



**Dissertation By**  
**VICTOR FREDRICK**  
**OBWOCHA OMBATI**

**EDUCATION IN KENYATTA**  
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**DEVELOPMENT OF SECULAR EDUCATION IN SOUTH**  
**KAVIRONDO**  
**DISTRICT OF KENYA: THE CASE OF GOVERNMENT AFRICAN**  
**SCHOOL KISII (1934 - 1963)**

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DEVELOPMENT OF SECULAR EDUCATION IN SOUTH KAVIRONDO  
DISTRICT OF KENYA: THE CASE OF GOVERNMENT AFRICAN  
SCHOOL KISII (1934 - 1963)

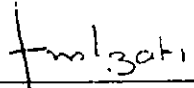


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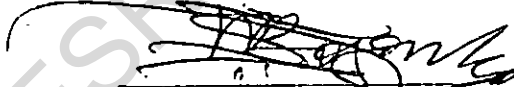
A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER  
OF EDUCATION IN KENYATTA UNIVERSITY.


D E C L A R A T I O N

This 'thesis' is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University.

  
V. P. O. OMBATI

This thesis has been submitted for examination with our approval as University supervisors:-

  
Prof: S.N. BOGENKO  
Department of Educational Foundation  
Kenyatta University.

  
Dr. J.E. Otiende  
Department of Educational Foundation  
Kenyatta University.

(iii)

DEDICATION

*To my parents, brothers and sisters for their continued support and encouragement; I owe this to you.*

A B S T R A C T

This thesis discusses the development of secular education in South Kavirondo District of colonial Kenya. However before doing that, an examination has been made of the role of the Christian missionaries in the introduction of formal western education in South Kavirondo, Kisiiland in particular. The study shows that modern western education in South Kavirondo was introduced and shouldered for a long period of time by the Roman Catholic Mill Hill and Seventh Day Adventist missionaries. The chief aim of these Christian missionary groups was to convert the African into Christianity. Hence these Christian missionaries used formal education as a means, of propagating the Christian gospel.

Besides religious education in reading, writing and basic elements of arithmetic, this thesis shows that Africans in the mission schools were subjected to vocational education by the colonial government education policies on the ground that through vocational education, idleness, laziness and helplessness which Africans were said to be suffering from could be eradicated. Vocational education was also seen as a means of promoting the virtues of self discipline, punctuality, self reliance, responsibility and humility which the Africans were said to be lacking.

The thesis reveal that when Africans became dissatisfied with the type of education they were subjected to in the mission schools through the Local Native Councils which were inaugurated in 1925, they collected and voted money for the establishment of Government African School Kisii in 1934. With the establishment of this school, a new era of literary or secular education was ushered into the district.

The thesis also shows that with the excellent academic and extra curricular performance staged by the Government African School Kisii, the mission schools in South Kavirondo were in turn forced to improve their performance making them able to compete with Government African School Kisii. Besides discussing the social economic contribution of the school in the period under review, the study has recommended other areas for further study or investigation.

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*My gratitude also goes to my former students at Njoro Girls' High School for influencing my perspectives and my niece Evelynne Change of the University of Nairobi for moral and spiritual support.*

*Last but not least, I am grateful to Dorothy Wanjiku for her A to Z help in this difficult panorama, Mr. Antony D. Bojana for his technical reading of this thesis and Mrs. Mary Oballa for typing it.*

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFC	-	Agriculture Finance Corporation
AIM	-	African Inland Mission
ART	-	African Retail Traders
BOG	-	Board of Governors
Bro.	-	Brother
CCM	-	Consolata Catholic Missionaries
CGA	-	Church of God in Africa
CMS	-	Church Missionary Society
COHS	-	Cardinal Otunga Historical Society
CSS	-	Cambridge School Certificate
CSU	-	Civil Servants Union
DC	-	District Commissioner
DE	-	Department of Education
DEB	-	District Education Board
Dr.	-	Doctor
DWP	-	Devonshire White Paper
EASM	-	East African Scotland Mission
EDAR	-	Education Department Annual Report
FAM	-	Friends African Mission
FR.	-	Father
GAS	-	Government African School



