in the responses. Both the secondary and primary sources of data were subjected to criticism to test the relevance and accuracy of the information that was identified as appropriate for this study qualitative analysis was used to summarize the findings of the study in line with study objectives and theoretical framework. Table 1.2 shows the various methods that were used to analyse different data sets.

**Table 1. 2: Methods used in data analysis**

Specific Objective	Variables	Method of Analysis
To examine the emergence of Abagusii society before colonialism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The emergence of the Abagusii before colonialism</li> </ul>	Comparative literature reviews and corroborations with oral interviews
To evaluate the migration of the Abagusii into South Rift in Colonial era (1895-1963)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Migration of the Abagusii into South Rift during the Colonial era (1895-1963)</li> </ul>	Triangulation method
To assess the migration of the Abagusii into South Rift in Post-colonial era 1963-2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Migration of the Abagusii into South Rift</li> <li>Post-colonial era 1963-2007</li> </ul>	Narrative summary of the oral interview
To explore the challenges and opportunities of the Abagusii diaspora in South Rift	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Challenges and opportunities</li> <li>Abagusii diaspora in South Rift (Kericho County).</li> </ul>	Comparing and contrasting the primary data and secondary data.

*Source: Author, (2019)*

### **1.11.7 Validity and Reliability**

Validity refers to the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of the data actually represents the phenomena under study. Valid instruments result to reliable data, hence ensuring content validity. This is also relevant to the objectives of the study (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). For the purpose of this study, content validity was established by having Focus Group Discussion by the chiefs and some village elder on the interview questions. Each one of them examined the questions and their comments on the content and other related issues were incorporated.

According to Mugenda & Mugenda (2003), determination of the reliability of research instruments is important because it assesses the degree to which a particular measuring procedure gives similar results over a number of repeated occasions. The researcher also preserved the records of all interviews for reference purposes, in order to ensure reliability of the analysis. After the analysis, the data were presented in the narrative form.

### **1.11.8 Ethical Considerations**

According to Mukherji & Albon (2018), ethical considerations are critical for any research. During the research process the researcher observed a number of values that included; confidentiality of the information obtained from the respondents, obtaining informed consent from the respondents, and not treating the information received with prejudice. The respondents were assured of confidentiality of the information received and protection of their identity.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **EMERGENCE OF ABAGUSII SOCIETY BEFORE COLONIALISM, 1895-**

**1963**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

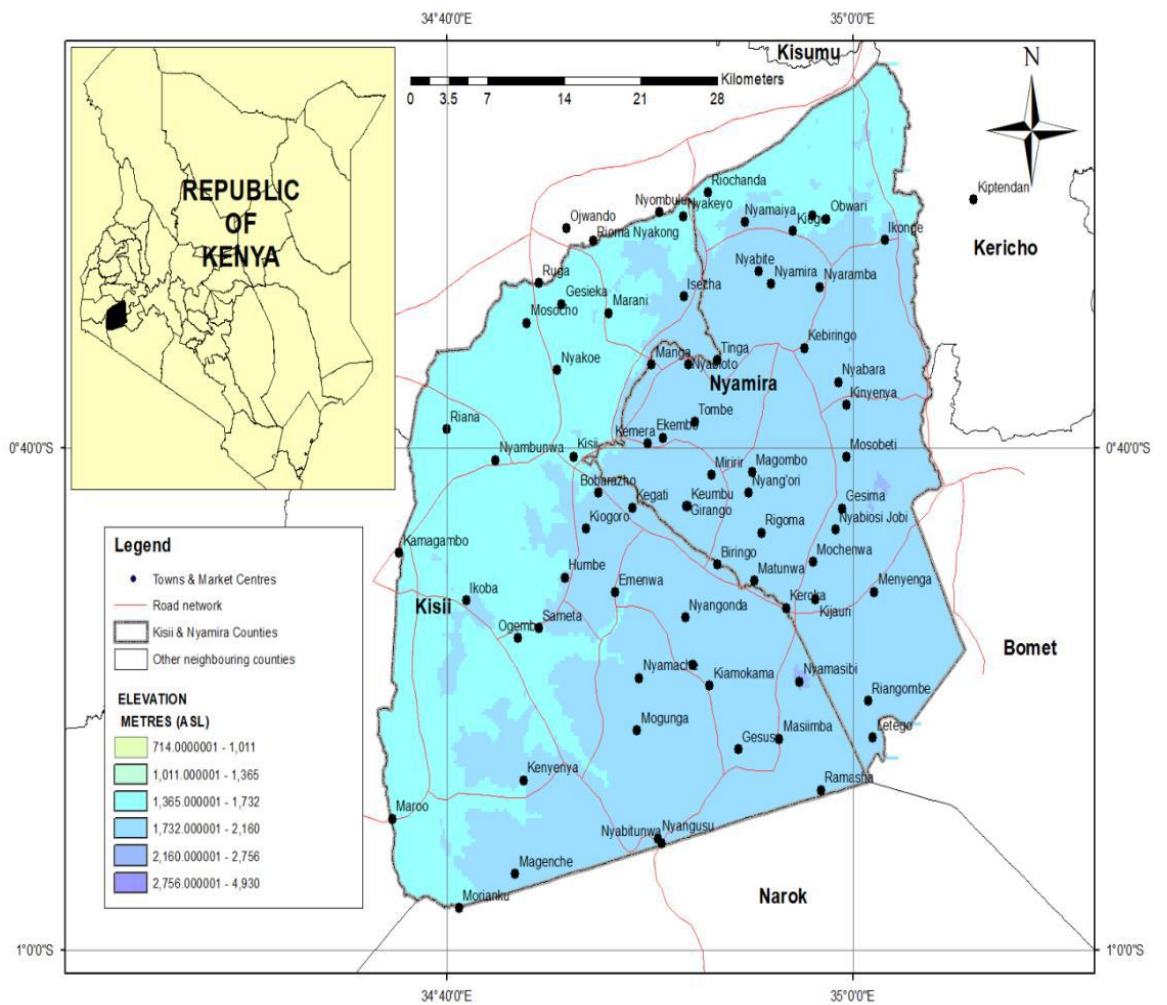
The first section of this Chapter outlines the migration and settlement of the Abagusii before colonization and briefly outlines the geographical setting of the area. The bulk of the chapter examines the pre-colonial organization of the Abagusii namely, social, economic and political setup. The chapter examines both internal and external dynamics that influenced the migration and settlement of the Abagusii before colonization by the British.

This chapter also demonstrates some key aspects that made the Abagusii migrate in the pre-colonial period. The chapter also seeks to analyse how internal and external dynamics affected the social, generational and political aspects of the Abagusii during pre-colonial period. This later on made them to move to diaspora in the colonial and post-colonial period. In addition to that, the relationship between the Abagusii and their neighbours (Kipsigis) has been looked at.

#### **2.2 Origin, Migrations and Settlement of the Abagusii in Pre-colonial Period**

According to Ochieng' (1974) Abagusii occupied the most Southern portion of the cool fertile Western section of the Kenya Highlands. Their language places them within the family of Bantu-speaking majority of sub-equatorial Africa. They inhabit two counties, Kisii and Nyamira in western Kenya as evidenced in the map below, Gusii is the fond reference to their homeland and Mogusii is their eponymous founder. The home area is sandwiched between the Kipsigis, Nandi, Maasai and the Luo ethnic groups. They are

related to the Tende (Abakuria). The 1989 National Census recorded the Abagusii people at 1.3 million and population densities ranged from 200 to over 600 per square kilometre. This population, increase by three per cent per year. In 1989 Kenya National Population Census, the Abagusii constituted the country’s sixth largest ethnic group, comprising about seven per cent of the national population. The population was 2.2 million people.



**Table 2. 1: A Map Showing Kisii and Nyamira counties**

*Source: Foundation Primary School Atlas (2016)*

Chvasu (1997) concurs with Ochieng’ (1974) about the migration of the Abagusii and the Logoli in particular, originally they migrated into Nyanza from a homeland they

identify as Misri (presumably in the River Nile Valley in Egypt) to the North of Mt Elgon at the beginning of the sixteenth century.

The Abagusii identify Mogusii as the founder of their society and the person after whom their ethnic group is named. History also has it that Mogusii's father was Osogo, son of Moluhya, son of Kigoma, son of Riabiaka, who was the son of Kintu. Kintu led the migration from the land of Misri to the foothills of Mount Elgon, where they stayed for four generations before dispersing to various directions due to droughts and other natural pestilences. Abagusii traditions also indicate that Moluhya, the grandfather of Mogusii, had a number of sons who founded some of the Baluhya sub-groups or clans. Some of the sons of Mogusii were Osogo and Mogikoyo. Osogo's descendants are said to have founded the Abagusii, Kuria, Logoli and Suba ethnic groups while Mogikoyo gave rise to Kikuyu, the Embu, Kamba and Meru groups (Ochieng', 1986). This migration concurred with what the focus group discussion mentioned on the field, how they moved from Misri (Egypt). From Misri they moved to Mt Elgon with the Mulagoli only to separate later in Kisumu.

Ogot (1976) notes that, the Abagusii oral tradition indicate that, they were the same people as the Kuria, the Logoli, the Bukusu, the Suba of south Nyanza, the Kikuyu, the Meru, the Embu and the Kamba. The Gusii oral traditions also state that from Misri they were together with Ganda and Soga. The two ethnic groups branched off from the rest of the migrants around Mt. Elgon, in a South Westerly direction. The Kikuyu, Meru, Embu and Kamba are said to have travelled Eastwards toward what is now the central highlands of Kenya while Bukusu remained around Mount Elgon.

According to Ogot (1976), linguists like Whitley and Greenberg, and anthropologists like Hopley, Johnston, and Oliver, who have studied the Abagusii and other Bantu

languages, have agreed that, the Abagusii, Logoli, Kuria, Kikuyu, Embu, Kamba and Meru languages are closely related. They argue that from Misri they all migrated to the foothills of Mount Elgon where the final dispersal took place.

Ochieng (1986) notes that, the remaining clusters, Abagusii, Kuria, Suba and Logoli migrated southwards following the course of River Nzoia, arriving on the Eastern shores of Lake Victoria around 1490-1520. Turning east, they travelled along the lakeshores and eventually settled at Goye Bay in Yimbo Kadimo location where Mogusii and Mulogoli, the respective eponymous founders of the Abagusii and Logoli societies were born. From here, their homestead spread to Ulowa, Sare, Ungera, at the foot of Ramogi Hills, where the first wave of the Luo immigration into West Kenya found them.

Ochieng (1986) further indicates that, Abagusii economic and social institutions underwent a fundamental transformation in the period between 1520 and 1755 as they established themselves in the lake region where they spent about two generations. Due to constant migration, Abagusii culture became inevitably a mixture of various influences, combining original Bantu elements with aspects borrowed from or imposed by contacts with Nilotic speaking people, notably the Luo, Maasai and Kipsigis. After prolonged cattle rustling, conflict between Abagusii and the Luo, who posed a big security risk and infiltration, and other Bantu groups from north-eastern around Lake Victoria like Munje, Nzaba, Maswa, Boko Ini and Lungo who were also a threat to Abagusii.

The Abagusii and Logoli were compelled to move out for this case. They eventually moved to Alego, Gangu then to Kisumu led by Mogusii and Mulogoli. It is at Kisumu where Mogusii disappeared [either he died or too old to command general respect as

group leader]. Nyakomogendi, the mother of Mogusii also died in Kisumu settlement. Because of drought and famine, they left Kisumu and eventually migrated to Kano plains led by some warriors such as Oibabe, Mobassi, Omugesero, Mochorwa and Kimanyi where they settled between 1620 and 1755, (Ochieng 1986). While at Kisumu, the Logoli broke off and travelled northwards into Kit Mikay then to Maseno and to their present homeland. Their outward movement was probably due to drought and famine.

The Abagusii settlement in Kano plains probably lasted seven generations between A.D 1640 and 1755 (Ochieng`, 1986; Ogot, 1976). They settled by the lakeshore from Dunga to Nduru and spread into the interior along streams. It was in this period that the Abagusii economic and social institutions experienced a notable transformation. It not only witnessed the expansion and transformation of individual family units into small but distinct clans, but also the evolution of small groups. Clan leaders came into existence at this point. Around this period, the Abagusii social institutions such as sectional totems, clans and, sub- national structures emerged.

Ochieng' (1986) maintains that, Abagusii interacted with other people in the plains in a variety of ways acquiring from them iron working and fishing technology. Ogot also indicates that the economy of the Abagusii during their stay in Kano was mixed. They cultivated finger millet, which was grown together with sorghum, beans and sweet potatoes and used cattle meat for food, drank milk and cattle-blood. They also ate roots, yams, pumpkins, vegetables, fish, birds and fruits like strawberry, raspberry, raised berry, lily berry and cape berry. They hunted the buffalo, bushbuck, wildebeest, and hares, among many others.



One of the Key informants reported that:

As they were moving, there was a lot of mixing with other ethnic communities, they learned new things from them such as iron working, fishing technology and their culture and religion was mixed too, hence started practicing mixed farming (KII, Clan elder, 8<sup>th</sup> August, 2018).

Ng`ang`a (2006) says that about A.D 1755 Abagusii moved out of Kano plains, being overwhelmed by Luo raiders and spearmen and decided to look for peace and security elsewhere. From Kano plains the Abagusii moved in four major and distinct groups. The expansion into the highlands from the lowland plains necessitated a change in their economy and society. They first stopped at Gososia near Ngoino the present day North Mugirango. Here, their oral tradition states that the soil was not good to produce finger millet and they were so close to the enemy (Luo), therefore some moved to Nyamira as others remained behind, they found Nyamira thick wooded highland. The wet and cold conditions of the highlands killed many of their people and forced some of them to move to South Mugirango where the climate was warmer. However, the Maasai forced them to retrace their steps back into the highland. They finally settled at Kiogoro in Nyaribari then to South Kitutu and eventually expanding to North Mugirango. One village elder indicated that their grandparents used to grow crops and rear animals.

Ogot (1976) and Ng`ang`a (2006) state that, from Gososia (North Mugirango) another group moved several days to Biego then they migrated north-eastward to Kabianga in Belgut. With better iron weapons, the Abagusii were able to expand at the expense of the Kalenjins, Sirkwa, Dorobo and Maasai into areas of present day Kericho. This expansion into the highlands from lowland plains also necessitated change in their economic and social organization.

The Abagusii extended to Kabianga which according to Abagusii Kabianga means *an inhabitable place*, in Kericho. Here the climate was wet and cold throughout the year, they tried to plant millet and pumpkins in the new gardens but the crops did not do well and many of their animals died. Completely alarmed by the rate at which their people and flocks were dying, the Abagusii decided that the devils and spirits of whoever had originally occupied Belgut were against them. During the data collection period, the researcher came across a remnant of the migration who added that:

When we arrived here at Kabianga, the place was wet but many of our people and our animals died. People thought that the spirits of the dead are following us, so most of them moved out of the place (KII, Clan elder, 3<sup>rd</sup> August, 2018).

They then moved only a few miles eastward to Kericho, where they encountered the Maasai. Living alongside Abagusii were Maasai together with the Kipsigis, who are part of the Kalenjin, their meetings were not always peaceful. There were constant fights between these groups. This is where the Abagusii killed the Maasai war leader, Ole Kericho\_ after whom, Kericho town is named (Ochieng, 1986.) One of the informants asserted that the battle took too long hence; there was loss of life and animals.

The Kipsigis raided both the Maasai and Abagusii for cattle. As a result, the Maasai moved away from Bureti. The Abagusii put up a spirited fight and kept the Kipsigis at bay for some time. The Abagusii built heavy stone fortifications called “*orwaki*” round their villages, which were further secured on the outside by deep trenches. A key informant reported that, at night all cattle were brought here and men and their warriors used to sleep outside to keep an eye over the animals (KII, Church elder, and 7<sup>th</sup> August, 2018).

Because of several ambushes and counter ambushes, the Abagusii were forced to migrate southwards beyond present day Sotik. Even here however, the Kipsigis did not leave them in peace. Thus in the following centuries of migration, the Abagusii settled in the present Gusii highland (later on was referred to as Gusiiland) during the closing of the nineteenth century (Omwoyo, 1990). It notes that the entire Gusiiland was one until 1961 and by 1988 it was divided into Kisii and Nyamira.

Historical Materialist theory is relevant to the study because it focuses on the social reality and the economic structure of a particular society in this case the Abagusii society. It goes further and explains how different groups of people relate to economic resource of their society and ways of production. The Abagusii who went and lived in diaspora were an aftermath of the change of economy and social interaction from pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial era. The British Colonialists came to Kenya with capitalist economy and land policies which led to land alienation and displacement of people contributed greatly to the major migrations and settlement of Abagusii in the new lands “schemes”.

### **2.3 Political, Social and Economic Setup of the Abagusii in Pre-Colonial Period**

The Abagusii political, social and economic organization was so pronounced as it has various aspects as explained in the sub-sections below.

#### **2.3.1 Social Setup**

The social setup of the Abagusii in pre-colonial period was complex as it involved various socio-cultural featuring birth, marriage and death rites, religious beliefs, their education, food components and political leadership.

### 2.3.2 Birth Rites

Okeng'o (1990) notes that, marrying more wives solved a woman's barrenness among the Abagusii community; if a man, for instance realized that his wife was barren, he had to marry another wife or wives who would bare him children. Children were indeed assets to any Abagusii family. In case the man was proven barren, then the woman was allowed to try outside the house, which meant that the husbands' brothers or cousins could come in to get children with the wife. However, sacrifices were to be offered before by the parents to appease the ancestral spirits. During these sacrifices, animals such as goats, sheep and hens of a particular colour that could be black or white as the medicine man (*Omoragori*) suggested were offered. Songs and dances were performed during this ceremony. This was reiterated through an oral interview as follows:

Reproductive fertility was a very important aspect among the Abagusii. It was considered as a blessing of any married person. Barrenness (*Obogomba*) was thought by the Abagusii to be a sign of the disappointment of the ancestral spirit (*ebirecha*) when, or if, the victim refused to offer sacrifice to them. It was also considered to have been brought about by the failure to perform some vital cultural rituals such as keeping one's fire lighting throughout seclusion period after circumcision. To some Abagusii clans, barrenness could also be caused by witchcraft. The Abagusii considered barrenness as a curse (O.I, Moraa, 5<sup>th</sup> August, 2018).

During field work, the researcher observed that, the Abagusii had a strong belief in supernatural forces, which is evident in their belief system on ancestors, offering of sacrifices, and witchcraft, which they believed controlled fertility of the people.

Pregnant women in the Abagusii traditional society were given special treatment. She can only do light duties in the house and in the fields. As the pregnancy matured, she was exempted from heavy duties. Pregnant women were not allowed to take part in certain traditional ceremonies since most of them involved dancing and hectic movement which could affect the health of the pregnant mother. Pregnant women, according to

Abagusii beliefs, were not allowed to go near a grave during funerals. It was thought that the unborn baby was not supposed to be oriented to sorrows before coming to the physical world. She was not allowed to eat bitter foods. This was because it was thought that the unborn baby would be rude, harsh or disobedient if it consumed bitter foods from her mother during pregnancy. Among the Abagusii, it was a taboo to beat a pregnant woman. In case she made a mistake, she was warned by a word of mouth (O.I, Mogire, 5<sup>th</sup> June 2018).

This clearly shows how expectant women were valued by Abagusii as they were the ones to bring forth the next generation. At the time of giving birth, the mother was helped by mid-wives and her fellow women. A woman, at the time of labour was confined in her bedroom where she gave birth. If the woman was young and perhaps newly married, she went back to her parents' home when her maternity days approached. It was here where the birth of her first-born took place. She stayed for two to three months after which her sisters and cousins escorted her to her marital home (Okeng'o, 1990).

When a child was born, ululation was done to mark its birth. Moments of great joy followed accompanied by singing and dancing. A male child was received with more and prolonged ululation than a female child. The reason was that male children were thought to be the future protectors of the community. The Abagusii had a saying that; *bamura mbanje bande* (boys are not like others). This saying implied that boys were more reliable in defending the society against any external aggression. Female children received fewer ululations than male children did because it was thought that they would go to new and different homes when they grew up. There was a thought that their work would be 'centred in the kitchen'. It is worth noting that ululation accorded to male children were more peculiar than those performed for the female children in that they were accompanied by words of praise and whistling from men. Those of female children had few words of praise (O.I, Nyaboke, 6<sup>th</sup> June, 2018).

It was noted by the researcher that birth was one of the most important rite of passage. It was further noted that the Abagusii valued male children more and celebrated them more than female children. This was emphasized as follows through the oral interviews.

A mother who had just given birth was considered weak and had to remain in the house in order to regain her strength. After two weeks, the grandmother shaved the child. The *Okogingera* (shaving) exercise was, and still is, important among the Abagusii. Children were given names that originated from their dead relatives and great parents among the Abagusii. Some people named their children after certain events, warriors of the community, elders who had died, or even after certain animals. For instance children who happened to be born during the great famine that was experienced in early 1950 were called *Nyangweso* after the famine that was known as *Nyangweso*.as noted by (O.I, Gesra, 7<sup>th</sup> June, 2018).

This is evident that the Abagusii believed in life after death and they also used occurrences and events to name their children.

When parents met certain wild animals before a child was born, the new-born would be given the wild animal's name. It was a bad omen to meet certain animals like *Eguto* (ant bear), *Enyan\_g'au* (hyena) or *Chingera* (buffalo). Once one met such animals, he or she was made to believe that the ancestral spirits were warning him or her against bad conduct. Thus, the most appropriate way of propitiating the ancestral spirits was recognizing the ancestors' power by naming any child born within the family after the animal that was met. That is why some people came to be called *Nyang'au*, (after the hyena), *Guto* (after the ant- bear), and *Basweti* (after the python) (KII, villager, 2<sup>nd</sup> July, 2018).

### **2.3.3 Circumcision**

Okeng'o, (1990) postulates that, among the Abagusii, initiation was very important

stage in the development of both boys and girls into adulthood. Male and female children were eligible for initiation between the ages of twelve and eighteen years. Initiation practice was important in that, the initiates were given certain special skills and teachings such as sex education. Initiates learnt important attributes of bravery and patriotism. In most cases, the child suggested to his or her parents that he or she wanted to be initiated. The parents could agree or object. Agreement or objection on whether a given boy or girl would be initiated depended mainly on the age of the child and the appropriateness of the event. On initiation, a key informant had the following to say:

Upon the parents' acceptance, he would invite young men of the older generation (age-group) to take him to the circumciser (*bware*). Preparation for circumcision included the initiate's gathering firewood with which to light the seclusion fire, brewing enough beer (*amarwa*), for celebration as this was a 'kind of stuff' which was popular among the elderly men and women in any social ceremony. As well, enough food was prepared for the young men who would accompany the initiate and other guests who would attend the ceremony. Girls of the older age and their mothers escorted girls to the circumciser (*omokebi*) (KII, Native Villager, 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2018).

The researcher noted that seclusion period was another area where informal education was taking place among the Abagusii. Circumcisers among the Abagusii community played a very important role. They were often considered as traditional surgeons. They inherited their profession from their parents. Sometimes initiates had to walk for long distances to look for one. The circumcisers were given such items as grain, a goat, a hen, and the equivalent. This was because of lack of monetary currency among the Abagusii in the olden days. Even after the introduction of currency, the above items had more value than money and were generally accepted as a payment for such a ritual exercise.

Male initiates had to be given certain tests the night before the circumcision day. These tests included, picking a burning stick from the middle of a burning fire, sitting on

stinging needle plants (*amase*) while naked as well as standing still for a long time as sign of discipline. On circumcision day, male initiates were teased with spears, bows, arrows, and other weapons. The major aim was to inculcate a sense of manhood into them. It should be observed that female initiates did not undergo such tests (Okeng'o, 1990).

According to a church elder,

Initiates were often gathered in one hut the night before the circumcision day. In most cases, these initiates came from one village. On the circumcision day, they had to wake up so early (about 2.00am) to go to the circumciser's place. On their way, male initiates had to immerse themselves in a nearby cold stream. This was meant to remove any form of fear from the candidates. It was also thought that cold water was an aesthetic and therefore could reduce pains during the cutting of the foreskin of the male initiates (KII, Church elder 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2018).

From the Abagusii circumcision, the researcher finds that this rite of passage hardened the male to become tough and courageous men in the society. Okeng'o, (1990) added that initiation was a symbolic mark of transition. It implied that a childhood stage had come to an end and the adulthood one had begun. This was favourably compared with baptism in colonial times where a new life in Christianity started when a sinner repented, was baptized, and led a new life. The journey to the circumcision court was full of agonies on the part of the initiates. This was because they were often teased and told scaring stories, which were meant to encourage them to be brave. A great number of young men, married and circumcised, accompanied the initiates. A young man, most recently circumcised was given the circumciser's payment to carry. After the circumcision, the initiates went into seclusion. Every group of initiates from a given village chose a young man perhaps one who was closest to them and trustworthy to guide them throughout the ceremony.



The guide (*Omo-segi*) had a similar role to that of a best-man or best maid in a modern wedding. The guide gave the initiates company and served them with food during the whole period of seclusion. It was also the duty of the guide to take care of the supply of firewood and also to guard against the extinction of the initiates' seclusion fire. The fire was meant to keep on burning throughout the seclusion period that lasted for about a month.

From the FGDs, it was established that throughout the period of circumcision, circumcisers could hardly sleep. A respondent stated that the Abagusii used to borrow circumcisers from their area with payment of a cow or several. Their services were rendered throughout. At times villagers of a given village could invite a circumciser who stayed there throughout the circumcision period. The initiates had to queue at the circumciser's place for the service. This ensured orderly and quick service. The exercise followed the principle of 'first come first served'. The initiate on the line being served was required to hold a tree at the back while facing forward.

When the circumcision exercise was in process, the candidate was teased with spears and arrows so as not to cry of pain as this was considered a taboo among the Abagusii community. No initiate was allowed to leave until all the initiates went through the exercise. At the end of the exercise, the circumciser was paid his dues after which he pitched a celebration song '*esimbore*' (sacred song), thereafter followed a choral response from everybody. It is worth noting that orphans never paid initiation fee. This was because they were considered as an unfortunate group who required free services. As well, those initiates who were born after a number of their brothers and sisters had died and were left alone in their families, were circumcised free of charge. They were often referred to as, *abatakerwa*' (dedicated ones) to the ancestral spirits. As male

initiates were escorted home, *esimbore* songs were sung throughout the journey to the initiates' seclusion place. Through the FGD, it was gathered that:

On arriving back home, women who included the initiates' mothers sung and danced from a distant to usher the initiates back home. The women were not allowed to see the initiates, as this would be bad omen (FGDs, Clan elders, 2<sup>nd</sup> August, 2018).

As far as the female initiates were concerned, they walked slowly home accompanied by a large group of elderly women after clitoridectomy. This was an occasion of great joy, filled with singing and dancing. Most of the songs sung reminded the initiates that they had now moved from one age group to join another and therefore they were expected to start thinking seriously about their adult role after seclusion. Seclusion period for both male and female initiates was between three and five weeks.

During seclusion period, male initiates would go out to hunt for birds and other small wild animals. Their mothers or any other person of the opposite sex could not see male initiates in seclusion. On the other hand, their mothers and other community women could only see female initiates. It is worth noting that during seclusion there was education and training geared towards preparing the initiates for future life. Female initiates were especially taught about their future roles as women.

They were given this kind of education by their grandmothers, mothers and other women of their community (Okeng'o, 1990).

Initiates in seclusion were given meals like; meat, beans, ugali and milk. They were also given fruits and greens all of which ensured balanced diet. Different kinds of foods were given to keep the initiates healthy and to heal in good time so that they could graduate to join the adult class in the community (KII, village man, 1<sup>st</sup> July, 2018).

After being blessed by their grandparents and parents, the initiates graduated to adulthood and were ready for marriage. They could now be entrusted with the various

duties and responsibilities meant for adult members of the Abagusii. The researcher found out from the field that some people in diaspora went to pick the circumcisers from ancestral home while others who did not have connection borrowed one from the Kipsigis community (Okeng'o, 1990).

#### **2.3.4 Marriage**

According to Okeng'o, (1990), marriage (*Enywomo*) was a very important stage of development as far as the Abagusii were concerned. Every member was expected to marry in order to participate in the procreation process. Any member of the Abagusii who avoided marriage was considered an outcast. Any child born could not be named after the outcast. It was through marriage that the community could be considered a complete circle. It was believed that after birth, a person grew as an adult until he or she died and joined the world of the ancestors but emerged again in the offspring of his or her grandchildren. Whoever did not marry therefore interfered with the cycle and was punished by the ancestral spirits. He or she would consequently become insane.

In that connection therefore, no one among the Abagusii could allow any of their members to remain single for that brought bad omen.

Celibacy was unheard of. No family could have its daughters unmarried. This was because a daughter could not be given a piece of land or could not be buried in her home of birth (FGD, Church members, 12<sup>th</sup> June, 2018).

Okeng'o (1990) adds that, when an unmarried woman died she was buried away from her parents' homestead. An unmarried man once dead would be buried close to the parents' home but one of the posts of his bed was thrown on his grave (*korutwa Omwaro*) to show that he was a less worth member of the Abagusii community.

One of the interviewees reported that;

In the olden days among the Abagusii, the parents proposed the spouse and organized for marriage when their daughter or son was ready for marriage. When a son wanted to marry, it was left to the father to look for a spouse for him. His relatives especially the maternal uncles consulted each other on the matter. The lady to be married was looked for from the neighbouring clans. The woman who qualified had to be industrious, hardworking, well behaved, and co-operative. Her family background had to be free from such vices as theft and witchcraft. Spouse 'hunting' exercise took about five to eight months. When a given woman was spotted as the potential wife, the agent had to establish whether there was any form of clan relationship between the interested party and her family. It was a taboo to marry from the same clan and hence the issue of clannishness was a crucial point as far as marriage preparation was concerned. When the interested party was fully satisfied with the agents' assignment, the bridegroom's father took off to the bride's home where negotiations took place. The negotiations mainly concerned dowry, which was paid in kind. Animals such as *Chiombe* (cows), *Chimbori* (goats), and *Ching'ondi* (sheep) were paid as dowry. This probably could have been due to lack of monetary possessions during the olden days unlike today. Negotiations at the bride's home were followed by further negotiations at the bridegroom's home.

This was now a time of 'having a glance at the dowry' (*Okomana chiombe*). After giving out the dowry, various ceremonies followed that culminated in the wedding ceremony (KII, Clan elder, 20<sup>th</sup> June, 2018).

Okeng'o (1990) asserts that traditional Abagusii wedding took a period of two days. A day before the wedding, the bridegroom was accompanied by a number of young men to go and get the wife- to-be. These people had to carry a pot of traditional beer (*amarwa*). At the bride's home, there were also young and energetic men who were always invited from the village. On arrival, visitors from the bridegroom's side were given a warm welcome, with a lot of joy and beer drinking. At the end of the day, *enyameni* (a mock fight) was staged between the men from the bridegroom's and those of the bride's villages. This kind of confrontation was meant to serve as a warning to the bridegroom's party that should they mishandle the bride, they were to get a rough treatment. This also emphasized the fact that the bride's community was strong and had to be given the respect it deserved. After the *enyameni*, the visitors then settled and the

bride's parents gave speeches to advise the couple. Gifts, which included cooking pots, traditional plates, and cattle's skin, were given and the bull that was usually brought by the bridegroom's party was slaughtered.

According to a number of respondents, every attendee of the wedding party participated in merry making. There was usually song and dance throughout the night. The kinds of songs sung were usually full of advice to the bride and the bridegroom in preparation for their lives in marriage or after the wedding. On the second day, the ceremony continued up to around midday when food was eaten after which the bride and the bridegroom and their escorts were accompanied by a procession to the bridegroom's home where they had to start a new life. After reaching there, they were welcomed with songs and dances. The bride wore a piece of decorated goatskin on her head, while the bridegroom carried a spear (*ritimo*) on his hand, usually right hand. Thereafter, food and drinks were served to everyone who was present in the ceremony. The ceremony continued until the following day when the normal life commenced. On the immediate night, at the bridegroom's home, the couple had to have intercourse for the first time. If the bride was proved to be a virgin, her father was to be added two more cows. Indeed this was a source of great honour to the family.

In case the groom was unable to break the membrane, he could use the sharp edge of a cow's horn to break it or a strong age mate to do it. In most cases, if a man failed to break the virginity of his wife, he commanded no much respect and often teased in the community. Two days after the wedding, the bride's family brought ugali and a roasted goat's meat to the bridegroom's home. The ugali was usually cooked using finger millet. However a key informant pointed out that, traditional marriage ceremonies among the Abagusii varied slightly from clan to clan.

The ugali and was served as recognition of worthwhile task of breaking the virginity of their daughter by the bridegroom. This kind of food was to be brought by the bride's sister accompanied by her cousins. In turn the bridegroom's family appreciated by giving them finger millet in the same container they brought ugali (KII, Clan elder, 14<sup>th</sup> June, 2018).

The researcher found out that in a case where an Abagusii married one from the community where such marriage ceremonies were conducted, but if it was a different community then each community had to do their own and each had to migrate to a new home where she was going to be assimilated.

### **2.3.5 Death Rites**

In the traditional Abagusii community, there was a firmly established traditional medical system but death had been there since time immemorial. The Abagusii had a common saying that, "*Amakweri na makoro*" (death is as old as history). Death was inevitably accepted and was understood as another stage in the development of human beings in the community. It was believed that the dead members of the society emerged back in the young children that were born in the Abagusii community. That is why the children were named after people who had died early on. Among the Abagusii death was thought to be caused by old age, accidents, witchcraft, and illness among other causes. It was very rare to believe that a person could die easily out of a disease. This was because the Abagusii had strong medicines, which were capable of treating all types of disease (Okeng'o, 1990).

FGDs notes that, when a person died, he or she was buried either immediately or the following day in case he or she died in the evening hours. Gender, age, and manner in which a person died dictated burial rights in the Abagusii community. For example, if a person died because of being struck by thunder, he or she was buried at the scene where the incident had taken place. Likewise, if a person drowned in rivers, when his or her body was recovered, or she was buried near the same river. In case where a person committed suicide by hanging on a tree he or she was buried near the tree after which the tree was uprooted (FGDs, Clan elder, 10<sup>th</sup> July,

2018).

According to Okeng'o (1990), such deaths were often referred to as 'bad deaths' (*ogokwa okobe*). Deaths willed by ancestral spirits and if so the deceased were to be taken home for burial, it would mean tampering with the ancestral spirits, which will react against those concerned. Among the Abagusii, if someone died and it happened that he or she was not buried immediately, fire would be lit in the house of the deceased and was kept burning until the following day. All those who had social ties with the deceased attended the burial. These included village members, clan, deceased's lineage and in some cases people from other villages. When the burial ground was ready, the corpse was brought out of the house ready for burial. If the deceased happened to be a man, both men and women carried the corpse. Women usually held the head and men the other parts of the body. The passage was usually the door facing the cows' pen (*egesieri kiabweri*). Before the burial, the articles used by the deceased were turned upside down (*gotureka chingobo*). If the dead were women, men usually held the head and women the other parts of the body while bringing the corpse out for burial. This is contrary from what researcher found out from the field, they were indicating that it was men who carried the corpse weather a man or woman.

A key informant from the village said the following about death:

In the evening after the burial day, sacrifices were offered to the ancestral spirits. This kind of occasion was usually called *emurwa*, and occasion for cleansing. The occasion usually attracted family members and those of the deceased's lineage. This ceremony was carried out to cleanse family members (*kobasibia*). The sacrifice was given when all other people had gone leaving behind family members. In such occasions, grandsons, cousins, brothers and the close family members slaughtered and roasted a white or brown cock on the gravesite. A he-goat or a ram could also serve the same purpose (KII, Villager 3<sup>rd</sup> August, 2018).

The researcher confirmed that Abagusii practices are still carried out in the diaspora

with non-Christian traditionalists. To this effect, a key informant revealed that, grave digging was one of the most important burial rites among the Abagusii. In case an old man died, the eldest son broke the ground (*goaka egekamago*). Then the members of the community could join in the grave digging exercise. After which he was rewarded with a cow by the youngest of his grandmothers. The calves of that cow were supposed to be distributed to the grandsons of the deceased.

In case an adult male died, a sharp stick (*egechuriau*) at the top of his house was broken. Once the body was laid down in the grave, close family members threw soil in the grave (*koruta amaraba*).

If the deceased was a man, his wife or wives crawled backward towards the grave throwing soil mass then they were followed by his sons, brothers and cousins and gravediggers. If the deceased happened to be a woman, the husband could be the first one to throw soil followed by the sons and then the gravediggers. After the burial, family members and relatives grieved in sorrow, chanted poems and dirges condemning death for taking away an important member of the family (KII, Church member, 26<sup>th</sup> June, 2018).

From the field it was discovered that throwing soil in the grave by family members had heavy significance, which may lead to death again, for example, if a woman was having sex with another man, she could not throw the soil to the husband meaning she will also die if she did. If somebody bewitched the dead or caused his death, he will not throw the soil into his grave too. If he did, he would die.

During mourning, there was no shaking of hands between members of the bereaved family. Family members were not allowed to leave the compound. They had to stay in the compound until a ceremony that involved the shaving of the heads of the close relatives of the deceased was performed. The ceremony involved drinking of beer, eating of different kinds of foods such as ugali and meat, milk, greens and singing various songs to praise the late member of the society. Young people who had not married yet, upon dying were buried outside their houses. In the case where one never had a house, he was buried outside the parent's house. It is worth noting that all the dead people among the



Abagusii were buried with their heads facing north (KII, village elder 22<sup>nd</sup> June, 2018).

In addition to that, people used, charcoal, ashes and water to preserve dead bodies since mortuaries were not available. The shaving of the hair and turning of the deceased person's items is not common nowadays except for traditionalist.

### **2.3.6 Religion**

Religion was another unifying factor among the Abagusii. They believed in one god called *Engoro* who was believed to be the Supreme Being the creator of the world. According to Okeng'o (1990), Abagusii believed in one God whom they referred to as *Engoro*. They also owed their religious allegiance to the ancestral spirits (*ebirecha*). Sacrifices were given to the ancestral spirits whom the Abagusii thought were intermediaries between them and *Engoro*. If such sacrifices were not given, the ancestral spirits would give severe punishments such as death, failure of crop growing, chronic diseases, sterility of women, insanity, atrocious character, birth of idiotic children and so on. The Abagusii believed that when someone died, the body became soil and the soul went to the air to become a spirit. When family members among the Abagusii underwent difficulties and experiences, diviners and medicine men were consulted to tell how the spirits could be propitiated. There were men and women spirits. Men spirits were thought to be powerful and could come instantly. Women spirits according to the informants interviewed seemed to come much later in one's lifetime.

The ancestral spirits controlled all endeavours among the Abagusii, which included social, political and economic activities. When someone was successful in his socio-economic life, the Abagusii people believed that the ancestral spirits were well with

him (*Chisokoro nchiamorarere buya*). On the other hand, those who never succeeded were believed to be in bad terms with the ancestral spirits. In moments of joy and sorrow ancestral spirits' names were invoked. Traditional performance of poetry, songs and narratives were dedicated to them. Before any meals were taken, food was poured on the ground so that it could be shared with the ancestors. Traditional dancers could stamp the ground so hard using their feet (*ebisanyi*) or poles (*chimoti*) to entertain and please the ancestral spirits (Okeng'o, 1990).

This study found out that the Abagusii believed ancestral spirits had the ability to give a number of people gifts to become what they were. For example being blacksmiths, diviners, and oral artists, soothsayers and rainmakers. Those were talents that came from the ancestral spirits. The ancestral spirits punished the various personalities of these talents who never executed their duties. The Abagusii had a conviction that the ancestral spirits gave various professionals in the community guidance and insight into new discoveries in their individual field of professionalism. The ancestral spirits essentially controlled every activity that was performed by the Abagusii. They were the sources of knowledge and gave judgment in every single case amongst the community members,

*Engoro* among the Abagusii governed man's destiny, he brought rain to him and gave him all that he desired. Ochieng' (1974) holds the view that *Engoro* sent to man rain or storm, wellbeing or famine, health or disease, peace or war depending on what he chose to give him. The Abagusii believed that God's continued operation in the physical world was executed through his agents, the ancestral spirits (*ebirecha*). These spirits were believed to have great influence on the social and economic lives of the Abagusii. In the event of a calamity or disease, a seer or a diviner (*Omoragori*)

could be consulted on the wishes of the ancestors, who more often, were believed to be behind the calamity.

In the words of North-cote, 'God among the ancient Abagusii seemed to have fell on the scales of meaning between sun and ancestor worship. Individuals had direct access to God throughout the year by means of prayer. The Abagusii offered sacrifices to God, which was conducted mainly by the heads of the various homesteads. During harvesting time or the start of a given year there were always thanks giving to God in form of sacrifices that was followed by festivals involving singing, dancing, and beer drinking.

### **2.3.7 Totem**

Abagusii Community adopted traditions connected with the founders of their community. A “totem” (amulet/charm) played an important role in the evolution of the Abagusii. Totemism, has been defined as, a class of material objects which primitive societies regarded with superstitious respect, believing that there exists between individual members of their society an intimate obligatory, and all together special relationship.

A totem may be a feared, emulated or a dangerous hunted animal, an edible plant or any staple food. For our purpose, the clan totem, thus, is an object revered by a group of people who believe themselves to be of one blood, descended from one common ancestor, bound together by a common responsibility for each other, and are united by a common faith. Sometimes the members of a totem group may refer to themselves by the name of their totem, commonly believing them to be descended from the totem, and therefore related to it. In such circumstances, a man naturally treats the totem with

reverent respect; he will not kill or eat.