GMS - Gospel Missionary Society  
IBEA - Imperial British East Africa  
HGM - Holy Ghost Mission  
HON - Honourable  
KA - Kikuyu Association  
KANU - Kenya African National Union  
KASSE - Kenya African Secondary School Examination  
KISA - Kikuyu Independent Schools Association  
KKEA - Kikuyu Karinga Educational Association  
KPA - Kenya Ports Authority  
KNA - Kenya National Archives  
KNUT - Kenya National Union of Teachers  
KOBA - Kisii School Old Boys Association  
KT1 - Kenya Teacher I  
KT2 - Kenya Teacher II  
KT3 - Kenya Teacher III  
KT4 - Kenya Teacher IV  
KTPWA - Kavirondo Tax Payers Welfare Association  
KTTC - Kenya Technical Teachers College  
LC - Legislative Council  
LNC - Local Native Council  
MBE - Missionary Board of Education  
MD - Managing Director

MHM - Mill Hill Missionaries  
MP - Member of Parliament  
NAO - Native Authority Ordinance  
NCU - Native Catholic Union  
NITD - Native Industrial Training Depot  
NKCA - North Kavirondo Central Association  
OI - Oral Interview  
PAOG - Pentecostal Assemblies of God  
PC - Provincial Commissioner  
PROF. - Professor  
PRP - Parastatal Reform Programme  
PS - Permanent Secretary  
PSE - Primary School Examination  
RC - Roman Catholic  
SA - Salvation Army  
SDA - Seventh Day Adventist  
UK - United Kingdom  
UMM - United Methodist Mission  
UN - United Nations  
USA - United States of America  
WW1 - World War I  
YKA - Young Kavirondo Association  
YMCA - Young Men Christian Association

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## CHAPTER ONE

### BACKGROUND, STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM, METHODOLOGY, LITERATURE REVIEW AND ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The establishment and provision of formal western education in Kisii\* as in any other part of Kenya was mainly the work of the Christian missionary groups. The first of these missionary groups to arrive and settle in Kisii were the Roman Catholic Mill Hill Fathers (MHF), who founded a mission station in Nyabururu as early as 1911 and the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) who established theirs at Nyanchwa in 1913. However, beginning in the 1930s, the Salvation Army (S.A.), Pentecostal Assemblies of God (PAG), the Friends African Mission (Quakers) (FAM), the Church of God and the Swedish Lutheran Mission arrived on the scene.

#### Background to the problem

Sifuna (1986) contends that:

*The primary objective of the early missionaries was to convert the 'heathen' or benighted Africans to Christianity via education.<sup>1</sup>*

Therefore from the start, the provision of education was part and parcel of the missionary evangelical activity. Through schools, the much desired missionary objective of increasing the number of Christian followers could be realised. Hence, the school was seen as a vital weapon of propagating the Christian faith<sup>2</sup>.

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\* Kisii and Gusii are used in this study interchangeably.

In the mission schools, form, content and educational curriculum were mainly evangelical in nature. This was so because the purpose of all early educational endeavours of the Christian missionaries, was to enable students to read the scriptures for themselves so that they could become more ardent Christian converts<sup>3</sup>.

To spread the message of Christianity further from the stations, the missionaries decided to devote much of their early time by opening up missions and out-schools, where simple religious instructions in hymn singing, reading, writing and basic arithmetic were taught. Since the whole aim of missionary education was to win more converts for the church membership, little was done by these earlier missionaries to stress the importance of education for its own sake<sup>4</sup>.

Apart from the evangelical education, the missionaries also offered vocational education. They, in particular, stressed on this type of education as they believed that it was capable of combating indolence, depravity and natural laziness that Africans were said to be suffering from<sup>5</sup>.

As the Abagusii disdained the presence of the White foreigners in their country<sup>6</sup>, enthusiasm for newly introduced formal western education was indeed very low accompanied by a display of dislike, suspicion and indifference at the start.

However, with time, enthusiasm picked up, the Gusii started to attend mission schools in large numbers, seeking the newly

introduced formal education which they had earlier on opposed. This new enthusiasm arose when the Gusii as did other people in South Kavirondo witnessed the new social economic advancement opportunities which had been brought about by the introduction of formal education. Hence, they subsequently flocked to mission schools in an endeavour to acquire the new skills which were rewarded with high pay in the employment markets:

*So Africans developed an interest in formal education when settlers began to pay relatively highly for reading and writing ability on the new farms. The Government began to look for clerks and employees who could obey instructions. The missions themselves helped to encourage interest in schools by giving better educated Africans responsibilities and material benefits. While the missions saw education as a valuable arm of their work. One reason for the concentration on education especially during the second decade of the twentieth century was the increasing demand for it?*