It is believed that totem animals could be kept as pets and would be treated with an almost religious respect, being things connected with founder ancestors. In this respect, leading Abagusii families are especially believed to have tamed and kept their totem animals in their homes, a symbol treated with a lot of respect. Disrespect to a totem would lead to a military defeat against the clan of a disrespectful man (Ochieng, 1986).

The connection between a man and his totem is generally regarded as mutually beneficial. The totem protects the man in a number of ways, for example by revealing to him in dreams the fortunes or misfortunes that are imminent. The man, in turn shows respect to the totem in a number of ways, usually by not killing it. Working against this was followed by a penalty.

Functionally, totems have a unifying role, especially as members of a totem; clan would regard each other as relatives. They were therefore bound to help and protect each other. A totem is thus an ancestral to the clan and to the individual, especially since it is connected with the "instituted morality, the totem is almost hedged about with taboos of avoidance or strictly ritualized contact." In its religious projection a totem constitutes mutual respect and protection between a man and his totem and has consequently been defined as "the mystique of the family projected and extended into larger social forms."

### **2.3.8 Indigenous Education**

A respondent pointed out that, among the Abagusii, the family was a social arena where important human events such as birth, initiation, marriage, and death took place in the pre-colonial period. These were marked with celebrations, feasting, singing, and

dancing. The entire Abagusii indigenous education acquired through infancy to death stage was put into practice throughout life. It was tested, refined and perfected (O.I, Kimanga, 6<sup>th</sup> June 2018).

Okeng'o, (1990) further indicates that, from one year to three years, the family especially the mother mainly took care of a child. During this period, a child learnt the fundamentals of language from the mother and the surrounding people. Between the ages of three-seven years, children in the family were taught correct manners, and the general behaviour expected of children among the Abagusii. A child was also taught how to greet various groups of people and how to handle household items such as fire, furniture, knives, and food. Through lullabies, stories, myths, legends and songs, the grandparents instructed children and taught them the community's history, religious beliefs, and laws. This information goes hand in hand, with what the researcher got from the field that the Abagusii used to conduct informal education.

Their mothers taught young girls and other mature women just as their fathers and other elderly men instructed boys. All the Abagusii children belonged to the community. Any adult had the obligation of assigning duty, correcting by reminding or even severely punishing, guiding, and directing any child in the community. Children were taught by elders to know their clans and relatives. The entire indigenous education among the Abagusii was acquired right from childhood to death.

There was a popular saying in the community that, "*Omote nigo ogokumbwa ekeroore omoke*" (the tree is straightened when it is young). This saying referred to the timing of education in the community.

According to the Abagusii, an elderly person was to be relied, on matters pertaining wisdom and objectivity in judgment. The Abagusii

saying '*Monto monene ndiogo*' (an elderly person is medicine) helps to emphasize the point that elderly people were regarded as knowledgeable and hence relied upon to give advice and guidance. Adult persons accumulated the knowledge and experience they acquired in their life-long education. In addition, various institutions worked at moulding the life of the individual through informal and unconscious training. These institutions included the family, peers, and the community at large. In a word a Gusii knowledgeable person who gave advice and guidance and also was conversant with the Abagusii history and customs was a moving and talking encyclopaedia (KII, Clan elder, 8<sup>th</sup> June 2018).

This indicates that informal education among the Abagusii was passed from generation to generation through apprenticeship.

### **2.3.9 Food**

Ochieng (1986) asserts that, the Abagusii during their stay in Kano plains, had a mixed economy. They reared cattle mainly for meat and milk. They grew such crops as finger millet, sorghum, millet, and roots. They hunted a large number of animals. Hunting, mainly done by the young energetic men and boys, was mainly for *Chingera* (Buffaloes), *Chingabi* (Gazelles), *Ebisusu* (Rabbits), *Chiguto* (Ant-bears), *Ebirongo* (Porcupines), and *Chinchogu* (Elephants). Most wild animals were hunted for food, some for their skin, which was highly valued for making shields, costumes for song and dance and for sale to the neighbouring Luo community. Lions' and Leopards' skins were used for ceremonial purposes.

Omwoyo,(1990) documented that various birds were trapped or killed using slingshots. This was mainly the work of young boys. Birds like *Amachore* (Weaverbirds), *Amaruma* (Doves), *Chingware* (Ducks), and others fall victims of traps. All these supplemented the Abagusii diet.

Interviews carried out in the field indicated that the Abagusii women also gathered wild vegetables, which included *Chinsaga* (spider plant), *Rinagu* (black nightshade), and *Ototo* (East African Spinach). However, the kind of food that was hunted and gathered was never enough to satisfy people, it only comprised a small portion of the Abagusii diet (KII, Village woman 2<sup>nd</sup> July, 2018).

### 2.3.10 Political Leadership

The period preceding colonial rule, Abagusii did not have any centralized political organization. Largely, they derived their values mainly from religious experiences and beliefs. The scholars that have studied the Abagusii society such as (Mayer, 1959; Levine, 1950; Ochieng, 1986) support this view. The community was made up of a collection of many political units, based on exogamous patrilineal clans or clan groupings, each of which often consisted of a large clan with a number of small clans or sub-clans or families, usually occupying a distinct territory over a ridge or succession of adjacent ridges.

An observation was made by respondent that:

At no given time did the entire Abagusii community fall under one 'tribal' leadership. This means that there was no ethnic authority which overruled clan authority either in dealings with neighbouring ethnic groups or in the management of internal affairs. The clan then was the most effective political unit. (O.I, Bosibori, 20<sup>th</sup> June, 2018).

Ochieng, (1986) notes that, the Abagusii clans were aware of having originally a common ancestor, and they were connected by bonds of intermarriage and common beliefs and practices in such a way that they considered themselves as a unit in contrast to the surrounding groups with whom they did not maintain such bonds. The leader of each political unit was locally called *Omoruoti* or *Omogambi*, a title equivalent to a chief. This man was accepted publicly and performed religious and political roles. Council of elders assisted *Omogambi*, *abatureti*. The *abaureti* met when there was

need to solve social, political, and religious problems. *Omogambi* were regarded as living representatives of the original lineage founders and were believed to be men who were divinely sanctioned to lead clans in communal sacrifices and social activities. They would be the first to cultivate, the first to sow, to taste crops on maturity and the first to harvest.

Besides the *Omogambi*, there were other notable leaders locally called Abarai. Ochieng' (1986) defines these leaders as persons who were talented or had qualities of leadership, played a directing role, wielded commanding influence, or had a following in any sphere of activity or thought. They consisted of 'prophets' (such as Sakawa) elders, seers, and rainmakers.

An oral interview explained that,

Abagusii homestead was an internally self-governing unit. *Omogaka* (the father of the home) was the head of the family. He was assisted by his wife (*Omokungu*) to look after the children. A family consisted of husband, wife, or wives in case of a polygamous family and children *Omosacha* (the 'husband') of the family had the role of looking for food and other family needs. Conflicts, between members of a given home were handled by parents. Those of different homesteads were taken to the council of elders headed by the *Omogambi* (O.I, Ogeturenki, 18<sup>th</sup> June, 2018).

#### **2.4 Historical Background of the Relations Between the Kipsigis and Abagusii**

Examining the Historical relations between the Kipsigis and Abagusii enabled the researcher to trace their relations up to 1895. It is through the historical analysis that we can ascertain whether the migration and settlement between them were created in the pre-colonial, colonial, or post- independence period. The major questions that guided this section included the following. The researcher sought to know; did the Kipsigis and Abagusii communities interact peacefully as they migrated and settled



from one place to another, or were they always in conflict? When did the conflicts between them actually start? What was the main cause behind their conflict? How did they manage to survive the deep-rooted conflict that existed between them?

The Kipsigis and Abagusii were not actually in main conflicts. They were mostly in latent conflicts which once in a while developed into manifest when precipitated by some issues as the researcher discusses herein. More often, the two communities under study were in conflicts. These conflicts were not created in the recent past, but rather, they existed since the pre-colonial period (Ogot, 1976).

The bad relations between the two communities began during their migration around the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries. When the Kipsigis came across the Abagusii in Kabianga, they started attacking them as enemies who have come to settle in their land. Over time, the Kipsigis traditions did not encourage speaking to strangers; hence, the reason why they perceived them as enemies. The Kipsigis later drove out the Abagusii. Earlier batch of the Abagusii had left the area due to unfavourable climatic conditions which had led to the death of most of their people and animals, hence, the name “Kabianga” which means (*Ebinto biangire koba buya buna etakeire* (things are not good the way they are expected to be), Ochieng’ (1974).

Through FGDs conducted at Kabianga, it was revealed that those who remained behind became friends with their hosts and they were given land where they are up today. This contradicts what Ochieng’ (1974) and Ogot (1976) narrates. Due to this, they moved and a faction of the Abagusii moved to the current West Mugirango where the Kipsigis pursued them. This was the focal point of a major clash between the Kipsigis and

Abagusii. During the battle, the Abagusii attacked and overran the Kipsigis. The battle was named “esaosao” due to the many deaths that led to the defeat of the Kipsigis. The event still evokes bitter memories that have been the main cause of animosity between these rivals (*The People Newspaper, Sunday, 17<sup>th</sup> June, 2012*).

As the Abagusii moved and settled at the South of Kericho, they found themselves in a difficult situation. They found out that, they were surrounded by the Kipsigis, Maasai, Luo and Abakuria. In the process of adjusting themselves to co-exist with their neighbours, colonialism made its way to the country. Living alongside Abagusii were the Maasai together with the Kipsigis, who are part of the Kalenjin. There were constant fights between these groups.

The Kipsigis raided both the Maasai and Gusii for cattle. As a result, the Maasai moved away from Bureti. The Abagusii put up a spirited fight and kept the Kipsigis at bay for some time. Because of several ambushes and counter ambushes, the Abagusii were forced to migrate southwards beyond present day Sotik. However, even here the Kipsigis did not leave them in peace (Ochieng’, 1974). Ondieki notes that these attacks divided the Abagusii once again, one group stayed in the region of Kericho where they eventually became one with the Kipsigis after assimilation in many ways like intermarriage and barter trade. This is evident by sharing of human’s names like Kosegei, Babasi, Bagisero, Matabori, Gesebei, and the type of activities they do like crop farming (tea maize), dairy farming and the type of food they prepare like milk among others. This branch of Abagusii believed that this area had a more favourable weather compared to Abagusii highlands. Among Abagusii people who stayed behind include the Abakione who are currently called Bakione in Kipsigis (O.I, Ondieki, 20<sup>th</sup> August, 2018).

## CHAPTER THREE

### MIGRATION OF THE ABAGUSII INTO SOUTH RIFT, 1895-1963

#### 3.1 Introduction

Before Kenya's independence, the colonial establishment led to land alienation and appropriation by the Europeans. As such, colonialism helped the establishment of capitalism and the development of a money economy in Kenya (Chavasu, 1997). In Kenya, African reserves were created and soon it led to pressure on the Africans due to scarcity of land and the need to get money to pay taxes. A teeming population pressure made some of the Abagusii to move out. Some of the Abagusii people migrated to South Rift. Prothero (1986) observes that, there was permanent rural-rural migration initiated in colonial Kenya, as one effect of the British colonial economic system, which also initiated the movement of the Abagusii from pre-colonial period to colonial era.

Levine (1979) notes that, land is so valuable among the Abagusii, a family with enough land is considered wealthy. Consequently, during an individual's lifetime, an individual entirely depended on land for social well-being and economic sustenance. Nyanchoka (1985) writes that, the Abagusii people believe that their land cannot be inherited or sold out to any outsider because the spirits of those buried in that land will be displeased and will haunt the family and lineage forever.

Ntabo, (2006) indicates that, land among the Abagusii is communally owned where the completely ethnic community collectively defended their territorial boundaries. The communal defence system was a result of a long identification of people with a certain geographical territory, which was understood to belong to them as a group. The

frequent conflicts between the Abagusii and their immediate neighbours, the Maasai and Kipsigis, are classic examples that show how the Abagusii valued land. Although these works addressed the importance of land among the Abagusii only, they helped the researcher to find out how the Abagusii were able to move to diaspora and occupy new land and start settling in foreign land. They also helped the researcher to find out whether the importance attached to land in Kipsigis and Abagusii had some effect on the Abagusii life. In addition Historical Materialism is well brought out and displayed by the factors such as land that triggered the migration of the Abagusii into South Rift.

### **3.2 Colonial Rule and Economic Establishment and the Abagusii Migration and Settlement**

Colonialism in Kenya lasted roughly for 68 years, from the end of the nineteenth century until Kenya's attained independence in 1963 (Zezeza, 1970). Like the Kikuyu of Kabete and the Luo of Central Nyanza, the Abagusii also had their prominent diviners. Names of Abagusii prophets like Sakawa of Nyakoe, Moraa of Bogeka and Bonareri, wife of Owura, ranked high in the Abagusii traditions. Sakawa for example had foretold the advent of "white strangers" and like the Kikuyu and Luo Diviners, he had advised strongly against any hostilities against them. He prophesied that there were to be police lines, hospitals, offices, and churches in Homeland.

Sakawa's prophecy also revealed that the Abagusii warriors were to be disarmed by these strangers if they showed any resistance. All these prophecies are believed to have come true. Judging from Sakawa's popularity and advice the Abagusii were to receive the British in their land in the same way as many of the Luo sub-tribes in Central Nyanza had done (Ogot, 1963). It was unfortunate; however, that violent entry by the British was destined to destroy the ground which Sakawa had unwittingly prepared for

his people. At the time the British entered into South Nyanza, they had largely abandoned their so called "peaceful policy of gradually bringing the natives" under their control "without using absolute force at once" and had come to rely increasingly on punitive measures as appropriate methods of bringing peace. It was this "*sword and fire*" policy which the British used to control the Abagusii when the latter strongly opposed the entry of the British into their land (Nyagosia, 2017).

For instance, Bagge, the then Assistant Commissioner for Kisumu Province, dispatched a punitive expedition to homeland towards the end of 1904. This was following the news that, the Abagusii had murdered some Kavirondo "tribesmen" who were supporters of the British policy. This expedition was characterized by wanton burning of huts, seizure of livestock and massacre on the Abagusii (Ogot, 1963). This automatically poisoned the relationship between the Abagusii and the British administration throughout the colonial era. Gordon (1946) asserts that even after the Abagusii had been warned several times that they were a subject people and that they should stop molesting other subject people, they did not stop conducting "daring cattle raids" deep into Luo, Maasai, and Kipsigis territories. If the British Protection of these groups was not to be a mockery, these predations had to be stopped.

Foran (1962) notes that, the attempts by South Mugirango people of the Abagusii to enquire about the intentions of "*strangers*" were answered with bullets, indiscriminate shooting, the burning of huts and granaries, and the seizure of cattle. When Nyaruba of South Mugirango, protested when police officers seized his fat bull, he was shot dead on the spot and many others suffered the same fate. Official estimate, which according to Abagusii tradition would appear conservative, put the number of the Abagusii who were killed at 100 and 3000 heads of cattle captured. For the operation, the platoon

under Captain Jenkins was issued with a bar in recognition of the fact that they had dealt successively with revolt of the Kisii in Kisumu Province (KII, Villager, 5<sup>th</sup> August 2018).

This kind of shooting was extended into Wanjare territory. When the Wanjare warriors realized that the British were out to finish them, they immediately organized a makeshift opposition against the insolent invaders who had unjustly meted brutal treatment to the Mugirango people, when they advanced on their camp, the British troops opened fire on them killing hundreds (Foran, 1962). At this point, it should be realized that not all the Abagusii were against the establishment of the British rule in their land. Some of the Abagusii had associated the coming of the British in their Homeland with fortune and development so they were not opposed to the British rule as such. For example, a man named Ombati was friendly to the British that he had to tell them more "secrets" of the Abagusii. Ombati's interview with Bagge at Kisumu for instance provided the British with just the pretext they had been looking for (FGD, Clan elders, 17<sup>th</sup> July, 2018).

For some time, the administration had cast a covetous eye on the land of Sotik and the related Abagusii people as "an area of excellent land which should be opened up to settlers. Governor Stewart had addressed a letter to the foreign office in which he stated that it was important that the Homeland should be opened up since it was 'well adapted to European settlement'. He however noted with regret that while some of the Abagusii were friendly and wanted the administration to establish "A Government Post in their country, a large portion of the tribe was 'inimical' and would most likely give trouble"(Mungearn, 1966).

It was against this background that Mumbo cult gained a lot of popularity and foothold

in Abagusii country. In the context of its spread and in the light of its manifestation among the Abagusii, Mumboism was anti-European and therefore an anti-colonial movement. It was a radical movement with far reaching political ramifications. Onyango Dunde started it in Alego in 1913. Mumboism clearly rejected anything to do with Christianity, missionaries and European traders. The colonial administration often referred to it as perverted form of Christianity (or a type of bastardised religion) and a wholesale vicious movement surrounded by superstition, ill will and mysterious *dawa* (medicine), (Ochieng, 1986).

In September 1914, the British evacuated Kisii town on the approach of a German force. At the outbreak of the First World War, the Abagusii were completely convinced that Mosi Awour Auma, the cults' high priest in South Nyanza was a true prophet, and that the European regime was over. Nyanchwa, Nyabururu and Asumbi missions, and trading centres of Riana and Rangwe and many government offices were plundered, and burnt down. As soon as the battle between the British and the Germans over Kisii town was over and Germans had been pushed back to Tanganyika, it was decided that some action had to be taken against the Abagusii and the Luo for the looting of missions and trading centres.

The Abagusii continued to have mixed resistance and collaboration to the British in the period of 1914 and after. In 1927 when the chief of Nyaribari died, the British placed the area under the control of chief Nzugu of neighbouring Kitutu, amalgamating the two locations. A few people in Nyaribari were happy with the change. Protest in various forms followed and in response the chief native commissioner held a *baraza* (public meeting) in Nyaribari where he emphasised that the union would stand, (Nyanza Provincial Diary 19<sup>th</sup> June 1927). Nevertheless, Nyaribari opposition

continued and by the end of 1929 the District Commissioner was forced to admit that the majority of the inhabitants still refused to recognize the new administrative boundaries (KNA: DC/KSI/1/1/3, 1929).

In 1930, the chieftainship was re-established with Nyaribari as a separate political division. By this period, the British authorities had revised the judicial structure operating among the Abagusii. A central court had been established for all civil cases. The Abagusii opposition of these colonial policies was continuous and strong. Until 1961, the Abagusii were administered with the South Nyanza Luo in what was until 1948 called South Kavirondo when it became South Nyanza in 1961. It was divided into two creating a separate Kisii District in a petition to the governor of Kenya to return the system of location tribunals. In response to this, colonial officials abolished the central tribunal and reconstructed the local courts, and this remained in effect even after the Second World War (Nyagosia, 2017).

It is evident that, British colonial economic policy in Kenya included the following: Land alienation for European settlers (Sorrenson, 1965), African taxation (Tarus, 2004), African migrant/forced labour (Zezeza, 1992) development of settler dominated agricultural production and peasant commodity production, export production, rail and road transport and communication, education and health. These policies were formulated and implemented incrementally during specific stages of colonialism: the pre-1920 period, which was interrupted by the outbreak of the First World War; the interwar period which also saw the great depression between 1929 and 1934; the Second World War 1939-45 and the Post-War era (Wiggley, 1965). The implementation of these policies was characterized by a series of contradictions, with which the colonial state had to cope, rarely with any success (Lonsdale &



Berman, 1979). There was, for instance, a clash of interests between metropolitan capitalists and the colonial state in Kenya. British merchants and financiers often won the day. Internally, African, Indian, and European settler interests were also at variance. More often than not European settlers had the ear of pro-settler governors.

Moreover, in the interest of capital these policies were anchored on partial dissolution and restructuring of pre-colonial structures. It was often cheaper, even if not efficient, to use pre-capitalist forces and relations of production. It was also in the interest of capital to place the market under the colonial state's control. This was done with greater enthusiasm during the post-Second World War period more popularly known as the second colonial occupation. Colonial commodity production, because of inappropriate practice, led to widespread environmental degradation. Forest concessions, which were granted to individuals and companies led to massive deforestation. Colonial enterprises destroyed local industries (Zezeza, 1992).

Generally, the colonial economic policies in Kenya were instrumental in incorporating the pre-capitalist communities into the colonial and international economic systems. This is reflected into Historical Materialism which argues that the causes of development and change in human society are important as human beings collectively produce the necessities of life (Livingstone, 1975). Colonialism trolled and completely changed the economy of Kenya, which in return further affected the economic structure and the ethnic groups like Abagusii community that later on influenced their movement and settlement into South Rift (KII, Village elder 2<sup>nd</sup> July, 2018).