The monopoly of establishing, financing and controlling formal Western education in South Kavirondo (where Kisii land was found) for a long period was largely in the hands of Christian missionaries. However, as from the end of the World War I, the people of this area like their counterparts in North Nyanza started to question and challenge the Christian monopoly on their own education. After their experience in Christian mission schools, the inhabitants of this area wanted non-denominational institutions with adequate literary content which they trusted could enable them



to be on equal terms with other races. Bogonko (1977) asserts that:

*When Africans in parts of Kenya became dissatisfied with the quality of education provided by the missionaries, they took two lines of action. There was one group who worked through the Local Native Councils (LNCs) and others which decided to run their own schools outside the government both local and central. The former led to the establishment of such schools as Kakamega, Kagumo, and Kisii. The latter line of action led to the opening of Independent schools which were best organised and most successful in Central province*

It was through the Local Native Councils that Government African School Kisii (GAS) was established in 1934. This school like Kagumo in Central Province and Kakamega in North Kavirondo was supposed to offer literary education which was not found in mission schools. The school was opened so that Africans could get secular education as opposed to the one offered by the mission schools.

#### Statement of the Problem

This study analyses the development of secular education in South Kavirondo District of Colonial Kenya. To bring out this factor clearly, the establishment of Government African School, Kisii (GAS) and its development between 1934 and 1963 has been chosen as the main theme of the study. Under this premise, an analysis has been made of the following:

- (a) *The forces that led to the establishment of GAS Kisii;*
- (b) *The part played by various agencies in the establishment and development of the school and*
- (c) *The impact of the school on the surrounding community and beyond.*

Secular education, as used in this study refers to that education outside missionary influence and control. It differs from missionary education in content, form and emphasis. This education was expected to provide Africans with relevant skills which could enable them fit in the European economy rather than making them converts and catechists.

### Significance of the Study

The study has analysed the various forces that influenced the development of secular education for Africans in South Kavirondo District of Colonial Kenya. It hopes to reveal that it was as a result of the weakness and meagreness of the missionary education which denied Africans opportunities for secular education that the Government African School was established. Further, the study hopes to shed light and knowledge as concerns the school's historical origin and development.

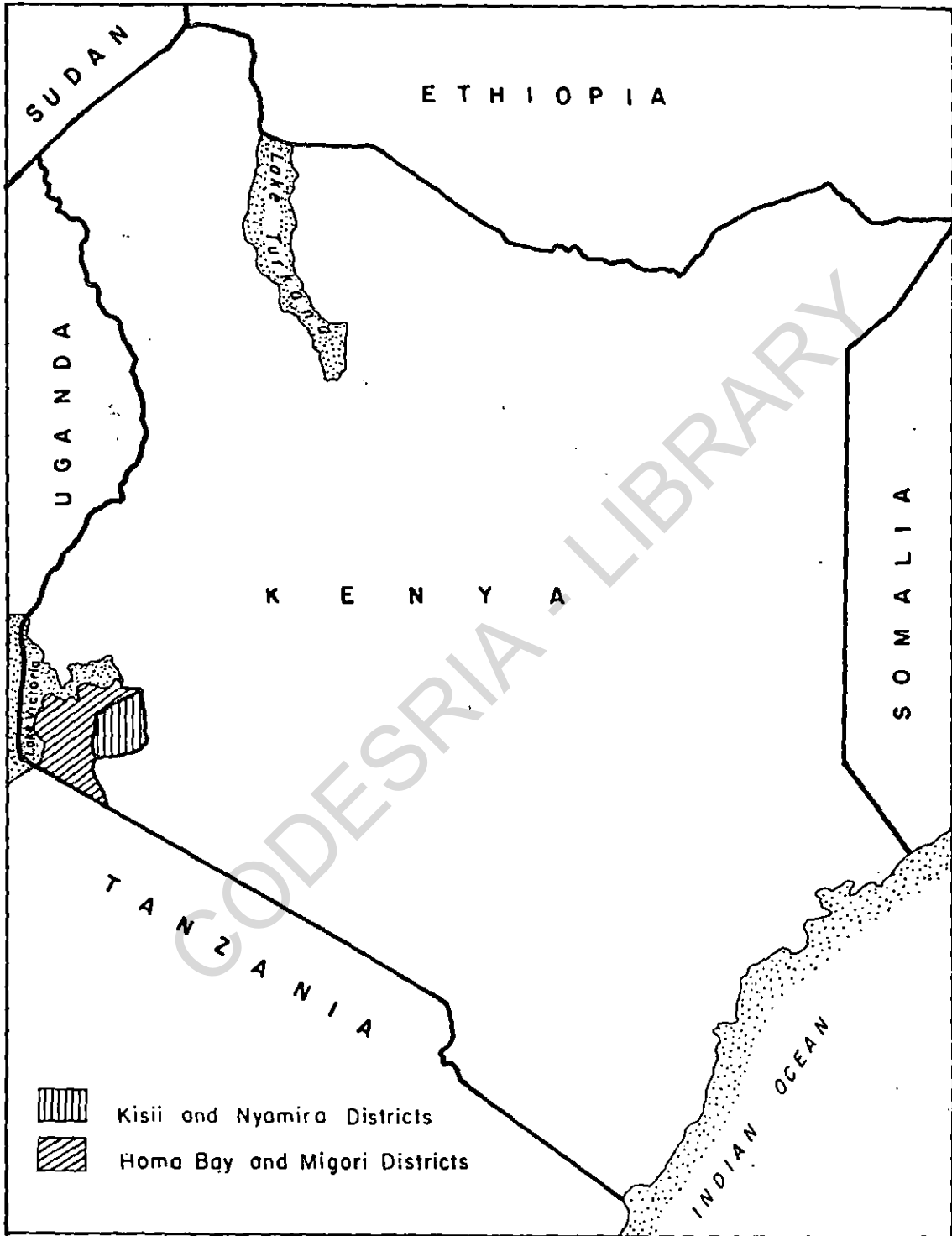
The study apart from going to show the role of various agencies in the establishment of Kisii School should be a useful reference to educationists and planners. To the other educational researchers, this study hopes to encourage and stimulate some interest and further research in the development of secular education in Kenya.

### Scope of the Study

This study discusses the growth of secular education in South Kavirondo during the colonial period. The historical South Kavirondo District in the study refers to the area that constitutes the present day Kisii, Nyamira, Migori and Homa Bay Districts of Kenya (See Map in Fig. 1 Below).

CODESRIA - LIBRARY

**THE STUDY AREA**



Source: Kenya National Atlas, 1970.

**Fig. 1. The historical South Kavirondo District (Now Kisii, Nyamira, Homa Bay and Migori)**

To bring this out clearly, a case study of the origin, development and impact of GAS Kisii is made. The study has established that Christian missionaries pioneered the introduction of Western education in various parts of Kenya including South Kavirondo. It has also examined and traced the underlying factors behind the establishment of GAS Kisii in 1934 up to 1963 as this was the year that marked the achievement of political independence, bringing to an end the British colonial system of education in Kenya. The development of education after this period was influenced by the outcome of new educational policies adopted by the Independent Government.

Though the Kuria, Luo and Basuba did contribute to the establishment of GAS, Kisii, the school was established largely through the efforts of the Gusii. Hence, this study is mainly centred in Gusii land.

#### Methodology

In carrying out this study the researcher employed the historical research method. This method involves a systematic and objective systematic and objective location, evaluation and synthesis of evidence derived, with a view to establishing the facts and drawing conclusions about past events. Highlighting the importance of historical method, Travelers says;

*Every area of human endeavour can benefit from the study of its own history (sic). But the historical studies probably have special values in education where the latest innovation is too often only the renewal of a*

*long discarded idea. For example the recent interest in the initial teaching alphabets represents a revival of the idea had considerable popular vogue during the last century. The Historian can often tell whether they are earliest and related efforts with which we should be familiar (sic)?*

In this research method, facts on past events, which would otherwise remain unknown are established, revealed and made available to the present and future generations.

In carrying out this study, the researcher relied on both primary and secondary sources, of information. Primary sources can be described in most cases as written records or documents on what a writer has actually seen and heard or the first hand expression of his ideas. Secondary sources on the other hand are those in which a person describing the event was not present but has obtained his description from someone else who may or may not have directly observed the events<sup>10</sup>.