Africa's pre-capitalist forms of production were subjected to a historic break in their autonomous development; in the terminology of the time, they were literally 'opened up'. They became part-economies, externally orientated to suit the dynamics of a

capitalism, which had been imposed upon them from outside. East Africa's pre-colonial relations with the global economy had been based too exclusively on the production of two rapidly wasting assets, slaves, and ivory. In the inland area which became the hub of Kenya there had barely been an exportable surplus at all when, suddenly, in the first decade of the twentieth century, production was intensified beyond all previous experience by the demands of colonial rule and, concurrently, by the opportunities of the commodity boom, itself in part created by the political and capital investments with which the imperial powers competed for preferential access to markets and resources (Lonsdale & Berman, 1979).

This explains Historical Materialism as the force behind the movement of the Abagusii in the Colonial period, which has been brought out, as well as the causes that brought about development and changes in the social, economic and political perspectives. In this chapter, we will discuss the various factors that influenced the Abagusii migration and settlement during the Colonial economy in Kenya.

### **3.2.1 Settler Exploitation of Kenyan Land**

The first European settlers arrived in 1902 and in 1915, the Crown Land Ordinance recognized "native rights" in lands reserved for the Kenyans. It allowed the government to sell or lease crown land to Europeans at two rupees per one hundred acres annually. In 1926, this was further defined by the creation of "African Reserves" for each of Kenya's "tribes", leaving the "White Highlands" for the European (Anderson, 1971). Historical Materialism is reflected here in that we see the materialistic conditions such as land that is alienated by the white settlers for the purpose of exploitation and production. In addition to that, causes behind the economic development and changes of the Abagusii economic, social and political organization

is well brought out. The Abagusii land was among those highlands that were alienated by the whites.

As pointed out by Lonsdale & Berman (1979), the Abagusii migration was propelled by the need to acquire more land for farming and to satisfy their ego for the lost land which was alienated by the white settlers. This concurs with what the researcher found from the field; “we came here when the white man came to our land, killed our people and took the land to be his, we were put together like a flock of sheep without a place to farm and even to keep our animals [reserves] (KII, clan elder 6<sup>th</sup> July, 2018).

The establishment of capitalist estate production depended upon the appropriation of Africa land. But this partial separation of Africans from their means of production did not have an immediately adverse effect upon their well-being save in the case of the pastoralists, who suffered immeasurably larger losses than the cultivators. On the contrary, some African farmers enjoyed an enormous access of exploitable land, as both the British parts enabled them to use areas previously left empty for reasons of defence, and as white landownership made available to their tenants' hoes the acres that settlers could not yet afford to plough (Lonsdale & Berman, 1979).

### **3.2.2 British "Encouragement" of African Labour**

Zezeza (1970) explained that, the colonial state introduced settler and corporate production as the mainstay of the colonial economy. The state forcibly seized land, livestock, and other indigenous means of production from certain regions, communities, and households on behalf of the settlers and corporate interests. By the mid-1930s, about one-fifth of all usable land in Kenya was under the exclusive control of the settlers. In addition, the state provided the settlers and corporate capital with the necessary infrastructural, agricultural, and marketing services and credit facilities. Above all, the state, which was under the white settlers, sought to create, mobilize and control the supply of African labour for capital. The state itself, of course, also required

massive supplies of labour to build and maintain the colonial economic infrastructure and the administrative bureaucracy.

The British used five main policies to secure and control African labour. First, it established African reserves; the Kenya Land commission of 1932 fixed the boundaries of the white highlands leading to population pressure in the African reserves. Africans were given small areas to settle. "Eventually, with official boundaries where each African ethnic group in the colony was expected to live separately"; the Africans lacked sufficient land in the reserves. They "had little choice but to migrate to the European farms in search of work" (Zezeza, 1970). On the other hand, "through the initial act of alienating land to settlers, the colonial state deprived some Africans of their means of production and laid the basis for the entry of Africans in ever-increasing numbers into the wage labour force (Elikns 2005). This made some of the Abagusii to migrate to South Rift in order to avoid being in reserves in their home area.

Second, they imposed taxes, [hut tax, and a poll tax], "together amounting to nearly twenty-five shillings, the equivalent of almost two months of African wages at the going local rate. Zezeza (1970) clarified that, though taxation was a double-edged sword: it encouraged peasant commodity production as much as wage employment. In fact, peasant commodity production increased precisely in those regions from where the colonial state and capital expected to draw their labour, namely the Central and Nyanza Provinces.

Thus, to keep Africans from competing with British farmers, the government imposed the third means of "encouraging" African labour: forbidding them to grow the most profitable cash crops (coffee, tea, and sisal). It was actually illegal for Kenyans to grow coffee, but coffee growers needed a license and it was very difficult for Kenyans to

obtain a license (Leys, 1975). Kenyans could continue growing and selling maize until marketing boards established after World War II set a two-tier system that benefited European settler farms (Elkins, 2005).

Fourth, forced or compulsory labour was widely used and became institutionalized during the first few decades of colonial rule in Kenya (Zezeza, 1970). This was a period requiring a lot of labour to lay foundations of the colonial economy. Labour was demanded in building rail lines and roads, dams and bridges constructed, administrative centres erected, and forests cleared and settler farms established. Forced labour inevitably became the most reliable means of securing labour. Few government officials or settlers ever questioned the need for some form of labour coercion. For many it was even an act of benevolence, a necessary 'shock therapy' for people deeply mired in idleness and indolence. This also activated their migration to South Rift.

Fifth, the colonial government introduced the pass (Kipande system) to control the movement of African workers and to keep track of their employment histories, (Elkins, 2005). The use of *Kipande System* is discussed further below. The researcher noted that the above-mentioned systems were used to destroy the Abagusii economic structure and this made them vulnerable and weak to develop themselves. Thus, for their survival some had to work under rough British polices while others fled to foreign lands where they ended up in diaspora.

In conclusion we can assert that the five points also affected the Abagusii in their ancestral home making them to move to diaspora.

### **3.2.3 Kipande (Pass) System**

The *Kipande* system was first passed into law in 1915, implemented by 1919, and

abolished in 1947 (Zezeza, 1970). Unwillingness of the Africans to offer labour made Europeans face labour shortage, thus led to the introduction of the *Kipande* system.

Elkins (2005) explains that;

By 1920, all African men leaving their reserves were required by law to carry a pass, (*Kipande*), that recorded a person's name, fingerprint, ethnic group, past employment history, and current employer's signature. The Kikuyu put the pass in a small metal container, the size of a cigarette box, and wore it around their necks. They often called it "mbugi" (goat's bell). The "*Kipande*" became one of the most detested symbols of British colonial power, though the Africans had little recourse but to carry their identity at all times; failure to produce it on demand brought a hefty fine, imprisonment, or both.

These also applied to Abagusii because during that time, they were under the British rule and they were and still are one of African ethnic communities. The above discussion shows clearly how Historical Materialism has manifested itself. The colonial masters did use several ways exploit the services of the Abagusii among other communities with the aim of maximizing their production that boosted their profits and income. But in reality, the Abagusii and other ethnic communities suffered since they were economically exploited through land alienation which disrupted traditional structures through forced labour, restriction of movement, payment of low wages and taxes.

### **3.2.4 Emergence of Different "Household Types"**

Colonialism in Kenya, as in much of Africa, pitted the peasant household against capitalist enterprise. The differentiated response of peasant households to capitalist labour demands resulted in the emergence of different household types: commodity-producing households, labour-exporting households, squatter households and working-class household (Zezeza, 1970). This section brings out the causes of development and

changes in historical materialism by explaining the historical forces behind the movement and settlement of the Abagusii during the colonial period in South Rift. This historical occurrence latter on influenced the settlement and spread of the Gusii people in South Rift even after post-colonial period as well as the labour and production patterns.

### **3.2.5 Squatters**

Squatters were areas where Kenyan Africans lived, cultivated, and generally grazed [their livestock] on land that did not belong to them (Alam, 1870). Settlers allowed African squatters to live on their land in order to secure a continuous supply of cheap labour. The 1915 Crown land Ordinance provided land registration scheme for settlers; this gave them powers to put Africans to squatters. Zeleza (1970 ) notes that, by 1930 squatter labour had become the main source of labour on settler farms and estates, and the total number of squatters was in the neighbourhood of 120,000 people. They occupied at least 20% of settler land.

Many of the early squatters were actually the original inhabitants of the land taken by the white settlers when left, in this case the Abagusii. Later, squatters came from the reserves to escape the restrictions of reserve life, especially conscription during the war, and the rigors and abuses of communal labour after the war. Food shortages in the reserves also played a role in pushing Abagusii to become squatters, as did the desire to escape the education of missionaries, which were more pervasive in the reserves than on settler farms. Abagusii were not left behind, they were victims of circumstances.

For instance, Zeleza (1970) explains that, in 1918, the Resident Native Ordinance was

passed to demand that squatter payments were made in labour and not in kind or in cash. This was done to keep the squatter farms from competing with or even eclipsing settler farms. Conditions for squatters began deteriorating from the mid-1920s, at first imperceptibly, then dramatically from the 1930s. As reserves became more crowded, more Abagusii people left them to become squatters and then they lost the ability to return. Over time, squatter plots became smaller and the amount of time they were required to work for settlers increased. In 1918, a squatter was supposed to work for a settler for three months, but this increased to six months in 1925 and eight months in March 1944. After World War II, the labour requirement increased still further to nine months, and squatter plots grew yet smaller.

Squatters including Abagusii were not allowed to raise cattle [because the white settlers were eager to protect their imported, exotic herds from diseases] (Alam, 1870). One account reports that some settlers would even shoot squatters' cattle including seizure, sale or repatriation of squatter stock by both settlers and the Forest Department became commonplace and were given the force of the law (Zezeza 1970). Abagusii were farmers in nature and could therefore not encourage such situations because it hindered their economic growth and made them slaves thus opted to migrate.

FGDs noted that,

When we were put into squatters by the Whiteman, we suffered a lot, we were not able to get enough food since we had no land to farm on, and we had no animals because this man refused. We used to work for him in his plantation without payment or very little, this made us to move and leave him (FGD, Clan elder, 6<sup>th</sup> June, 2018).

### **3.2.6 Labour-Exporting Households**

"Free labour" emerged first in the cities, where the majority of workers were in



administrative and service jobs (as opposed to manufacturing). Zeleza (1970) notes that; from the beginning, Kenya's wage labour was segmented along racial, ethnic, regional and gender lines. Generally, Europeans occupied the top positions, Asians [Indians] were in the middle, while Africans were at the bottom of the occupational hierarchy. Among the Africans the labour market was dominated by people from the Central and Nyanza provinces, particularly the Kikuyu, Luo and Luhya.

Women's participation in the formal labour market was low because of the combined influences of traditional and European chauvinist structure that prescribed a rigid system of division of labour patterned along gender lines. In this system, women were required to stay in the rural areas to farm and raise their children. On the other hand, men migrated to the cities to work. As result of this, most men migrated to towns leaving behind women, separating the Abagusii families.

### **3.3 Reasons for Migration of Abagusii into South Rift During the Colonial Era**

The Abagusii just like all the other communities had reasons that prompted them to move from their ancestral home to diaspora. These reasons can be classified in different ways; but for easy understanding we can classify them as internal reasons (push factors) and external reasons (pull factors) which on further classification can give us the social, political and economic reasons which prompted the Abagusii migration into diaspora from 1895-1963.

These three categories helped the researcher to clearly and easily identify the various reasons that made the Abagusii to move during colonization. This was also helpful in understating the specific causes of migration and how these causes later on influenced their movement and spread into the diaspora, respectively. People migrate for labour

market opportunities which are crucially important and are probably most prominent in academic and policy discussions. On the other side, family consideration, educational opportunities and adventure, climate and cultural preference, cattle raiding and population increase, basic and immediate physical security issues, can drive migration. Typically, various factors come into play over time in shaping migration decisions from more structural elements to predisposing factors.

Adepoju (1977) notes, people migrate with the hope of improving their living standards, or ultimately those of their children. He asserts that the volume and direction of migration reflects diversities of opportunities and imbalances in development between and within the various areas in a region. Adepoju further notes that; other than economic considerations, political oppression, religious considerations, escape from social control, colonization or climatic disasters, ex-communication, epidemic breakout, and squatter introduction are important factors that inform the motives for migration. The applicability of historical materialism that shows the historical forces that prompted the movement of the Abagusii in the colonial era. The reasons that played a major role in catalysing the movement was basically materialistic conditions that influenced the production and reproduction of the Abagusii community as they moved from their homeland to South Rift.

### **3.3.1 Social Reasons for Emergence of Abagusii into South Rift during the Colonial Era**

Social reasons refer to the factors that Abagusii encountered in their daily activities as they mingled and interacted as a community with each other and their neighbours around them. These reasons could be positive or negative but the researcher sought to find out both positive and negative reasons that prompted the migration of the Abagusii

from Homeland to diaspora South Rift. Some of these reasons include population increase, excommunication, and epidemic break out, cattle raiding, squatter introduction, and search for employment.

From the above, it is clear that, the reasons that made the Abagusii move and live in diaspora were not internal social factors only, but rather there were also external social reasons that made them to move out. Thus, this affirms that there was the pull and push social factors that made the Abagusii leave their ancestral land to move to diaspora. Historical materialism is well portrayed because the latter migration of the Abagusii was affected as some of them collaborated while others resisted the colonialists. These reactions later on influenced their migration into South Rift diaspora as they interacted with their neighbor and within themselves in several social activities.

### **3.3.2 Population Increase**

The first European settlers arrived in 1902 and in 1915, the Crown Land Ordinance recognized *native rights* in lands reserved for Kenyans. In 1902, this was further defined by the creation of *African Reserves* for each of Kenya's tribes, communities leaving the White Highlands for the Europeans (Anderson, 1971). Historical Materialism is evident by conditions such as land alienated by the white settlers for the purpose of exploitation and production purposes. The Abagusii lands were among those highlands that were alienated by the white settlers, making them to be in reserves where they were overcrowded hence decided to move out.

Moreover, Abagusii migrated because of population increase as a push factor in homeland, which pushed some of the Abagusii to move out into the foreign land such as Kipsigis land as they were searching for space to settle and enough for conducting

their farming activities. Laurel & Phillipson (1978) indicate that, during migration small groups of people leave their old settlements, moving on to new areas, planting new fields and introducing their technological and economic practices into areas in which they had previously been unknown hence exchange of ideas.

From the Focus Group Discussion oral interviews the researcher noted that most of the Abagusii ended up in South Rift as they were looking for more spacious land to settle the high population:

Most of our parents moved to new land in search of fertile land with enough rainfall for our farming activities and for establishing our settlement. We had very small farms back at home and we were very congested in the small lands. Our families were still growing as most of us were the first-borns. Through the help of other Abagusii members who were already working in Kipsigis land, in the white settler's farms, our parents were told that there was more than enough land in the Kipsigis area. The land was not being used by the Kipsigis and it was just left lying idle and bushy. Our parents and others who were bold enough migrated as a group and came and settled in Kericho. On arrival, we started clearing some parts of the bushy and forested areas and started living since we had come with our farming tools, seeds for planting and our families as well. We started clearing the bushy areas with our iron tools such as machetes, and we did not find any one complaining since the place was deserted. That is how we started clearing and expanding the land for farming and making "*ebisareti*" (our homes) as well as building the cattle sheds (FGD, Clan elders, 17<sup>th</sup> July, 2018).

In addition to that, Nyangau(n.d) also noted that, they moved to the neighbouring land Kipsigis community such as Ndanai, Transmara, Sotik and Bureti to search for a place to settle since the little land that remained in Gusii land was small and congested (KII,villager O.I, 17th July, 2018). Therefore, it is evident that, the land in Kipsigis was still available and it was not used by then. The Abagusii were very congested back in their homes (after being pushed to reserves) following the Crown Land Ordinance, thus decided to migrate in search for more land that could accommodate their families and their fast growing population.

### **3.3.3 Ex-communication**

Some Abagusii were ex-communicated from their homeland because they practiced witchcraft that was a threat to the lives of people and their properties. Therefore, instead of killing the witches in the society, the community ex-communicated them to foreign lands far from home. The research revealed that, even those who were ex-communicated continued with their witchcraft in the diaspora. A situation that made their host, Kipsigis to repatriate the witches back to Gusii land. This is evidenced by FGDs, who said that;

Abagusii were believed to be witches. For instance, a man named Motobu from Ekerenyo in Nyamira County was caught practicing witchcraft and was chased from Mtaragoni and sent back to his Abagusii homeland in Ekerenyo. Instead of killing him, the Kipsigis organized for transporting him back to his ancestral land in a tea company truck. They feared that if they chased him he will not go far or he will come back and bewitch them or their families (FGDs, Clan elders, 18<sup>th</sup> July, 2018).

### **3.3.4 Spirit of Adventure**

Some of the Abagusii ended up in diaspora because they were willing and eager to go to foreign land such as the Kipsigis land with the aim of satisfying their spirit of adventure. Through this, they were able to learn a lot about the new land of the Kipsigis and did not hesitate calling their relatives to come over to the newfound land of opportunities and other very good things that were not or were less in their homeland. A key informant recalled one such immigrant called, Obiri Ocheti who had gone to visit a friend working in White man's land within Kipsigis community.

The narrative is as follows:

Our parents were able to come to Kipsigis land because they were convinced by Obiri who was their friend and had paid a visit to a friend working in Kipsigis land in one of the white settlers' farm. During his visit, he had learnt about availability of land that was fertile and unoccupied within the Kipsigis community especially the bushy and forested ones (KII, Elderly woman, 9<sup>th</sup> August, 2018).

The spirit of adventure made them to migrate into diaspora as they were searching for a better land for settlement, cultivation, and their freedom from the curfew restriction due to *Kipande* System policy.

In conclusion, the above observations leads to this study's assertion that the Abagusii could take no more of this exploitation and harsh treatment by the colonial masters and so they began to look elsewhere for freedom and relief from the yoke of slavery that the white masters tied around them. The desire to reclaim their lives led them to explore foreign lands such as that of the Kipsigis. Upon finding new and fertile lands away from the harassment of the colonialists, they called their relatives to join them and settle there. The land of the Kipsigis was full of opportunities and freedom, which was lacking in their homeland.

### **3.4 Economic Reasons for the Emergence of Abagusii into South Rift During the Colonial Era**

Economic reasons in this study refer to the factors that Abagusii encountered on the day-to-day activities as they mingled and interacted as a community with each other and their neighbours around them. This was mainly through various ways of exchanging commodities and services such as skills to earn a living. These reasons could be positive or negative. Some of the reasons included agriculture or farming activities, search for employment, land, cattle raiding, and commercial activities as

well as squatter issues.

### **3.4.1 Search for Land**

Some Abagusii moved from their homeland because the white settlers had alienated most of their fertile lands. Since the Abagusii fall under the Bantu speaking tribes, they were mainly farmers in nature and considered farming as their major economic activity. Following the growing incidents by the colonialist that is white settlers snatching all the fertile lands, some Abagusii moved from reserves in search of better lands where they could continue with farming. As revealed during oral interviews some opted to move to the Kipsigis land in search of fertile land to carry out their various farming activities.

### **3.4.2 Searching for Employment**

Unemployment especially among the Abagusii was also identified as another trigger of Abagusii migration to diaspora. Besides feeding the poverty trap in terms of high unemployment rates, low literacy rates in turn contributed to the migration in search of employment. This draws from the fact that, a high mass of unemployed youth are a ready force of warriors (morans) that are deployed for cattle raids and battles. Those who were courageous enough and willing to work opted to go to Kipsigis land to work for the white settlers in their farms so as to be paid for their services.

Those who managed to get the jobs latter on invited other Abagusii people to also come and live with them as they worked for the white man and be paid rather than being idle back at home and engaging in drugs .

Our parents were able to come and work in the white settlers' farm after they were invited and given the information about the labour services that were paid for by the white settlers. On arrival in Kipsigis land and especially the white settlers' farm the workers who worked in the white man's land were the Luo, Luhyia, Kipsigis, and all of them were living as squatters in the white man's land. Later on, we were able to acquire land and settle (KII, Church elder, 20<sup>th</sup> August, 2018).

As much as the Abagusii had their own land in homeland the land was not enough since the fertile highlands, larger part of it had been alienated, and most of them pushed to reserves. Thus, some Abagusii ended up in diaspora as they were looking for employment to better their living standards. This actually worked for them even though it was after a period of struggling. The researcher noted that, the Abagusii who worked and lived in the white man's land as squatter and were able to save part of their wages. They later on befriended the Kipsigis with the aim of buying land from them. This is another explanation for how the Abagusii ended up living in Kipsigis land even after the colonial period ended.

### **3.4.3 Cattle-Raiding**

Cattle-raiding was identified as one of the main factor behind the Abagusii migration into Kipsigis land to live in diaspora.

Traditionally, the Kipsigis were pastoralists. Livestock was, and is very important in their culture because one could not be a respectable man without cattle. They believed that, cattle were a gift from God to them. This therefore made those who were illiterate and held on their traditions to raid their neighbouring communities of their livestock, like Abagusii.

Hence, they decided to move and stay with them as their own, so as to retain their animals as it was believed that it was a taboo for a Kipsigis to raid cattle from within the community (KII, Church elder, 25<sup>th</sup> August, 2018).

This was because they believed that their neighbours like the Abagusii and Luo should practice cultivation and fishing, respectively. This traditional belief and the



legitimization of raiding among the Kipsigis gave permission to proceed of raiding their neighbouring communities.

Obonyo informed the researcher that,

In the Kipsigis culture, cattle-raiding was institutionalized even before the advent of colonialism. The more livestock a man could raid from their neighbouring communities, the more respect one could get. If one could carry out successful raids, he could be given some privileges like being the leader of warriors or joining the council of elders. This respect and privileges that accompanied successful raids encouraged most young men to engage in raiding as it legitimized the raiding (KII, Clan member, 4<sup>th</sup> July, 2018).

These views concurred with those of Orchardson (1971) who argues that, among the Kipsigis, raiding of cattle was a past time sport and was in fact institutionalized. Cattle theft from outside the community was the objective of their active lives and a test of their military prowess. This therefore meant that, raiding among the Kipsigis had a cultural attachment, a reason that may have legalized raiding on their neighbouring communities. The institutionalization of raiding among the Kipsigis also legitimized the activity as other men went to raid their neighbours because it was acceptable by the society. One was to be a hero and virtuous man in the eyes of the society for carrying out a successful raid.

The prestige associated with successful raids encouraged many men to raid their neighbouring communities.

In the colonial period, the Kipsigis and the Abagusii used to raid each other. The raiding was however a form of sport where we could inform the other early tribe so that they could prepare for our raiding escapade. However, this sport changed in the colonial period when livestock raiding became commercialized as the Kipsigis started raiding on our community at night without prior information. This sometimes led to retaliatory raids, which led into wars between the Abagusii and the Kipsigis. From that time up to date, more livestock raids have been carried out from Homeland to Kipsigis land where some Abagusii men

have liaised with the Kipsigis raiders (KII, Village elder, 24<sup>th</sup> June, 2018).

This assertion supports the work of Omwoyo (2000) which notes that; during the colonial period, all the raids that took place along the borders with the Kipsigis, the Kipsigis were being accused more often as instigators. Equally, the Kipsigis also suffered numerous raids from the Maasai, Abagusii, and the Luo though most of these raids were retaliatory in nature. Stock rustling, which was formerly regarded rather as a sport associated with manhood, took an economic turn during the colonial period. The commercialization of livestock raids meant that the acquisition of wealth became the main object behind livestock raids. Livestock raids flourished with time and were even made complicated. It was equally proved that, in a number of cases the Abagusii not only made false identification of cattle but also stole amongst themselves and then sold to the Kipsigis.

On the other hand, the Abagusii felt that, it was important for them to rear livestock for their cultural, economic, and even nutritional value.

The competition to raid and protect the livestock from raiders made the two communities to develop tension and hatred for each other.

Our parents identified the place because there were no cattle raiding or raids within the Kipsigis themselves. For example Obiri, who had visited one of his friends working in white man`s land in Kipsigis land had learnt about this. He went and told the fellow Abagusii people back at home (Homeland) that if they went and lived with the Kipsigis peacefully their cattle will not be raided by the Kipsigis. He had learnt that the Kipsigis did not raid the people living in Kipsigis land but rather their neighbours outside Kipsigis land (KII, Village member, 9<sup>th</sup> August, 2018).

The study found out that the Abagusii migrated to diaspora yet their enemies were after their cattle. They ran away from cattle raiding attacks into the hands of the cattle

raiders to blend in with them. This research therefore found out that, cattle-raiding between the Abagusii and their Kipsigis neighbours was one of the factors that caused the Abagusii to move into Kericho and live in diaspora with them despite the fact that the Abagusii were the main targeted community in which the Kipsigis used to raid from. An informant recounted how his community used to be raided;“My father and his age mates used to go to the homeland and raid for cattle since they believed that the Abagusii were supposed to be farmers and not cattle keepers” (KII, Village man, 23<sup>rd</sup> August, 2018).

#### **3.4.4 Squatter Settlement**

Marx observes that, ideally the product of labour should remain with the labourer, as it is the way he creates himself and hence it is his essence. However, under alienated labour of capitalism, the proletariat does not have any right over his product, which is the result of his labour. He does not own the means of production and hence he is forced to exchange the product of his labour, which actually is his own essence for money or wages. His relationship with the product characterizes alienation. He has no right or control over the product and hence it appears before him as an alien object. It stands over and above him, opposed to him as an independent power.

The product, which is his essence, is separated from him in the act of production itself. Hence, he is alienated from himself in the very act of production. Since he has no power, right, or control of what he produces, he is unable to view his work as a part of his real self. The proletariat, as mentioned above, will then be exchanging his labour, his activity of production, which is his method of self-creation and creation of his own essence, for the wages he is paid for. Hence, the product appears before him as an alienated object. The money for which he has exchanged it becomes his enemy, as it

becomes the symbol of his alienation. The more he worships this money, the more he becomes alienated from himself (Avineri, 1970).

The FGD in Kipkelion narrated as follows:

We arrived at Kipkelion at a place called Sauri Yako in 1970. This was after we were welcomed by a D.O who was an Amogusii man and gave us land to farm and live as squatters. He paid for the farm where we were to farm and also helped us with food, settlement and clothing. We lived in Kipkelion town for a long time until 1980 when we were chased from the land which was claimed to be a government land property and the land was later given to Kipkelion Town Council. Some of the people chased from Kipkelion went and bought land in Mtaragoni and others went and bought in Maili Nne. Later on the same Gusii D.O in Kipkelion was able to identify a settlement scheme through a friend called Kenduywo who was a Kipsigis chief (a paramount Kipsigis chief) and was working there for the white settlers. We were able to go and work for the white settlers coffee farms. In the process we meet other workers who were working there before us. These were the Kipsigis from the neighbouring community surrounding the white settler's farm. As we worked and interacted with the Kipsigis in the Whiteman's farm we became friends and with time we were able to befriend the Kipsigis who sold for us land, back in their community. Since we were being paid as we worked in the white settler's farm we were able to buy from the Kipsigis and we met no reaction against us as we had formed a good friendship with them and we had used our own money to buy land from the Kipsigis who willingly agreed. Those workers amongst us who could not pay for the land bought from the Kipsigis for their settlement were chased away (FGDs, village men, 19<sup>th</sup> July, 2019).

### **3.5 Political Reasons for the Emergence of Abagusii Diaspora**

Political reasons refer to the factors that Abagusii encountered on the day-to-day governing activities as they lived and as they were through rules and regulations that had been laid down as a community. These reasons could be positive or negative but the researcher sought to find out both. Some of these reasons include influence by prominent political leaders, influence of their local leaders, hospitable Abagusii leaders who lived in Kipsigis land, among many others.

### **3.5.1 Constant External Attacks from the Neighbouring Kipsigis Community**

The indirect rule administered by the British colonialists later turned out to be the *divide and rule* strategy, which polarized the various ethnic groups in Kenya. The colonialists argued that, they tried to make a nation-state out of a hotchpotch of antagonistic and uncivilized African people but they failed in their mission. This was because the ethnic groups had age long hatred for one another and as soon as the colonial power went, the natives descended into barbarism, maiming and killing each other (Vaughan, 2000).

This explains why the whites settled between the Abagusii and Kipsigis to act as a buffer. The two communities could not unite as they lived on opposite directions and the Europeans at the centre. This in turn contributed to the subsequent incompatibility of these ethnic groups as actors of one nation-state called Kenya (Aseka, 1989).

Rothchild (1997) argues that, colonial powers promoted unity or disunity among ethnic groups depending on the security, economic and political gains to be made. The effect of encouraging these socially constructed identities was to create an incentive among elites to mobilize support along ethnic lines. The colonial powers used authoritarian rule where power was concentrated in the hands of the few whites. This system of “an economically privileged and politically powerful centre” became entrenched. The experiences from the colonial masters made the Africans learn that ethnic differences could be used to gain, keep power and wealth.

The researcher found out that the Kipsigis and Abagusii were in conflicts due to the scarce resources that the post-independence government of Kenya inherited from the British colonialists. The two communities under study were in conflict over resources

like the social amenities and infrastructure. This was due to the differential distribution of such resources in the colonial period, which were perfected in the post-independence era. The two communities were in competition over land. In the two communities, such a resource was communally owned, but the landholding system changed with colonialism. The British demarcated the land by having a boundary between them, which was inherited by the post-independence government. The boundary was to help the colonialists administer the two communities with ease the reason it was drawn along ethnic lines.

As much as colonialism contributed to further separation and hatred between the two ethnic communities, the post-independent government takes the larger blame in promoting the conflicts between the two communities.

A key informant reported that;

Colonialism only maintained the colonial boundaries and administrative structures but did not solve the problems that were created by colonialism like that of land. Thus, the government of Kenya failed to address issues to do with inter- community relations and cross border co-operation (KII, village man, 18<sup>th</sup> July, 2018).

Because of this, some Abagusii decided to migrate to Kalenjin land and live within the Kipsigis. This is because they knew the Kipsigis would not attack them or raid their cattle if they lived with them peacefully. The Kipsigis believed that their neighbours such as the Abagusii were supposed to be farmers and not to keep cattle. They saw that raiding the Abagusii for their cattle and attacking them was just okay and normal just like all the other years before. They saw it a way of earning a living and making themselves rich. This is because during the attacks the Kipsigis warriors took away the Abagusii cattle together with their food, women and children into captives who later on became part of their property. Despite the fact that the Kipsigis were the enemies who

kept on attacking the Abagusii, some Abagusii were bold enough to move into the Kipsigis land and live with them.

### **3.6 Abagusii Diaspora as Colonial Phenomena**

From the above discussion, the Abagusii diaspora in South Rift is partly a colonial phenomenon since the colonial policies and changes that occurred in this period prompted the movement of the Abagusii into South Rift. Their movement was brought about by the hostile environment created by the colonial masters through oppressive policies such as tax payment, forced labour, creation of reserves, among other forms of exploitations.

### **3.7 Abagusii Resistance Influence on their Migration in the Colonial Era**

The Abagusii communities were never happy with the new colonial changes that were implemented, as they felt exploited and their resources being used to benefit the colonial masters. These tough policies such as taxes introduced, *Kipande* system, forced labour, land alienation forced them to move to South Rift with the hope of getting a better and more conducive environment where they could get a livelihood and develop themselves. Those Abagusii who resisted the British Colonial rule were greatly affected as they rebelled against the imposed policies.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **MIGRATION OF THE ABAGUSII INTO SOUTH RIFT IN POST-COLONIAL ERA 1963-2007**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter examines the movement of the Abagusii during the post-colonial era. It also provides reasons for their movement to South Rift, post-colonial dynamics and their spread in diaspora.

#### **4.2 Movement of Abagusii in Post-Colonial Era**

Huntington (1973) declares that any attempt to explain migration in Kenya must contend with the ecological as well as cultural diversity within the country. These ecological conditions are often incorporated into economic models under the label of rural incomes. Higher rural incomes produce a substitution effect, which raises the attractiveness of remaining in the rural area. He continues to note that the strength of the income effect would depend upon the spread of the cash economy among other factors. This emphasizes that Abagusii movement is rural-rural migration. Their movement to South Rift continued during the post-colonial era as they were looking for fertile land. Due to overpopulation in their land, there was still movement of Abagusii to South Rift to occupy the lands that had been left by the white settlers.

#### **4.3 Post- Colonial Dynamics in South Rift**

After the colonialist left, there were many changes in the political, economic, and social structure of Kenya, due to a shift in power from the colonial masters to the African leadership. People were given freedom to move to wherever there was an



opportunity and this is how the Abagusii ended up in South Rift.

A key information informant asserted as shown in the following quotation:

We came to Mtaragoni in 1969 November. Then some of our members moved to Chebessi, Nyagacho and finally to Molo. There, we occupied the white settlers' (Briton's) land that had already left, which was no longer restricted. However, we met resistance from the Kipsigis, who were the original inhabitants (KII, church elder, 15<sup>th</sup> August, 2018).

#### **4.3.1 Kenyatta's Regime (1963-1978)**

According to *Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965*, the leaders who ascended to power in the dawn of independence played a great role in influencing the movement of the people in Kenya and Abagusii were no exception. The most important change that took place after Kenya became independent in 1963 under the leadership of Mzee Jomo Kenyatta who portrayed a good symbol of African nationalism. He brought stability to the country and defended western interests during his 15 years as Kenyan leader. He introduced the general policy change towards migration. With political freedom came freedom of migration; no more Passes (*Kipande*) to be carried and absolutely no restriction of movement whether to the urban areas or to any other rural places of choice. He used his authority to suppress political opposition, particularly from radical groups. He also inspired the spirit of *Harambee*, in that people had closed their ranks, and had to move forward as a national front to conquer the remaining evils of poverty, illiteracy, sickness and hunger in creating opportunities for all (<https://www.internationalbudget.org.pdf>).

With such freedom of movement, people started fighting over natural resources such as land, and other social amenities left by the white settlers. Hence, communities with leaders who had ascended to government positions of power benefited more than

others (<https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/kenyatta-freed> 2019). The Sessional Paper championed for equity and development in the country. It targeted political equality, social justices, human dignity including freedom of conscience, freedom from want, disease and exploitation, equal opportunities and equitably distribution. All these made it easy for the Abagusii to move to new areas since Africans had replaced colonial elitism. The researcher found out that with such freedom of movement after the colonial masters left, some of the Abagusii were able to move to South Rift.

#### **4.3.2 Moi Regime (1978–2002)**

Kenyatta died in 1978 and was succeeded by Daniel Arap Moi who ruled from 1978 to 2002. Being a member of the Kalenjin ethnic group, he quickly consolidated his position and governed in democratic manner. He also continued with most of the policies left by the late Mzee Jomo Kenyatta. By 1986, Moi had concentrated all the power and most of its attendant economic benefits. Moi's era was characterized by pragmatic policies. The vision on equal opportunities was blurred by the unbridled rewarding political cronies. Access to public offices has favoured those in power and those of their ethnic hue based on the politics of tribalism (<https://www.internationalbudget.org.pdf>).

Under his leadership, President Moi made it easy for people to acquire land in any part of the country. His political cronies were appointed into ministerial positions and issued with title deeds, which also contributed to some of the Abagusii to move to South Rift. While the free movement of people was still the general policy, there were more people moving to urban centres than those moving to rural areas. After tribal clashes of 1992, which came along with elections most people were chased to go back to their original homelands. To inspire confidence in the government, all those who

were displaced from their farms during tribal clashes were assisted to resettle back on their farms and appropriate security arrangements made for their peaceful stay. All this caused more migrations in Kenya either to rural or urban areas and the Abagusii were not left behind (<https://reliefweb.int/report/Kenya/Kenya-clashes-comission-urges-idp-returns>).

The researcher asserts that the education system in place at that time favoured those in the urban areas. Those finishing school feeling that the only places their skills would be rewarded would be in urban areas. This era prompted some Abagusii to migrate to South Rift in search of employment opportunities.

#### **4.3.3 Prominent Gusii Leaders who Worked in Government**

The oral interviews observed the great role played by some of the Gusii leaders that made it possible for the Abagusii to migrate and settle in diaspora. The prominent names of leaders include; Simeon Nyachae, George Anyona, and Samwel Ongeru among others. A key informant added that:

Through the then, Abagusii spokesperson Nyachae the Provincial Commissioner of the Rift Valley, some members of the Abagusii community got three locations of settlement. This was after Nyachae's negotiations with the then president, Mzee Jomo Kenyatta who was a District Commissioner. Nyachae steadily rose through the ranks within the provincial administration to the apex as a Provincial Commissioner (1965–1979), before moving on to become Chief Secretary in the civil service in both the Kenyatta and Moi regimes. Nyachae was elected Nyaribari-Chache MP in 1992 and later on served as cabinet minister for Finance and Agriculture. It is during this time that he was able to stand up for the Abagusii, who were being chased away by the Kipsigis after they were incited by some Kipsigis political leaders (KII, village elder, 12<sup>th</sup> August, 2018).

From the above, it is true to say that Mr Nyachae used his position to help the Abagusii to settle in the South Rift. He identified for them places to settle and provided them

with food as his brothers and sisters. He realized the scarcity of land back at home and acted.

#### **4.3.4 Efforts by Gusii Leaders Working in South Rift (Kericho) towards Abagusii Settlement**

Some of the Abagusii were able to settle in Kipsigis diaspora with the help of hospitable leaders who were also Abagusii but working in Kipsigis community. Kipsigis community had vast land and part of it was not occupied by then. With the right guidance and assistance some Abagusii were helped to get employment and later a place to settle in and start their lives.

The following narration from a village dweller reiterated that:

We arrived at Kipkelion at a place called Sauri Yako in 1970. This followed a welcome by a District Officer (who was a Gusii man) and gave us land to farm and live as squatters at first. The DO paid for the farm where we were to settle and helped us with food, and clothing. We lived in Kipkelion town for a long time until 1980 when we were chased from the land, which was claimed to be a government property, and the land was later given to Kipkelion Town Council. Some of the people chased from Kipkelion went and bought land in Mtaragoni and others went and bought in Maili Nne. Later on the same Gusii D.O in Kipkelion was able to identify a settlement scheme through a friend called Kenduywo who was a Kipsigis chief (a paramount Kipsigis chief) and was working there for the white settlers. We were able to go and work for the white settlers' in coffee farms. These are African lands that the white man occupied during colonial times. In the process, we met other workers who were working there before us. These were the Kipsigis from the neighbouring community surrounding the white settler's farm. As we worked and interacted with the Kipsigis in the Whiteman's farm, we became friends and with time, we were able to befriend the Kipsigis to sell us land, back in their community. Since we were being paid as we worked in the white settler's farm we were able to buy from the Kipsigis and we met no reaction against us as we had formed a good friendship with the Kipsigis and we had used our own money to buy land from the Kipsigis who willingly agreed to sell their land, (KII, village man, 22<sup>nd</sup> July, 2018).

From the field, the researcher noted that apart from Mr Simeon Nyachae, there were

other good and concerned persons from both communities. They helped the Abagusii to settle in South Rift, others even used their own money to feed them for many years. The D.Os and Chiefs played an important role in aiding Abagusii to settle hence it implies that Abagusii love one another more when they are out of their land and involve their members once opportunity comes on their way.

#### **4.4 Economic Dynamics**

Economically, some of the Abagusii benefited from the changes that took place in the economy of Kenya during independence; there was economic freedom in that one could own land anywhere in the Republic of Kenya without any restrictions and plant cash crops the way one wished. The Abagusii were not exempted from this since they were allowed to buy the leased land using their own money and efforts in South Rift. Being farmers, they were able to plant both cash crops and subsistence crop (Ochieng', 1997). They also kept animals that were left by the white settlers. This enabled them to improve their standard of living and call for more labour force from their original homeland as they practiced large scale farming. Through these, more and more Abagusii flew to South Rift during post-colonial era.

##### **4.4.1 Buying of Land**

Some of the Abagusii managed to migrate from ancestral land to diaspora through buying land leased by the white settlers after Kenya gained independence through shares.

This was revealed in a focus group discussion as follows:

We were able to come to this place through the shares that we bought through a man and village; elder called Obiri Ocheti from Gesema. Obiri had gone to visit a friend who was working on a white man's land. In the process, he learnt that the white man was selling the land and with this information, he came back home and urged people to buy the land as a group through shares. This was done through a group called Nyagacho Chisaro Chikunure that acted as the head title. The survey company divided the land bought through shares in 1985. This did not leave land for school, market centre and road space. Later again, the surveyor came and divided the land into 6 acres each and included space for social amenities. (FGDs, Clan elders, 16<sup>th</sup> August, 2018).

After independence Abagusii continued buying land in various places in the South-Rift. Owing to the fact that Abagusii were farmers in nature and their place was overpopulated. They wanted more land for doing various agricultural activities. This explains why the Abagusii are spread all over Kenya and outside and have land in different places such as Maasai land, Western Region, Botswana Canada among others. However, they were met with negative reaction as explained by a participant in the study.

Our parents were against the strangers coming and occupying our lands. Thus, we were taught to be protective against any stranger on our land. They feared that if Abagusii settled in our lands their population will outgrow ours and they will start taking control over Kipsigis land. Thus, wherever the Abagusii came to our land they were chased away (KII, Village man, 27<sup>th</sup> August, 2018).

#### **4.4.2 Entrepreneurship**

Some of the Abagusii landed in South Rift through entrepreneurship. The main activity behind their migration was to conduct various trading activities both in urban and rural areas. A participant reported the following during an oral interview: "We came to South Rift to do business and earn a living by activities such as operating shops, as business hawkers, brokers' vendors and retailers among many others (KII, village

woman, 18<sup>th</sup> August 2018). Abagusii's entrepreneurial nature was evident to the researcher during data collection and interviews; they could be seen engaging in various business activities.