In this study, the primary sources will include government and mission reports, letters of correspondence, school records and official government circulars kept at the Kenya National Archives (KNA), mission archives, Cardinal Otunga Historical Society Archives (COHSA), Nyabondo Historical Archives and the institution libraries, such as Kenyatta University Library and University of Nairobi Library. Apart from these documentary records, information on this study were obtained through interviewing various people who had a direct bearing to the study. Such people include the

Kisii School Old boys, the ex-teachers, administrators and former mission boys among others.

The use of oral interview technique in this study is justified on the ground that information that is obtained would help substantiate the primary and secondary sources of data<sup>11</sup>.

Through oral interviews, the researcher came face to face with persons directly affected by this study, hence adequate information to supplement the primary and secondary sources were obtained<sup>12</sup>.

For the purposes of this study, secondary sources included information gathered through reading relevant books, articles, journals, magazines, newspapers and dissertations. The data collected from both the primary and secondary sources by the researcher were subsequently synthesised into what has formed the thesis. On the basis of the researcher's findings, conclusions are drawn and recommendations for further studies in certain areas made.

### Review of Related Literature

In Kenya as was the case with other British colonies, the Christian missionaries had the upper hand in establishing financing and controlling formal education development before the emergence of government - missionary cooperation at the turn of the twentieth century. The main education curriculum emphasized by the missionaries and supported by the colonial government educational policies was techno-religious.

In proposing vocational education for the Africans, the government and missionaries reasoned that the right way of getting African artisans to replace relatively expensive Indians. Vocational education was also stressed on the belief that the provision of literary education could make the African be more accessible to the mysteries of the White man in turn making the African big-headed and subversive. This attitude was best expressed by the saying that *"The best African was one who was ignorant and therefore of no challenge to the white man"*<sup>13</sup>.

In Kenya, with the end of World War I, the missionary educated Africans plus the African soldiers who had come back home with a wide view of the outside world formed political associations that pressurized for a secular education among other grievances. Towards this end, the alliance of churches started as a movement for the Federation of Protestant Missions of the Protectorate whose membership constituted the Church Missionary Society (CMS), the African Inland Mission (AIM), the United Methodist and the Church of Scotland established Alliance High School Kikuyu for Africans in 1926<sup>14</sup>.

Meanwhile, the Roman Catholics were not ready to be overshadowed by the Protestant groups, so they established their school at Kabaa in Machakos in 1930. Later, the school was transferred to Mang'u in Kiambu District. These schools were developed through grants-in-aid and offered Cambridge



Certificate Education. The Africans, with the inauguration of the Local Native Councils (LNCs) in 1925, worked through them to establish secular schools as Kakamega, Kagumo and Kisii. Considerable amount of literature has been written on secular education as a theme but none of these works has addressed the case of GAS Kisii as a secular institution adequately, a task this study has undertaken.

Furley and Watson<sup>15</sup> in their work have discussed generally the development of education in the three East African countries in the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods. While they concur that the government agreed to open secular schools at Kakamega and Kagumo, their work has ignored the case of GAS Kisii which was a secular institution in South Kavirondo.

Berman<sup>16</sup> discusses the contribution of the Christian missionaries in the establishment of formal Western education in Africa. He contents that when Africans were dissatisfied with the type of education they received at mission schools, they established their own independent schools, which were to be non-denominational institutions offering literary education. Schools such as Kakamega, Kagumo and Kisii were established as a reaction to lack of secular education in the mission controlled schools. This study shows that Africans did establish secular schools such as the GAS Kisii in addition to Berman's apt discussion of independent schools.

Sally Abbot's<sup>17</sup> work reveals that Africans contributed to the development of formal education financially, materially and industrially for the establishment of secular schools outside the missionary control. However, she does not show how these schools developed after establishment.

Lohentz<sup>18</sup> discusses the emergence of political associations in North Nyanza by 1920. Through these political associations, the LNCs were established which became the best channels for pressurizing for secular education. What Lohentz's work fails to show is the difference between the LNC and the political associations.

S.N. Bogonko (1977) says that modern education in Gusiiland was introduced by Christian missionary groups and was mainly evangelical. Bogonko is of the view that most of these missions were poorly equipped and staffed. Hence, education given by them was of relatively low quality. Bogonko shows that Africans in South Kavirondo as the case of North Nyanza and Nyeri started to demand more secular as opposed to purely religious education as early as 1920s. This led to the establishment of Government schools at Kakamega, Kagumo and Kisii. With the establishment of these schools, the Christian monopoly of Western education was virtually brought to an end. Bogonko's work on the growth of secular education in South Kavirondo exclusively highlights the difference between the secular GAS Kisii and the mission

schools. Consequently, a study giving details of the origin, development and impact of the GAS Kisii is necessary.