#### **4.5 Social Dynamics**

The social dynamics during the migration of the Abagusii into South Rift in post-colonial era 1963-2007 revolved around their wellbeing. Security concerns took centre stage as is discussed below.

##### **4.5.1 Security**

Security is a major contributing factor to the emergence of Abagusii society before colonialism (1895-1963). Every individual admires to stay where there is security. Abagusii were encouraged back to South Rift after being chased during political violence because of good security they were promised. Their prominent leaders during the colonial period also provided it (<https://reliefweb.int/report/Kenya/Kenya-clashes-comission-urges-idp-returns>)

One participant who emphasized on the issues of security said this:

Before settlement, our parents preferred places that were free from frequent attacks, cattle raiding or raids within the Kipsigis themselves. They were told by a fellow Abagusii who had once gone to stay and work among the Kipsigis that they can live with the Kipsigis peacefully with no attacks and their cattle won't be raided by the Kipsigis so long as they cooperated and lived according to the Kipsigis way of living. He learnt that the Kipsigis did not attack or raid the people living within but rather their neighbours outside (KII, village woman, 4<sup>th</sup> August, 2018).

The researcher concluded that some of the Abagusii ended up in South Rift as a result of continued search for employment to better their living standards. This worked for

them even though it was after a period of struggle. The Abagusii that worked and lived in the white men's land as squatter were able to save some of the money from their wages. They befriended the Kipsigis who had land to sell to them that is how some ended up living in Kipsigis land even after the end of the colonial period (Field data, 2018).

#### **4.6 Settlement Areas of Abagusii in Diaspora**

During the study, the researcher learnt that as Abagusii were moving and spreading in diaspora, they met different reactions from the Kipsigis who were their hosts. The Kipsigis were very protective and possessive when it came to land issues because land was one of the very important assets valued in any African community. Some Abagusii had a rough time as they tried spreading and settling among the Kipsigis while others were welcomed.

The Abagusii settled in various places in diaspora when they migrated to South Rift (Kericho County). This place of settlement is where they ended up after migrating to Kericho in search of employment opportunities, land, or peaceful environment among others.

Ondieki points out that Abagusii came to Mtaragoni in November 1969. They settled in Cheese then moved to Nyagacho then Molo. Later on, the willing members came and bought land in the following areas: Mtaragoni, Kiengeti, Katanne, Nyairobi, Munyanda, Kasheen (Kikuyu name) Kamutengo, Muraoo that were the lands bought at Ksh.5200 per share from the Kikuyus and settled in these areas. Other areas of settlement by the Abagusii diaspora were Chepseon, Roret, Litein, Kapsoit, Kaitui, Londiani, Tindaret, Chakaik, Ngoina road, Tebesonik, Kapkatet, Koru, Nyagacho, and



Brook (KII, village elder 16<sup>th</sup> August 2018).

#### **4.6.1 How the Settlement Areas in Diaspora were Identified**

Abagusii identified their place of settlement in diaspora in several ways. Through this study, it was confirmed that most of the places where the Abagusii settled in diaspora is where they had gone to look for employment opportunities, better living, land, better social amenities.

#### **4.7 Reaction by the Host Communities towards the Abagusii**

Although some were well received and easily fitted in the new land, the Abagusii met a lot of resistance in Kipsigis land. Others were not well received and they were chased and displaced by the Kipsigis especially when they were incited by some influential political leaders who claimed that the Abagusii had come to take the land (KII, village man, 19<sup>th</sup> August 2018).

The bad relations between the two communities began during their migration, spread and settlement. When the Kipsigis came across the Abagusii at Kabianga, they started attacking them as enemies, due to their traditions which perceives strangers as enemies. The Abagusii were later on driven out by the Kipsigis. They moved and a fraction of the Abagusii moved to the current West Mugirango where the Kipsigis pursued them Ochieng', (1994). This was the focal point of a major clash between the Kipsigis and Abagusii. During the battle, the Abagusii attacked and overran the Kipsigis. The battle was named "esaosao" due to the many deaths that led to the defeat of the Kipsigis. The event still evokes bitter memories that have been the main cause of animosity between the rival sides (*The People Sunday*, 17 June 2012).

Some political leaders claimed that the Abagusii were witches, so they were chased from Chepsir to the Chepson. The Abagusii had already planted maize in the place but they had to leave it thus leaving without cash crops (KII, church leader, 14<sup>th</sup> July 2018). This was contrary from what the researcher was informed by one respondent that, there was witchcraft conducted in diaspora by those Abagusii who were excommunicated from their homeland. Once in foreign land they started it again hence chased back and their houses put on fire.

Issues of government officials' incitement on matters of land were also captured by this study. For instance, in a related research by Omolo (1990), it is recorded that, a Kipsigis pioneer politicians bravely told a huge crowd during a political rally in Kericho that those who wanted land for free should as well go to the Sahara Desert where there was plenty of land for free. The rally was held at Sosiot trading centre in Belgut, Kericho district. The tough Kalenjin politician by then under Political Alliance party was affiliated to KADU, had just won a bruising election battle during the snap elections. The then Governor of Kenya, Sir Patrick Benson on a KADU ticket, had called the election. A focus group discussion revealed the following:

In the 1992 and 1997 clashes between the Abagusii and Kipsigis, they forced us to flee our homes for safety. We stayed at Manga girls' school and Manga police station for some time as we waited for more police to be deployed in order to escort us to our ancestral homes. This was because it was dangerous to travel on road; moreover, there were no vehicles for us to board. We had to stay in congested make-shift structures and homes far from the border and the old men, women and children got sick. Additionally, we suffered from food shortage because many of us were caught unawares and our food stores had been torched or looted by the Kipsigis (FGDs, Clan elders, 25<sup>th</sup> July 2018).

Even though that was the case, in the 1992 and 1997 clashes between the Kipsigis and Abagusii, the Abagusii warriors were able to get to their homes. They torched the Kipsigis houses, which forced them to move to further places like Ndanai and

Kaplomboi for safety. This was the case on the ground, for children, the aged, and women they sought refuge in schools, Ndanai police station, and churches. Here, the police protected them. However, they greatly suffered from a humanitarian crisis as they were congested which meant that, they could not get access to the basic needs.

This concurred with Osero who was a victim, due to poor sanitation and lack of adequate water. There was an outbreak of cholera and dysentery in the camps. The warriors and some men who decided to take advantage of the situation also impregnated some of the women and girls whether consciously or subconsciously (KII, village man, 26<sup>th</sup> July 2018).

This meant that, both the Kipsigis and the Abagusii were displaced by the conflicts between them, which had turned manifest in 1992, and 1997. The displacement came before the actual polling day and after, and was aimed at benefitting some individuals as another section of this chapter will discuss. However, the displacement came with a number of consequences on the affected people. In the congested areas where they assembled for safety, they were welcomed rudely with a humanitarian crisis. They were faced with hunger due to lack of enough food, as many may not have carried the food while escaping from their enemies. There was shortage of clean water, better housing, sanitation facilities, medical facilities, and other social amenities. This eventually, exposed the displaced populations to some diseases that took advantage of the unhygienic conditions under which they lived. As much as the conditions were worse, still the Abagusii went back to SR to look for more land.

Apollos (2010) observes the refugees as well as the internally displaced persons often tend to live with stigmatization or marginalization that tends to be associated with the status. The displacement of persons from both communities could be explained by Kaufman's symbolic/emotional choice theory. Kaufman (2001) observes that, conflict is a product of symbols that define a group and to which its members respond. They

reflect both interest and value: a struggle for security, status, and ultimately group survival is at the same time a struggle against hostile, evil, or sub-human forces. Thus, in the process of struggling for security and group survival, the Kipsigis and the Abagusii came into conflicts. As a result, some of them were displaced by the members of their perceived enemy group; owing to the group mythologies that justified enmity between the two communities. The idea of displacing their “enemy group” was all aimed at their survival as a community. This could be achieved by sending their opponents away from them as they considered them hostile or evil.

Other Abagusii on the other hand, lived well and was able to adjust to live with the Kipsigis well. This is because in the process of working with the Kipsigis in the white settlers farms they created good friendship and were able to convince them to sell them part of their land where they could establish their homes and dwelling places.

We were able to live well with the Abagusii, though we were not that friendly. They had to keep their space and we did keep ours. If they crossed our path then conflict arose (KII, village man, 28<sup>th</sup> August 2018).

#### **4.8 Connection of Abagusii in Diaspora with their Ancestral Gusii Land**

The researcher concluded that, though Abagusii in diaspora were far away from their home, they still had a lot of connection with their original homeland. They carried with them their traditions and continued to practice them in diaspora. Though not all, there are those who were received and welcomed well by Kipsigis who saw them as fellow friends and tried to earn a living together just like any other people. This group are the Abagusii who befriended the Kipsigis when they were working with them in the White settlers farms and later on convinced them to sell for them some land.

However, there are those who had no connection with their original homeland. This is because some of them were running away from some problems such as witchcraft, diseases, famine, unemployment, ex-communication, theft among others. Since they were evading many challenges back home, they saw no need of going back or being connected to their ancestral land

**CHAPTER FIVE**  
**CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF ABAGUSII IN DIASPORA:**  
**SOUTH- RIFT**

**5.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses some of the challenges and opportunities that the Abagusii in diaspora came across in South-Rift. Abagusii in diaspora did face many challenges as they moved and settled in Kipsigis land in South-Rift. Despite the many challenges, they had also some opportunities too. This means that, even though they had gone through many problems during their migration and settlement in diaspora, the Abagusii finally enjoyed some of their struggles and efforts.

**5.2 Challenges Faced by the Abagusii in Diaspora**

A challenge is something that is difficult or that acts as a barrier to something or someone. Della (1995) postulates that “something challenging” is one that is demanding and stimulatingly difficult. Through the field data, the researcher was able to find out several challenges that affected Abagusii in diaspora. These challenges emerged during their migration, spread, and settlement in South Rift, as they wanted to work in the white settlers’ farm or seek for settlement land. They can be categorized into two: political and socio-economic challenges. As much as they were faced with these challenges, they were able to counter them and adjust to them and finally they managed to move on and live there.

### **5.2.1 Political Challenges**

The following were the challenges that the Abagusii in the diaspora faced in relation to their political affiliation and that of their hosts (the Kipsigis) in South Rift. Some political challenges included effects of politics of exclusionary. The introduction of multiparty democracy caused a lot of hatred and animosity, incitement from Kipsigis politicians who advocated for the eviction of the Abagusii in the diaspora. Conflicts over land issues, appointive position such as chiefs, D.Os, D.Cs ([https://reliefweb.int/report/Kenya/ Kenya- clashes-commission-urges-idp-returns](https://reliefweb.int/report/Kenya/Kenya-clashes-commission-urges-idp-returns))

#### **5.2.1.1 Politics of Exclusion**

One factor that promoted animosity between the two communities is politics of exclusion. This is where one community was perceived to be given some privileges at the expense of the other. KII observes, during Kenyatta's regime, the two communities were treated equally as none was favoured at the expense of the other. However, during Moi's regime, the situation changed, as the Kipsigis were perceived to have more privileges than the Abagusii in their homeland. This was attributed to the fact that most of them were not empowered with education. The few who benefited received material benefits like loans, food aid and farm inputs. The president then embarked on the mission of empowering the Kalenjin communities with education through such strategies like, the quota system and bursaries for secondary and college students. This was to prepare them for white-collar jobs in his administration, which came to be after sometime. After some few years in presidency, Moi embarked on promoting Kalenjin hegemony in the government. He did this by appointing many Kalenjin to ministerial positions, government jobs especially in state corporations and recruitment into the armed forces (KII, clan elder, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2018).

The researcher defers with this interviewee on the line of bursaries. Bursaries were issued to all Kenyans; however, it could be that during that time the Kalenjins community was given the lion share. It is African culture that one must feed his children with good and enough food before gives it to the neighbours (KII Village elder, 8<sup>th</sup> July 2018). In terms of education, with the introduction of 8.4.4 system every child in the republic was given opportunity to go to school (<https://www.internationalbudget.org/pdf>)

The above assertion is in line with the work of Korwa & Munyae (2001) who noted that, Moi appointed Kalenjins in key posts among others, Agricultural Development Corporation (ADC), Kenya Commercial Bank (KCB), Kenya Posts and Telecommunications (KPT), Central Bank of Kenya (CBK), Kenya Industrial Estates (KIE), National Cereals, and Produce Board (NCPB), Kenya Grain Growers Co-operative Union (KGGCU) to mention the few.

Field data collected the following views from a participant about the politics of exclusion as shown below:

Neither the Abagusii nor the Kipsigis received any favours from Mzee Kenyatta's regime. However, in the Moi regime, it was rampant as the Kipsigis and other Kalenjins were given many benefits like farm inputs, government jobs and other deliberate assistance. Their land just next to ours was declared to be a hardship area by the president so that, it could legitimize the state assistance offered to them. In our community, we received aid from the government in the 1980s when there was severe famine in 1992 and 1997 after the clashes when we were given food, blankets, and farm inputs (KII, village man, 15<sup>th</sup> August 2018).



Another participant added that:

People like us struggled to take our children for further studies in countries like India so that they could get better jobs when they came back home. However, we were met with frustrations and hopelessness when they could not be employed by the government. This made us bitter and envious of our hosts who were employed even with the basic primary education. In our location there was only one dispensary serving people from all the way from Mtaragoni, Lelu, Chagoror, and Chebesi that was poorly equipped but among the Kipsigis they had better equipped dispensaries where we sometimes went for medication like Kipkelion dispensary (KII, Female participant, 12<sup>th</sup> July 2018).

Korwa & Munyae (2001) observed that there was inequitable distribution of resources to all Kenyans during the Moi's regime. They indicate that in order to bolster his grip of power, Moi embarked on the gradual "*Kalenjinization*" of the public and private sectors from the 1980s. He began to "*de-Kikuyunize*" the civil service and the state owned enterprises previously dominated by the Kikuyu ethnic group during Kenyatta's regime.

The theory of Historical Materialism fits into this situation, because as the foregoing findings illustrate, there was a perceived differential distribution of resources between the two communities. The Abagusii felt that the Kipsigis had more access to most resources especially economic and political power especially during the Moi's regime than the Abagusii had. This may have made the relations between them sour. As the Kipsigis put efforts in protecting their privileges on one hand, the Abagusii on the other hand struggled to get access to some of those privileges accorded to their neighbours but denied to them. This competition may have led to bitterness and tension between the two communities. At any rate, that does not negate the fact that, there were other Kipsigis men and women who did not benefit from the Moi's government. It does not therefore mean that the two KANU governments excluded Abagusii in totality (Korwa & Munyae ,2001). The researcher found out that the quota system, bursaries,

ministerial appointments, and government jobs in state corporations and the armed forces were not preserved of the Kalenjin only. The other communities including the Abagusii were also considered in such opportunities. Some Abagusii also benefitted from ministerial positions like Simeon Nyachae, Sam Ongeru and Zachary Onyonka.

Nevertheless, whether one community disproportionately got more privileges than the other did, the fact remains that there was competition over resources, which could be either intra- or inter-ethnic. As one group struggled to get access to the resources that they perceived to be denied to them but given to their neighbours, the privileged group also strove to protect their positions and privileges. This could be because of the threat the “out-group” posed to them of losing their privileges and positions; hence the need to protect them at all costs. This led to tension between the two groups in competition.

Makanda (2010) observes that, biases and prejudices in development priorities have followed the influence of ethnic identities making it an institutionalized issue. Some ethnic groups are perceived to be privileged while others are underprivileged leading to the present atmosphere of mistrust and suspicion among regions and ethnic groups. It has made ethnic identity a form of social capital that can be used to influence or determine people’s social and economic prospects.

The researcher noted that the problem of favouring one ethnic group is common in every ethnic community where their members are in top positions. The problem has continued up to present times. The theory of Historical Materialism is compatible with this study because within it there is class struggle over the production of materials for human existence.

Muhula (2009) supports this assertion by arguing that, historically, political patronage

has reflected regional access to political power. The post-independent Kenyan constitution conferred vast powers on the president. These included the powers to allocate ministerial positions and make appointments to constitutionally protected offices.

Successive regimes therefore entrenched their rule, assigned strategic administrative positions and directed political resources to supportive provinces (regions). Some of the powers that the president exercised may have promoted political patronage during Kenyatta's regime and reflected in the Moi's regime. Other express powers extended to; appointment of the Chief Justice and other judges of the High court, control of the police, civil service, and the national government and power to declare an emergency and detain people without trial.

From the field data, the researcher noted that, these powers encouraged political patronage, which reflected access of resources to regions. Those who supported the president were rewarded with some resources to their communities, which may have led to bitterness among those perceived to be rebels to the government, and their communities. The feeling of marginalization and exclusion by the government made such groups of people live with bitterness and resentment. These emotions could be easily ignited by insensitive influential people in those communities against those whom they perceived to be more privileged than they could.

Murungi (2000) argues that at the root of ethnicity lies the question of economic security. Open ethnic conflicts arise between privileged ethnic groups who have benefited from a regime they seek to protect and perpetuate the oppressed and economically deprived ethnic groups who seek to change the political system. This leads to permanent political tensions because each group feels that it can only win if

the other group loses. These facts could be attributed to the perception on the part of the public that, given the power of the President and the political class everything flows not from laws but from the Presidential power and personal decisions. This also has led the public to believe a person from their own tribe must be in power, both to secure for them benefits and as a defensive strategy to keep off other ethnic groups, from taking over power, jobs, land, and other entitlements. This applies to Abagusii who were in South Rift in that they were not able to be elected to positions of power because they were a minority.

### **5.2.2 Re-introduction of Multiparty Democracy**

Multiparty democracy was also cited to be one of the political challenges that Abagusii faced in diaspora while in South Rift This is an admission they were in other people`s land. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, there was a political wave towards democratization in the world. This was also the case in Kenya as a number of stakeholders mounted pressure on the Moi government to introduce multiparty democracy in Kenya (<https://reliefweb.int/report/Kenya/Kenya-clashes-comission-urges-idp-returns>).

This pressure was based on the human rights abuses, which were perpetrated by the regime that existed then. This pressure resulted to the repealing of *Section 2A* of the Kenyan constitution in 1991, which subsequently led to the 1992 multiparty general elections. Section 2A was included in the constitution in 1982, an amendment that was to make Kenya a de-jure one party state. Section 2A stated that, “there shall be in Kenya only one political party, the Kenya African National Union” (KANU, 2001). After it was repealed in 1991 to introduce multiparty democracy, it came to be inserted in the constitution in 1997 as *Section 1A* which stated that, “the Republic of Kenya

shall be a multi-party democratic state” (FGDs, Clan elders 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2018).

As the move to political pluralism became increasingly probable, senior politicians in many political rallies issued inflammatory statements and utterances, asking people to go back to their ancestral lands or they be forced out. The advent of the violent ethnic clashes closely followed these rallies (Human Rights Watch, 1993).

As Osamba (2001) notes, the Kalenjin vented their anger on other ethnic groups whom they viewed as supporters of the political opposition. The Theory of Historical Materialism is evident in the study because that grabbing in the theory is reflected between the two communities, which feels that one is favoured more than the other is. Omwoyo (1990) indicates that, it was aimed at disenfranchising the Abagusii together with other communities who were perceived to be sympathizers of pluralism. This then led to the eruption of ethnic clashes between the two communities. This argument received support from the politicians and other government officials who supported KANU especially from Kipsigis. They told the people that those who supported multiparty politics were against KANU and Moi as a person. The aim behind this allegedly was to overthrow Moi from power. The Kipsigis felt threatened and began fighting the Abagusii who were living in Kipsigis land together with other communities not in support of KANU (KII, Male, 26<sup>th</sup> July 2018). From the field data, the researcher found out many people lost their lives, people were displaced, families separated and many children were left orphans not only in Kipsigis and Abagusii ethnic communities but also all over Kenya in the period between 1963 and 2007.

As Murungi (2000) argues, the *laissez-faire* politics of a multi-party democracy has been used to deliberately exploit the cultural differences of ethnic groups and to fan tribal hatred for the selfish benefit of politicians. Kenyan intellectuals and opposition

leaders adduced overwhelming evidence to show that ethnic clashes were an artificial creation of a few self-centred politicians. These were those who were opposed to political pluralism and development of democratic institutions and culture.

Nyukuri (1997) notes that, the misunderstanding of pluralism and *majimboism* (federalism) was a source of ethnic conflicts in Kenya. The re-introduction of multi-party politics in Kenya in the early 1990s had far reaching consequences one of which was the eruption of ethnic clashes. Moi had predicted that the return of multi-party system would result in an outbreak of tribal violence that would destroy the nation (Human Rights Watch/Africa November, 1993). It was also because of the misconception of pluralism and *majimboism* by leaders from the ruling party and opposition parties as well as the public.