Mukudi<sup>20</sup> discusses the contribution of Africans in North Nyanza towards the establishment of secular education in that area. Mukudi shows that in their quest for better education than the one given in mission schools, Africans used the inaugurated LNC to establish the Kakamega secular school. Whereas this case study of Kisii Secular School is going to cover all the colonial period, Mukudi's work is up to 1945 and localised to the situation as it was in North Nyanza.

Were<sup>21</sup> has analysed the factors behind the establishment of GAS Kakamega. He has also identified the dissatisfaction of the Africans as far as missionary education was concerned but his work is a mere tribute to Herold Arthur Chapman.

Mwanzi<sup>22</sup> and Keino<sup>23</sup> give an account of the origin and development of Chavakali and Sosiot Girls respectively. Their works have shown how the 'Harambee' (Self-Help) spirit has been successfully used for educational advancement and development in Kakamega and Kericho districts. Unlike the works of Mwanzi and Keino on the role of 'Self-Help' during the post - independence period, this study deals with the entire colonial period.

Okenye<sup>24</sup> in her account of the role of Roman Catholic Mill Hill Christian Fathers shows that Roman Catholic missionaries pioneered in education establishment in Kisii. She concurs with Bogonko that this education was mainly

evangelical whose objective was to increase the number of Roman Catholic followers. In 1935, Nyabururu became a girls' school offering secular education in addition to religious education. Okenye then traces its development to the 1980s. However, her work does not show how education generally developed in Gusii.

Karani<sup>25</sup> analyses the origin and growth of Maseno High School to the early 1960s. She points out that Maseno was founded by the Church Missionary Society (CMS) as a springboard for propagating Christianity in the area around Maseno. The school also offered vocational education in addition to religious instructions. Karani cites 1908 strike that broke out in the school whereby the students rejected vocational education to secular one. After the strike, the school started to offer some secular education and with the coming of Carey Francis, the school developed to be a great educational institution. Although Karani's work discusses secular education, the theme of her study is more centred on Maseno and its alumni with the local society.

Kipkorir<sup>26</sup> analyses the contribution of the Alliance Movement - a movement for the federation of protestant missions. According to Kipkorir, Alliance High School was established to offer secular education. Under the leadership of Carey Francis, the school transformed into a great educational institution in the country. Despite his detailed

discussion, Korir's study is limited to Alliance High School and cannot be generalised to GAS Kisii.

Osogo gives us an exhaustive account of the history of Kabaa from the time it was established by the Roman Catholic Holy Ghost Fathers in Machakos up to its transfer to present site in Mang'u, Kiambu District. He reveals that the establishment of Alliance in 1926 by the protestants acted as a catalyst to the establishment of Mang'u in 1930. Although Osogo's work is detailed, it cannot be generalised to other schools such as GAS Kisii.

#### Summary

Review of the available literature has shown that since the end of World War I, the desire of having secular institutions to offer literary education in various parts of Kenya was very high among the Africans. Hence, through self-taxation, secular schools like Kagumo, Kakamega and Kisii emerged. However, the reviewed works have focussed on the factors which led to the establishment of the above schools but not how those schools developed after establishment. This study like those of Karani, Osogo and Kipkorir highlighted the forces and the role played by various agencies in the development of GAS Kisii. It has also discussed the social and economic impacts on the establishment of the school to the surrounding community and beyond since its establishment.

### Organisation of the Study

This study is organised into six chapters. Chapter one presents the background to the study, statement of the problem, methodology and review of literature.

Chapter two discusses the establishment of missionary education in Gusii land (1909-1934) while Chapter three looks at the colonial government's policies, practices and participation in education in South Kavirondo up to 1925.

Chapter four analyses the origin and development of Government African School, Kisii (1925-1946). Chapter five discusses the achievements of Government African School, Kisii. Lastly, Chapter six presents summary, and recommendations for further research.