The advent of pluralism in Kenya was misconceived as the advent for democracy as implied in some of the political slogans and ideologies propagated by the various pressure groups and political parties that were formed in the early, 1990s. The so-called champions of these political parties and pressure groups never took enough time to explain to their euphoric supporters the meaning and practice of pluralism, and hence the subsequent confusion, conflict as well as instability. The re-introduction of pluralism in Kenyan politics ignited the pre-existing bad relations between the two communities that had been created in the pre-colonial period and perfected in the colonial and post-independence periods. The repealing of Section 2A of the Kenyan constitution in 1991 saw the formation of other political parties besides KANU.

The researcher notes that, most leaders of the new political parties drew membership from their ethnic groups. This meant that, Kenyans got divided along ethnic lines based on party affiliation. This was further compounded by the information the citizenry

received from their political elites most of whom misunderstood the concept of pluralism. This eventually misguided the electorate; hence the eruption of inter-ethnic animosity and violence between the communities who were not in political alignment. This explained the inter-ethnic conflicts between the Abagusii and the Kipsigis during the electioneering periods of 1992 and 1997.

In conclusion, the Abagusii in diaspora were affected by the re-introduction of multipartism. Though they viewed the Kipsigis as their ethnic rivals, they had no option but to just continue living with them. However, they knew where their political allegiance and affiliation was lying. This was a very crucial political challenge as it was strange how two different ethnic groups with different political affiliations managed to live and co-exist together despite the great and deep rift between them.

### **5.2.3 Political Incitement**

In the traditions of the two communities, they had prejudices and stereotypes against each other, which provided a fertile ground for incitement by politicians. A participant in the study also says this in the following statement.

Most politicians incited the two communities against each other. They took advantage of the stereotypes and prejudices that existed between the two communities to ensure that the two communities were not united. The two communities considered each other to be traditional enemies as the Kipsigis referred to the Abagusii as “*gosobindet*” to mean enemy while the Abagusii referred to the Kipsigis as “*abaibi*” to mean thieves (KII, male participant, 6<sup>th</sup> July 2018).

The researcher noted that, during the election campaign periods, politicians of the region openly referred to the other community by negative nicknames. This gave the people of their community the legitimacy to refer and believe that the statements from the politicians were true. Even though the two communities interacted in trade and

other ways, deep down in their hearts they considered each other enemies. This belief was a fertile ground to be utilized by the politicians and at times could provoke bitter emotions which led to war between the two communities.

The researcher notes from the field data, that the incitement based on land led to conflicts between the two communities. It was true that the two communities competed over resources more especially land. These conflicts could be avoided if some of the politicians could not have made their communities aware of the scarce resources between them. The insensitive politicians utilized the opportunities they got in the political space to express themselves. This was not because they cared so much about their communities but rather it was aimed at gaining political mileage. It was an opportunity to popularize themselves among the electorates so that they could get their support or endorsement to a political office. That meant that, it was all based on personal and selfish motives of some of the politicians. The misperceptions, prejudices, stereotypes, and misinformation of the people by politicians may have led to bitter emotions, which were utilized by the insensitive politicians.

Politicians played a major role in the conflicts between the Abagusii and Kipsigis South Rift. On one hand, the Kipsigis politicians told their relatives how part of Abagusii land belonged to them and on the other hand, Abagusii politicians told their relatives to defend their land. This worsened during the electioneering period when the politicians were marketing themselves to the voters (FGD, Clan elders 25<sup>th</sup> July 2018).

This therefore meant that, the conflicts between the two communities were products of the underlying factors that the politicians took advantage of the situation. The resources especially land, was and is still a thorny issue in the history of the two communities. Some insensitive politicians incited their electorate and manipulated the competition



over this means of production in addition to the pre-existing prejudices and stereotypes. This may have led to more animosity between the two communities that may have culminated into the occasional manifest conflicts.

From the above, Historical Materialism Theory easily explains the causes of development and change in human society as human beings collectively produce the necessities of life (Livingstone ,1975). The difference in Abagusii and the Kipsigis social classes and relationship between them along with the political structures and ways of thinking in society, are founded on and reflect contemporary economic activity that was brought about by the political favourism of each ethnic group. Human consciousness is a part of the materialist conception of history and has an application in our study since the attitude and the feelings of enmity between Abagusii and the Kipsigis is clearly brought out. From the above it is true that, human production is geared towards human reproduction and in this way, change in human societies is easily made comprehensible.

This concurs with what the researcher found from the field, there were many displacements within the diaspora in order to settle. They were chased from one area to another area such as Ndanai and Kaplomboi while others camped at Manga hills and Manga police station.

#### **5.2.4 Frequent Attacks**

Since time memorial, there used to be frequent attacks among the two communities. Key informants indicate that there were frequent clashes between the Kipsigis and Abagusii. He pointed out one battle where the Abagusii attacked and overran the Kipsigis. The battle was named, “esaosao” due to the many deaths that led to the defeat

of the Kipsigis.

The event still evokes bitter memories that have been the main cause of animosity between the rival sides. As the Abagusii moved and settled at the South of Kericho, they found themselves in a difficult situation. They found out that, they were surrounded by the Kipsigis, Maasai, Luo and Abakuria (KII, church elder, 20<sup>th</sup> August 2018).

In the process of adjusting themselves to co-exist with their neighbours, colonialism made its way to the country. It never took long before the Abagusii and Kipsigis started feeling the heat of colonialism as the white settlers arrived in the Sotik highlands. Land alienation took place and this greatly affected them.

### **5.2.5 Development of Ethnicity**

The ethnic conflicts between the two communities led to the development of negative ethnicity among the young generation. This was well reiterated by a key informant who narrated as follows:

My children were really affected by the conflicts between the two communities, as their mother is a Kipsigis. When the Kipsigis raided the Abagusii, they said that the Kipsigis were bad people but that is the tribe of their mother. When they visited their maternal grandparents, they also took sides with them against the Abagusii, where their father belonged. I do not understand how it will be in the future when they grow up because they have never understood how their parents could marry one another and yet their communities were enemies (KII, Church elder, and 24<sup>th</sup> July 2018).

The researcher noted that children were brought up knowing that the other community was an enemy. This was due to the constant raids, fights, prejudices and stereotypes the children were exposed to by their communities and parents concerning the other community.

Nyukuri (1997) notes, this has led to a cultural and identity crisis especially for the children of the ethnic groups. Children born of parents from the warring ethnic groups identify with either the paternal or maternal side depending on where the pressure is most. This trend created a new dimension of societal lives where children (potential marriage partners) are discouraged from engaging in any affairs with the “enemy” ethnic group (Nyukuri, 1997). This has affected the inter-ethnic marriages and interactions not only in the rural areas but also in urban centres.

As discussed earlier in chapter one, the two communities had stereotypes which justified hostility against each other. Resentment developed among children who were products of intermarriages between the two communities. This was because in the traditions of the two communities, they were enemies; a fact that the children were exposed to. This could have discouraged some of them from marrying members of the ethnic group that they did not support which could be either from the side of the father or mother. The relations between children from the two communities also became sour as they considered each other as enemies. This found its way in places like schools; which could explain why some of the schools became mono-ethnic with time.

### **5.3 Opportunities**

Della (1995) defines opportunity as either; a good chance; a favourable occasion, or a chance or opening offered by circumstances, or good fortune. In the settlement of the Abagusii in the Kipsigis diaspora, a number of opportunities came along. Though they were faced with many challenges, they enjoyed some opportunities which some of them could not access or get in their ancestral land. These opportunities have been discussed in two categories; that is in terms of the socio-economic and political opportunities.

### **5.3.1 Social Amenities Accessibility**

Nyukuri (1995) argues that, at the dawn of independence, African leaders ascended to governmental structures, which had been intended to preserve the colonial administrative legacy. These leaders were armed with the Western Constitution and ill-trained work force to soldier on and make provisions for the enlarged nation-state, now encompassing diverse ethnic groups with variegated interests. As if this was not enough, Kenya, like most other African countries, inherited from the colonialists' scarce national resources, inadequate infrastructure, inadequate human resource capacity, inadequate capital, inadequate education, and health facilities, among others.

The scramble for the scarce national resources and facilities intensified and ethnicity became the main vehicle through which the dominance and preservation of power as well as resources could be achieved. The ruling elites in post-colonial Kenya have often relied heavily on ethnicity to remain in leadership positions or settle a dispute with their perceived enemies.

Abagusii in diaspora were able to enjoy and access these social amenities such as schools, dispensaries hospitals and transport means. This opportunity played a major role in being a social equalizer between Abagusii and Kipsigis. This is because Abagusii children later on were the most educated in the society and after some time they started getting white collar jobs and very strong political positions such the Gusii District officer who welcomed some homeless Abagusii to Kipkelion and helped them to settle down in the foreign land. Abagusii never took these opportunities of social amenities accessibility for granted and given an opportunity, they considered their own

kind first in many cases for employment, land purchase, and settlement among others.

### 5.3.2 Basic Needs Availability

The two communities also engaged in trade especially at Kamukunji, Ndanai, Ole Miriri and Centre markets. According to a key information informant;

During the Kenyatta and Moi regimes, we co-existed with the Abagusii irrespective of some instances of animosity between us. From long time ago even before independence, we used to sell our items and even cattle to them in exchange for food during periods of famine more especially maize, beans and finger millet. We used to trade [we still trade] with them at Kapsoit, Kipkelion, Mtaragoni, Roret and Chepseon markets. Our women went [and still go] with donkeys to Gusiiland to buy the cereals from house to house. Although sometimes they feared coming to Ndanai when there was tension between us or when we had initiated our boys (KII, Male, 26<sup>th</sup> August 2018).

Another KII also supported this assertion by observing that;

In most instances there was coexistence between Abagusii and Kipsigis. We took our milk to KCC for weighing (process of receiving and ascertaining the quantities of the, milk delivered by a farmer trader) when we were in Kipsigis land at a place called Centre. This was because it became difficult and hectic for us to take milk to Kahawa shopping centre for weighing because it is far. Our trading activities were concentrated in Roret and Mabasi markets, which are in Kipsigis land (KII, Male, 26<sup>th</sup> August 2018).

This assertion has been supported by Omwoyo's (2000) work which noted that, items such as pots, arrows, spears, *pangas* and swords were acquired from Abagusii in exchange for beads and other ornaments. Much of this barter trade took place in peace time. The Kipsigis land appears to have experienced periods of epidemics, drought, and famine in the second half of the nineteenth Century. In such situations, the Kipsigis people went to Abagusii for food. Such food was purchased in exchange either with livestock or other trade items. These assertions therefore indicate that, the two communities engaged in trading activities even from the pre-colonial period. Even

though they co-existed peacefully in such an economic activity, it did not mean that they could not disagree on some issues. As illustrated, the trading activities were restricted to peaceful time, as they could not engage in the same when there was fear and tension, which is common in every society.

In farming activities, the two communities interacted cordially and peacefully. The fact that the Kipsigis economy is skewed towards livestock keeping, most of their land was uncultivated as it was left for grazing livestock. Due to the reducing livestock population, some of the Kipsigis started cultivating the land for food production while others leased it out to their neighbours\_ Abagusii. Abagusii sought for land to lease because of their growing population, which rendered the available land. However, Abagusii could not purchase the land from the Kipsigis across the border for fear of losing it during times of manifest conflicts. The idea of land leasing became more prevalent after 1990s due to decline of livestock among the Kipsigis (Omwoyo, 1990).

From the FGDs, it was brought to the fore that, the Kipsigis women came to work on the Abagusii farms especially in weeding of finger millet and maize in exchange for food. This was mostly the grains. The Kipsigis men who owned tractors were also hired to plough land for Abagusii at fair prices than their Abagusii counterparts (FGDs, Clan elders, 14<sup>th</sup> August 2018).

The researcher indicates that, this co-operation between the two communities can be said to be of a symbiotic nature as both of them benefited for survival. This is because the farm produce from the land cultivated by Abagusii more especially the grains benefited both ethnic groups. As illustrated earlier, the Kipsigis could get these grains through trade or by providing labour on Abagusii farms in exchange for the grains. The mode of exchange was barter trade. For example, an informant recounted that; there

was a family that used to give the Kipsigis family two bags of maize annually and continuously for two years to be given a cow by the Kipsigis family. When the deal was over after the three years the Abagusii family were given the cow partially, that is; only to get the milk. Eventually, the cow would be handed over to the Abagusii effusively, amid some traditions so that it could be more productive and beneficial to the Kisii family.

He continued to state that, those who were economically well off and had finances would use money as a mode of exchange though they were very few. This came by as the trade in Gusii diaspora developed from barter trade after the coming of the colonial master's capitalist economy to currency trade.

Abagusii in diaspora had enough food since they were farmers who practiced mixed agriculture and were industrious in nature. To support this, they went ahead to secure land for conducting various agricultural activities as well as building the granaries where they would store their food for future use. The prevailing conducive climate in the Kipsigis land with deep red volcanic soil received reliable rainfall which boosted their farming activities as including food production. They also hunted wild animals and birds as well as gathered edible fruits and vegetables in the forest to supplement their food supply.

This is supported by the views of a participant who said:

The climate was conducive for farming which was our major economic activity. We came with our own food to last us enough time until we managed to grow and harvest the ones that we had planted in our new places of settlement. When the food that we had come with was almost depleted our parents or some other elderly Abagusii went to get more food from our ancestral Gusii land.

Water was there in plenty and most of the water was tapped or fetched

from the river. Some people were employed in the coffee plantations, they were paid, and some used the money they were paid for buying food when they had ran out of food. When digging our farms, we were using fork-jembes because the ground around the area was stony. We planted cash crops and food crops and had our own plantations e.g. maize plantation. Through trade we managed to obtain various types of food from exchanging what we had and what we did not have (some people opened shops and others traded in the open air market) maize was the main cash crop though there was sweet potatoes, pyrethrum and coffee. Grinding maize was done the traditional way with using two stones and using water-propelled grinding millers. This gave us flour that was used for cooking ugali (FGDs, Church members, 17<sup>th</sup> August 2018).

### **5.3.3 Intermarriages**

The Abagusii and Kipsigis also interacted with each other in intermarriages. In the pre-colonial period, there were very few cases of intermarriages between the two communities. However with time, it became a common practice between them. According to Mwanzi (1977), the Abagusii of Sotik are *Kalenjinized* by Kipsigis through intermarriages. Some respondents who had married from their neighbouring community said that, the intermarriages had worked in favour of them. This was so because, in events of manifest conflicts between the two communities, their homesteads were spared as they belonged to both communities. This means that the intermarriages between the Abagusii and Kipsigis promoted more peace than conflict between them; hence, the need to be encouraged. This could be so because, they were founded on love as people were not coerced to marry each other. The children who were born to these couples could identify themselves with both communities and this could enable them to be agents of peace in their families.



Payment of bride price is a common practice in most African communities since the pre-colonial times to date. The payment of bride price was one of the motivating factors towards cattle rustling which in turn caused conflicts between the two communities. KII informants stated that among the Kipsigis, one was allowed to marry after initiation as one was considered a mature adult to take care of a family. He continued that;

One of the things a man was supposed to do was to pay bride prize, which was mostly in terms of livestock to the parents of the intended wife. During the time of our ancestors, it was the duty of the man's father to pay the dowry for his son but over time, the tradition has changed because bride prize has since been commercialized. It did not matter how one acquired the livestock even if it meant taking from any other field bearing in mind that it was a taboo to raid from their fellow Kipsigis. The young men who wanted to marry were encouraged to pay bride prize for themselves instead of depending on their fathers. If one could not raise the needed livestock, in most cases he resorted to raiding their Gusii neighbours or rearing sheep and goats, which he could exchange for cattle. Those who paid their bride prize using the successfully raided livestock earned respect among their peers. This was further supported by the institutionalization of raiding in the 19<sup>th</sup> century where it was not illegal to raid our neighbouring communities (KII, Chief, 17<sup>th</sup> August 2018).

These findings therefore concur with those by USAID (2005) that emanated from a study among the pastoralist communities in Northern Kenya. From that study, it was noted that, the pressure put on young men of marriageable age to pay bride prize for their brides encouraged them to engage in raids in order to raise the required livestock. Among the Abagusii, on the other hand, it was the responsibility of the father to pay bride prize for his sons. The Abagusii have since commercialized the payment of bride price, which proved difficult for the fathers to afford paying for their sons. The responsibility therefore shifted from the fathers to the sons to pay bride prize for them (KII, villager, 15<sup>th</sup> July 2018).

Between the two communities, livestock and more especially cattle, was a symbol of

wealth. The more livestock one had, the richer he was and the more wives he could marry. The competition for wealth and prestige that was associated with livestock could be what encouraged the men from both ethnic groups to raid each other. The society regarded people with large herds of livestock as wealthy and when such men wanted to marry, they had to prove to the parents' in-law that he was worth to take their daughter. This meant that, the society expected such men to marry many wives, pay the bride prize in large quantities and promptly. The prestige may have forced some of the men to engage in raids in order to maintain the herds and status they had earned themselves in the society. In the process of maintaining the status and prestige, such people may have instigated conflicts with their neighbouring communities whom they raided.

There was intermarriage between the Abagusii, there was also language assimilation, and the majority were using the Kipsigis language since they were the majority in the place where the Abagusii were living in diaspora. This came to be practical since the intermarriage between Abagusii and the Kipsigis and other tribes developed with time as Abagusii continued to stay in diaspora. To avoid periodic quarrelling, an agreement on how to settle to issues was settled upon. For example, neighbours could agree to farm on lands that were far away from the homestead so as to leave some space for their cows to graze and their chicken to find food (KII, villager, 5<sup>th</sup> August 2018).

#### **5.3.4 Initiation and Age-set System**

The researcher found out that, both the Kipsigis and Abagusii practiced circumcision of both boys and girls in the pre-colonial, colonial, and part of the post-colonial period. However, the initiation of girls has since reduced due to the health risks involved and the campaigns against the Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). Initiation of boys in these

communities was very important and among the Abagusii, circumcision of girls continued up to the period under study and for boys, it is still practiced to date. The following narration helps to depict the place of initiation between the two communities.

Initiation was very important among the Abagusii, as this was the time to pass our traditions and customs to our children when in seclusion. Boys were trained on various skills like fighting and making of some weapons, which were aimed at training them on how to defend themselves, the community and their property from enemies. On the day of initiation, strong, courageous and circumcised men in the community escorted them into seclusion with heroic songs. In the songs, they were told to be brave enough to defend their community against their traditional enemies. Through the songs they sang, they were told that they had been prepared to fight in Kipsigis land and Maasai land in order to protect their community and property from their traditional enemies (KII, Church member, 20<sup>th</sup> July 2018).

### **5.3.5 Adoption of a Mixed Economy**

Gusii land served as a food basket for the Kipsigis both at pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial Kenya. This was illustrated earlier in chapter three, where the Kipsigis acquired food from Abagusii either through trade or by working in their farms in exchange for food. As noted in one of the FGDs, the trend changed owing to the constant tension and hostility between the two communities.

Most of the Kipsigis were pastoralists but they turned into mixed farming, as they could not get an adequate supply of food. This was because; they depended on food from Gusii land. The food supply reduced as many of the Kipsigis women feared going to Gusii land to purchase the foodstuffs or even working there. The Kipsigis were left without any other alternative but to cultivate their own food (FGD, Clan elder, 19<sup>th</sup> July 2018).

### **5.3.6 Minimal Cattle Raiding (Security)**

It is noticeable that constant cattle raiding between the two communities made them more careful about one another. Some Abagusii decided to migrate to Kalenjin land and live within the Kipsigis. This is because they knew the Kipsigis would not attack

them or raid their cattle if they lived with them peacefully. Others decided to build big and strong fences called *orwaki*.

KII explained that, since we came here, there is minimal theft from our animals, this people cannot take animals, which are in their own land, it is a taboo to them and one cannot be recognized as a warrior of the community. This made more Abagusii to come over (KII, Villager, 10<sup>th</sup> August, 2018).

It is thus notable that while the Kipsigis were the enemies who kept on attacking Abagusii, some were bold enough to move into the Kipsigis land and live with them. It surprises to note that the Abagusii were able to withstand the harshness of the Kipsigis towards them even after they had gone to live among them

### **5.3.7 Farming /Agricultural Land**

The Abagusii migrated into Kipsigis land and used various means to acquire parcels of land for farming. They had the advantage of good knowledge of iron work, had good farming tools and equipment that helped them. All of these boosted their acquisition of land and establishment of farming activities in the foreign land. They had also migrated with planting seeds from their motherland and this made their establishment of farming in Kipsigis land easy since this land was fertile and the place had plenty and reliable rainfall.

Land holds a significant position in the social and economic wellbeing of most Kenyan communities. Culturally, among all the Kenyan communities, land is the channel for survival as it provides the means through which the subsistence needs are met whether among the pastoralists or cultivators. Land has also been used as a measure of wealth and a source of prestige in the society. Without land, one is considered as poor. Land

also lays a foundation for identity and association with one's kin, which are established through links with one's lineage, clan, and ethnic group members.