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## C H A P T E R T W O

### THE ESTABLISHMENT OF MISSIONARY EDUCATION IN GUSIILAND 1909 - 1934

The introduction of formal western education in Gusii was the work of the Mill Hill society of the Roman Catholic Church and the Seventh Day Adventist Christian missionaries. Although the provision of education, was initially the sole responsibility of the Christian missionaries, Africans through the encouragement of the Local Native Councils gradually assumed the responsibility for supplementing educational development of the Christian churches. In Gusii, it was until 1934, when Kisii School was established that the Africans became partners alongside the Christian missionaries in shouldering, co-ordinating, financing and directing the development of formal Western education.

This chapter examines the role of Christian missionaries in the establishment of formal Western education in Gusii between 1909 to 1934.

#### Missionary Intrusion Into Kenya

Generally Christian missionary intrusion into Kenya as any other part of Africa was as a result of evangelical rivalry among various religious movements in Europe. Christian missionaries believed that they had a divine duty of propagating the Christian gospel to the "heathen" or benighted Africans in order to win their souls for Christ. The impetus behind the missionary zeal was provided by reports of European explorers and traders who maintained that Africa

was a land rich in paganism and therefore a suitable ground for European missionary work<sup>1</sup>.

According to Sifuna (1980), most Christian missionaries believed that Africa was backward, uncultured and uncivilized with no tradition or history. The Africans themselves were said to be lazy, indifferent or alternatively too superstitious and immoral to have developed a serious religion. Hence the Christian missionaries naturally assumed that it was their duty to regenerate, evangelize and raise Africans to a high level<sup>2</sup>.

In the final analysis, Christian missionaries ventured into most parts of Africa with the sole aim of converting Africans into Christianity. To succeed in their evangelization, the missionaries introduced formal schooling through which they propagated the Christian message.

#### The Establishment of Missionary Work in Kenya

Christian missionaries are rightly acknowledged as the founders of Western education in Kenya and in other parts of Africa<sup>3</sup>. The Roman Catholic missionaries from Portugal, were the first group of missionaries to settle and begin work in the Kenyan coast in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

The Augustinian Friars known as the Portuguese Christian Missionaries established a monastery at Mombasa and were responsible for the establishment of formal education activities among the local inhabitants along the coastal strip, stretching up to Lamu in the North. In 1599, they claimed the conversion of nearly six hundred souls, but gave

no details of their race and age, no doubt some of them were young Africans possibly who worked for the Portuguese as slaves<sup>4</sup>. The Portuguese missionary activities were mainly restricted to the coastal areas.

The defeat and departure of the Portuguese in 1729 led to the total collapse of formal Western education at the coast.<sup>5</sup> However, with the second wave of Christian missionaries venturing into Kenya in mid-nineteenth century, a new era in Kenya's educational development began.

In 1844, the representatives of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) founded in 1766 and led by Dr. Ludwig Krapf, J. Rebmann and J. Erhardt arrived in Kenya. Within a short time of their arrival, they were able to establish a mission station at Rabai. Dr. Krapf then started to translate some parts of the Bible into Swahili and to prepare some reading materials for his pupils in preparation for baptism.

Krapf together with Rebmann went ahead to start a boarding school for sons of chiefs as a way of influencing the spread of Christianity through the future ruling elite<sup>5</sup>. *"The school at Rabai mission made a slow progress and Krapf's constant persuasion for parents to send their children to the school generally proved fruitless"*<sup>6</sup>.

Apart from Rabai, the CMS later opened other stations and schools at Freetown (1875) in Mombasa to cater for the freed slaves, and in Taita Taveta (1890).

The United Methodist Mission (UMM) under the leadership of Dr. Krapf, who had broken from the CMS entered Kenya and

opened stations and schools at Rabai, Lamu and Jomvu. The Church of Scotland Mission encouraged by the director of the Imperial British East Africa Company William Mackinnon opened a station at Kibwezi which they later transferred to Kikuyu area in 1888.

The Swedish Mission on its part, worked in Kulesa on the Tana River and in Lamu. However, later on, they moved to Kismayu to convert the Galla into Christianity. In 1902, these two mission stations were handed over to the Neukerchener German Mission after having made little educational impact in their areas of occupation.

With the African Inland Mission, they settled at Nzui in Ukambani where they made little success. This later forced them to move further inland to Kijabe where they established their headquarters. The Roman Holy Ghost Mission also opened a mission station in Mombasa, Bura in Taveta and later moved to Nairobi in 1890.