Nyukuri (1997) observed that, under the independence agreement with Britain, the Kenya government was to buy the land from the settlers. In fact, the British advanced a loan to Kenya to facilitate this purchase. That in turn meant that there was no free land for distribution. Land distribution in Kenya came to be based on willing buyer willing seller. Many of the migrant labourers in the white highlands bought land individually or collectively in the settlement schemes which mostly were outside their ancestral homelands. These claims support those of the Kiliku Report (1992) which noted that at independence, the white highlands, partly forming the border area between the Kipsigis and Gusii were apportioned between the Maasai, Kipsigis and Gusii communities. Under the facilitation of the Settlement Fund Trustees, members of the three communities bought land that was formerly owned by the departing settlers. Members of Abagusii community who had a higher population density settled in the area in larger numbers than the Kipsigis and Maasai.

Later on Abagusii in diaspora were given the title deeds for the lands that they had bought. This was pointed out by a key informant who revealed that, in 1986, President Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi gave them title deeds through the transition of power (KII, Villager, 10<sup>th</sup> August 2018).

## CHAPTER SIX

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.1 Summary

This study has established that the Kipsigis and Abagusii had been interacting peacefully since the pre-colonial period in trade, agriculture, during disasters and intermarriages. Occasionally, they would experience latent or manifest conflicts against each other. From the findings discussed in the previous chapters, the presence of Abagusii in diaspora is a result of the migration that has developed in the recent past. This type of Abagusii in diaspora includes permanent rural-rural migration initiated in colonial Kenya as one effect of the British colonial economic system.

The study examined the emergence of Abagusii society before colonialism, evaluated the migration of the Abagusii into South Rift in colonial era between 1895 and 1963. It also assessed the migration of the Abagusii into South Rift in post-colonial era from 1963 to 2007. The study has also explored the challenges and opportunities of Abagusii diaspora in South Rift. Despite the fact the two communities constantly came into conflicts due to some political, socio-cultural, and economic factors, some Abagusii were bold and daring enough to the extent of migrating into the Kipsigis land. They lived with them even though they encountered numerous difficulties, politically, socially, and economically.

## 6.2 Key findings

There was incitement from some political leaders based on the local scarce valuable resources that the two communities were competing over such as land and livestock. This led to the movement, spread and settlement of Abagusii in diaspora. Politics of exclusion was also identified where the Kipsigis were perceived to have received more privileges from the national government than the Abagusii. This made the Abagusii to be bitter and hateful towards the Kipsigis. The Abagusii felt marginalized hence influencing some of them to consider migrating to the Kipsigis' land in order to enjoy the social amenities thereby ended up living in diaspora. The two communities (the Kipsigis and Abagusii in diaspora) were in conflicts due to the re-introduction of multiparty politics where political parties' championed ethnic sentiments, which in turn led to political patronage, based on party affiliations.

Raiding of livestock was identified as the major causative factor of conflict between the two communities. Cattle rustling had some cultural backing in the rites of passage of initiation and marriage between the two communities, which brought about movement of the Abagusii. Land was also identified to be an important resource that the two communities were competing for. This was because of the cultural and economic value attached to land in both communities.

The colonial policies such as the *Kipande* system, labour laws, and squatter system, among others also prompted the mass movement of the Abagusii into South Rift during the colonial period. This is because Abagusii were trying to run away from the oppressive colonial policies that were imposed on them. Unemployment also contributed to the migration and settlement of Abagusii in diaspora in South Rift. The unemployed masses were the larger population that constituted the Abagusii in

diaspora as they were the ones who went to Kipsigis land in search of opportunities so as to earn a living and better their lives. The colonial white settlers had large farms and plantations (that they had grabbed from the Kipsigis) which sparked the demand for unskilled and semi-skilled labour. This demand for labour presented an opportunity for the Abagusii in diaspora to easily secure the jobs in the Kipsigis land. They also secured a place for living as squatters in their employers' farms as they were saving money to buy their own farms.

There were some Socio-economic challenges that the Abagusii in diaspora faced. Some of these challenges include; displacement of people from both communities, stealing of chickens and household items, attacks by diseases such as small pox. They also faced lack of basic needs such as; shelter, clothing and food. However, other problems such as food shortage were solved by the D.O (who was a Gusii) who gave them some food and a place to farm temporarily in order to get some food. Most of them, especially their children did not get education thus ending up as prostitutes and bartenders. All these challenges led to increase in poverty in the region hence poor living standards.

There were some socio-economic challenges that the Abagusii in diaspora faced. There was displacement of people from both communities that exposed them further to a number of dangers like, jiggers attack, stealing of chickens and household items, diseases such as small pox in 1979. There were water shortages to the extent of getting water supplies from the town council at the cost of two Kenya shillings for 20 litters. They had no basic needs such as clothes, shelters, and farming tools since they were put as squatters. Food was a problem until the D.O gave them some food and a place to farm temporarily to gain food. A key informant added other challenges they experienced to include; underage children being used in selling alcohol, witchcraft, congestion, language barrier, un-conducive environment/harsh environment, cattle



raiding, poor transport and communication network, distant working places, and disruption of economic activities like trade and agriculture which also increased poverty in the region due to displacement (FGDs, Village men, 19<sup>th</sup> July, 2019).

From the foregoing, it is evident that though the Abagusii were faced with several challenges, they enjoyed some opportunities which some of them could not access or get in their ancestral land. These opportunities came after their settlement in diaspora and they were discussed in two categories; that is in terms of the socio- economic and political opportunities. Some of these opportunities included; availability of basic need like food, shelter and clothes, accessibility of social amenities such as school and hospitals, intermarriages freedom, development of good relationship with the Kipsigis and other communities in diaspora. In addition to that, the Abagusii in diaspora were able to secure political leaderships positions like chiefs, district officers, got their own lands which later on were given their own title deeds and also the ability to conduct their farming activities which was their economic activities.

### **6.2.1 Emergence of the Abagusii Society before Colonialism**

To assess the emergence of the Abagusii in pre-colonial period, the research looked at their migration from Misri being their cradle land into Mount Elgon their first dispersal point in Kenya. As they were moving, they were looking for fertile land for farming. The researcher also looked at other aspects that made the Abagusii to migrate in the pre-colonial period. This included the internal and external dynamics that influenced their political, economic, and social structures. From Mount Elgon, they moved to Kisumu and due to unfavourable climatic conditions, they continued to move to Kano plains. They stayed in Kano plains for some generations but later on, the incoming Luos chased them away. Some of the Abagusii moved to Abagusii highland, which is

their present homeland while others moved to Kabianga in South Rift.

### **6.2.2 Migration of the Abagusii into South Rift in Colonial Era**

To evaluate the migration of the Abagusii into South Rift in Colonial era (1895-1963), the research took into consideration how Abagusii in diaspora migrated and settled among the Kipsigis and this answered the second objective of the study. Upon arrival of Abagusii in diaspora, they continued to move from one place to another in search of a conducive settling place. They went through several challenges as they were moving and spreading in diaspora. It is also important to note that during the study, the researcher learnt that as the Abagusii were moving and spreading in diaspora, they met different reaction from the Kipsigis who were their hosts. The Kipsigis were very protective and possessive when it came to land issues. To the Kipsigis, land was one of the important assets that were that was held with very high esteem by the community. Therefore, the Abagusii had a rough time as they tried spreading and settling among the Kipsigis.

The research identified land alienation as major cause of the migration of the Abagusii as it was the main commodity the white settlers had used so as to secure more land for them to develop and exploit the natural resources in Abagusii highlands for their economic benefits. The colonial policies such as the *Kipande* system, labour laws, and squatter system, among others also prompted the movement of the Abagusii into South Rift. This is because Abagusii were trying to run away from the oppressive colonial policies that were imposed.

### **6.2.3 Migration of the Abagusii into South Rift in Post-colonial Era**

The research looked at the dynamics or the changes that took place in the economy, politics, and social structures of Kenya. The focus was in the changes that were brought about by the Kenyan leaders who ascended into power after the colonial masters left. Their rule and mode of leadership was biased and thus brought about several changes that influenced the migration of the Abagusii into South Rift. The study had discussed some of the changes that prompted the Abagusii movement during the period of Kenya's independence by assessing different presidential regimes and their influence on the movement of the Abagusii.

### **6.2.4 Challenges and Opportunities of the Abagusii in Diaspora**

The fourth objective of this study was to assess the challenges and opportunities of Abagusii diaspora in South Rift. The research identified a number of challenges as well as the opportunities that faced the Abagusii in diaspora. Even though, the challenges outweighed the opportunities, some of the challenges that the Abagusii in diaspora faced include; displacement of people from their homes, which could be attributed to loss of confidence in the security forces and the rise of fear and insecurity. Many people also lost their loved ones; there was disruption of the main economic activities and destruction of property, factors that subjected the two communities to suffering and poverty. Negative ethnicity also developed among people of the two communities and disenfranchisement of some voters due to their displacement.

On the other hand however, the migration, spread and settlement of Abagusii in diaspora led to development of infrastructure especially transport and communication and some social amenities such as schools and hospitals by the two communities. Even

though there was insecurity and fear, over time, the government enhanced security in the Abagusii diaspora residential areas by deploying more security officers to the area. Instead of depending on pastoralism alone, the Kipsigis also adopted land cultivation; which led to food security among themselves and the area under study. Some individuals also benefitted from the Abagusii who migrated and settled in diaspora as they got access to government resources and opportunities; especially, those who got political offices and their allies.

### **6.3 Conclusion**

It could be concluded that, politics played a major role in Abagusii in diaspora migration, spread and the challenges as well as opportunities they faced in South Rift due to a number of factors. The colonial policies such as the *Kipande* system, labour laws, and squatter system, among others also prompted the movement of the Abagusii into South Rift. This is due to the fact that Abagusii were trying to run away from the oppressive colonial policies that were imposed. Incitement from some political leaders, which was based on the local scarce but valuable resources that the two communities were competing over like land and livestock led to the movement, spread and settlement of Gusii in diaspora. Politics of exclusion was also identified where the Kipsigis were perceived to have received more privileges from the national government than the Abagusii. This made the Abagusii to develop bitter sentiments and hatred against the Kipsigis as they felt marginalized. The two communities (the Kipsigis and Gusii in diaspora) were in conflicts due to the re-introduction of multiparty politics where political parties fanned ethnic sentiments, which in turn led to political patronage, based on party affiliations.

This study was based on the Historical Materialist Theory, which is a scientific

method, which consolidates the events of the past and grasps their true nature. It enabled us to view the present historically and hence scientifically, so that we can penetrate beneath the surface and perceive the profound historical forces behind the happening of human events. It easily explains the causes of development and change in human society as human beings collectively produce the necessities of life. It also involves social classes and relationship between them along with the political structures and ways of thinking in society, which are founded on and reflect contemporary economic activity. It recognizes that human production is geared towards human reproduction. In this way, change in human societies is easily made comprehensible.

#### **6.4 Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made based on the discussions in the previous sections of this study. Sensitization on the importance of peace should be done through the establishment of more multi-ethnic markets by the county governments where the two communities Gusii in diaspora and Kipsigis in South Rift will be interacting in addition to trading activities. As business people, they can be encouraged to embrace table banking and organised merry-go rounds among members. These will help them understand each other more.

The county governments should also organize cultural and sporting activities to promote good relations, bonding, nurturing talent, and keep the idle youth busy. These avenues can be used to promote peace and better relations between the two communities and better understanding. The schools that exist in the area under study should be encouraged to engage in mixed students enrolment within the areas where the Abagusii live in Diaspora to promote interaction of students from the two ethnic

groups. The county governments in the region should also come up with more village polytechnics to accommodate the school dropouts in order to alleviate idleness and train them in income-generating activities.

The government should organize seminars and conferences within the places of residence of Abagusii in diaspora within South Rift. In these seminars, Abagusii in diaspora should be taught the history of their origin, migration, and cultural practices. This will ensure that the Abagusii culture and traditions is preserved and continued even by Abagusii generations that have moved away from their original Gusii homeland. The two communities should be sensitized about their civic rights. This will help to avoid easy manipulation by political leaders who might use them for their selfish political gains.

### **6.5 Suggestions for Further Research**

Further research should be carried out in other areas where the Abagusii are settled with an aim of drawing comparisons on challenges and opportunities. This will help to determine if they are the same as ones in South Rift. Such a research will give an insight into the nature of life in diaspora as it is at the moment.

More research should be undertaken on the how Gusii in diaspora can preserve and uphold their cultural traditions while in diaspora as well as how the religious groups can be used as agents of peace in the region and reduce the deep routed ethnicity between Abagusii in diaspora especially in the South Rift.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix I: Interview Schedule

*Dear participant, these interview questions are intended to help the researcher to collect information on Abagusii in diaspora. The information will be treated with strict confidentiality. Kindly provide accurate and honest information which shall be used for scholarly purposes only.*

#### PART A: PEOPLE IN DIASPORA

- i) What prompted you to move from Gusii land?
- ii) Was there any selection of those who migrated?

If yes, who did the selection and for what reasons?

- iii) How was information relayed about opportunity for migration?

#### PART B: AREAS OF SETTLEMENT

- i) On arrival in diaspora (South Rift) which sites did you settle?
- ii) How were the areas identified?

By who? And why?

- iii) What was the reaction of the host communities towards you?
- iv) Have you stayed connected to your ancestral Gusiiland?

If so explain how?

- v) Were there some people in those areas before your arrival?

If so, which community?

#### PART C: CHALLENGES OF THE ABAGUSII IN DIASPORA.



- i) What challenges did you face when you arrived in diaspora?
- ii) Were there places for you to settle?
- iii) Was the climate conducive for you?
- iv) Were your basic needs met? For example food, shelter and water.
- v) Were there some employment opportunities for you when you arrived here?

**PART D: OPPORTUNITIES OF THE ABAGUSII IN DIASPORA**

- i) What employment opportunities were available to you here?
- ii) Were there some leadership opportunities available for you?

If yes how were you appointed to those positions?


- iii) Were there some schools for you children?

***THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.***

## Appendix II: Research Permit

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:  
**MS. GLADYS NYABOKE ACHOKI**  
of **MASINDE MULIRO UNIVERSITY OF**  
**SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, 2811-50100**  
**KAKAMEGA**, has been permitted to  
conduct research in **Kericho County**  
on the topic: **THE ABAGUSII DIASPORA**  
**IN KENYA, 'S SOUTH RIFT, 1895 TO**  
**2000.**  
for the period ending:  
**22nd May,2019**

Permit No : **NACOSTI/P/18/25242/22684**  
Date Of Issue : **24th May,2018**  
Fee Received : **Ksh 1000**



*W. A. Achoki*  
.....  
**Applicant's**  
**Signature**

*Patricia W. O. Ombaka*  
.....  
**Director General**  
**National Commission for Science,**  
**Technology & Innovation**

## Appendix III: Research Authorization



### NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Telephone: +254-20-2213471,  
2241349,3310571,2219420  
Fax: +254-20-318245,318249  
Email: [op@nacosti.go.ke](mailto:op@nacosti.go.ke)  
Website: [www.nacosti.go.ke](http://www.nacosti.go.ke)  
When replying please quote

NACOSTI, Upper Kabete  
Off Waiyaki Way  
P.O. Box 30623-00100  
NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref. No. **NACOSTI/P/18/25242/22684**

Date: **24<sup>th</sup> May, 2018**

Gladys Nyaboke Achoki  
Masinde Muliro University of Science  
And Technology  
P.O. Box 190-50100  
**KAKAMEGA.**

#### **RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION**

Following your application for authority to carry out research on "*The Abagusii diaspora in Kenya, 's South Rift, 1895 to 2000,*" I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Kericho County** for the period ending **22<sup>nd</sup> May, 2019.**

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

Kindly note that, as an applicant who has been licensed under the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 to conduct research in Kenya, you shall deposit a **copy** of the final research report to the Commission within **one year** of completion. The soft copy of the same should be submitted through the Online Research Information System.

**GODFREY P. KALERWA MSc., MBA, MKIM**  
**FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO**

Copy to:

The County Commissioner  
Kericho County.

The County Director of Education  
Kericho County.

#### Appendix IV: List of Oral Interviewees

	Name	Residence	Age (Years)	Gender	Occupation	Period of interview
1.	Caroline Moraa	Kapsoit	48	Female	Farmer	June, 2018
2.	John Mogire	Kaitui market	48	Female	Business Person	June, 2018
	Willy Obare	Chepseon market	55	Male	Business Person	June, 2018
3.	Samson Nyakweba	Tindiret village	59	Female	Teacher	June, 2018
4.	Caroline Moraa	Chelal village,	56	Female	Farmer	June, 2018
5.	Andrew Kwamboka	Roret market	58	Female	Business Man	June, 2018
6.	Nyaboke Ann	Kamutengo village	59	Female	Village Elder	June, 2018
7.	Collins Mogute	Munyanda village	40	Male	Chief	June, 2018
8.	Cliff Nyabonyi	Litein center	48	Male	Farmer	June, 2018
9.	James Kimanga	Kiptere market	58	Male	Business Person	June, 2018
10.	Tabitha Gechemba	Muraoo village	75	Female	Retired Police	June, 2018
11.	Terry Bosibori,	Chepseon market,	56	Female	Business Person	June, 2018
12.	Nehemiah Ogeturenki	Kipkelion	59	Male	Chief	June, 2018
13.	Kerina Johnstone	Londiani	70	Male	Village Elder	June, 2018
14.	Nyang'au Rodgers	Chepseon	49	Male	Business Person	June, 2018
15.	Kerubo Emily	Tindiret	46	Female	Farmer	June, 2018
16.	Mageto John	Kapsuser	71	Male	Village Elder	June, 2018
17.	Mogendi Ananiah	Kabianga	53	Male	Chief	June, 2018
18.	Nteng'a Joseph	Roret	44	Male	Farmer	July, 2018
19.	Obino Samwel	Chepsir	72	Male	Village Elder	July, 2018
20.	Gesare Prisca	Kapsoit	56	Female	Business Person	July, 2018

21.	Obino Geoffrey	Ainamoi	78	Male	Village Elder	July, 2018
22.	Mary Kemuma	Getumbe	68	Female	Village Elder	July, 2018
23.	Ondieki Samwel	Kaplong	73	Male	Retired Chief	July, 2018
24.	Kemuma Agnes	Chepseon	62	Female	Village Elder	July, 2018
25.	Kemunto Margeret	Mtaragoni	75	Female	Village Elder	July, 2018
26.	Osero John	Chepsir	74	Male	Village Elder	July, 2018
27.	Mwebi Walter	Kipkelion	59	Male	Village Elder	July, 2018
28.	Omanga Kombo	Makutano	70	Male	Retired Chief	July, 2018
29.	Nyambegera Festus	Sauri yako	78	Male	Village Elder	July, 2018
30.	Obonyo Francis	Chepsir	68	Male	Chief	July, 2018
31.	Kenana Thomas	Chepseon	70	Male	Retired Chief	July, 2018
32.	Ombasa George	Mtaragoni	64	Male	Chief	July, 2018
33.	Omare Caleb	Sotik	50	Male	Business Person	July, 2018
34.	Okari George	Kapkatet	51	Male	Farmer	July, 2018
35.	Kaman Naftaly	Chebilat	81	Male	Retired Chief	July, 2018
36.	Omwansa James	Kaplong	48	Male	Farmer	July, 2018
37.	Momanyi Boniface	Kipkelion	52	Male	Business Person	July, 2018
38.	Nyamweno Joyce	Sauri yako	54	Female	Farmer	August, 2018
39.	Ng'eny Colins	Kipchimchim	51	Male	Farmer	August, 2018
40.	Mosoti Sammy	Brook	69	Male	Chief	August, 2018
41.	Nyangweso Rose	Mtaragoni	71	Female	Village Elder	August, 2018
42.	Moraa Jemimah	Mtrragoni	65	Female	Famer	August, 2018
43.	Ny'angau Elius	Makutano	68	Male	Village Elder	August, 2018
44.	Ombuki Caleb	Kapsoit	65	Male	Business Person	August, 2018
45.	Okemwa Francis	Kapsuser	54	Male	Farmer	August, 2018
46.	Ng'obobi James	Ngoina Road	80	Male	Retired	August, 2018

					Police	
47	Gesare Gladys	Roret	60	Female	Teacher	August, 2018
48	Ondieki Samson	Litein	61	Male	Village Elder	August, 2018
49	Mageto Silvester	Kapsoit	59	Male	Business Person	August, 2018
50	Chebet Jane	Koiyet	48	Female	Nyumba Kumi	August, 2018
51	Cherono Ruth	Kipsimbol	38	Female	Business Person	August, 2018
52	Jelimo James	Gelegele	45	Male	Farmer	August, 2018
53	Kemboi John	Chebilat	59	Male	Chief	August, 2018
54	Koskei Alfred	Kaplong	60	Male	Retired Soldier	August, 2018
55	Chepkwony Alex	Chepsir	69	Male	Retired Teacher	August, 2018

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