The completion of the Uganda Railway in 1901 enabled various Christian missions to penetrate into the interior with considerable ease, from the coastal areas. The CMS was able to open a station among the Kikuyu at Kihuruko (1901), Waithaga (1903), Kihuhia (1906), Mahiga (1908) and Embu in 1910. The Church of Scotland Mission opened a second station at Tumutumu in 1908. The United Methodist Mission (UMM) worked among the Meru people. The Consolata Mission from Italy opened a station at Kiambu (1902), Limuru (1903) and Mangu (1906).

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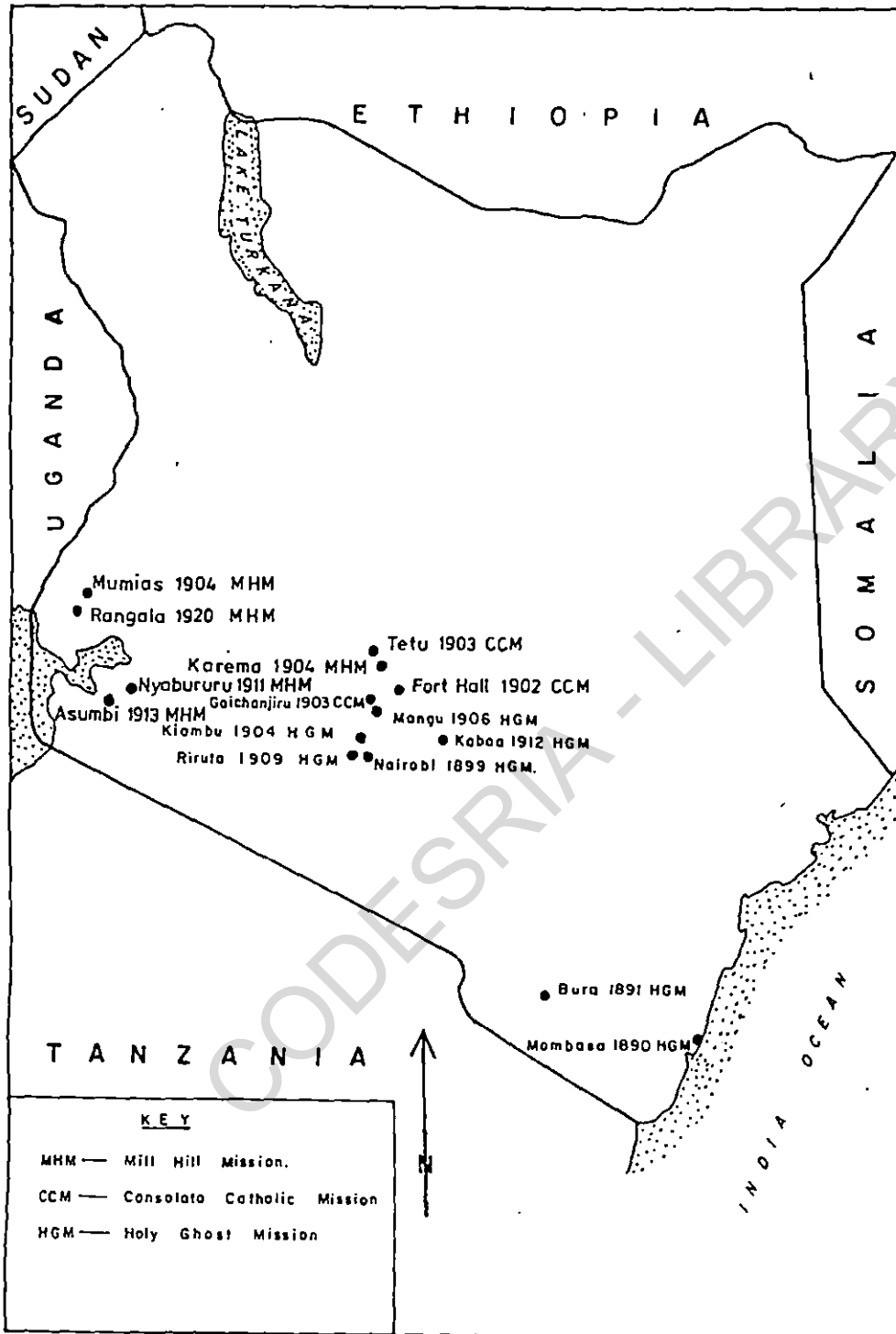
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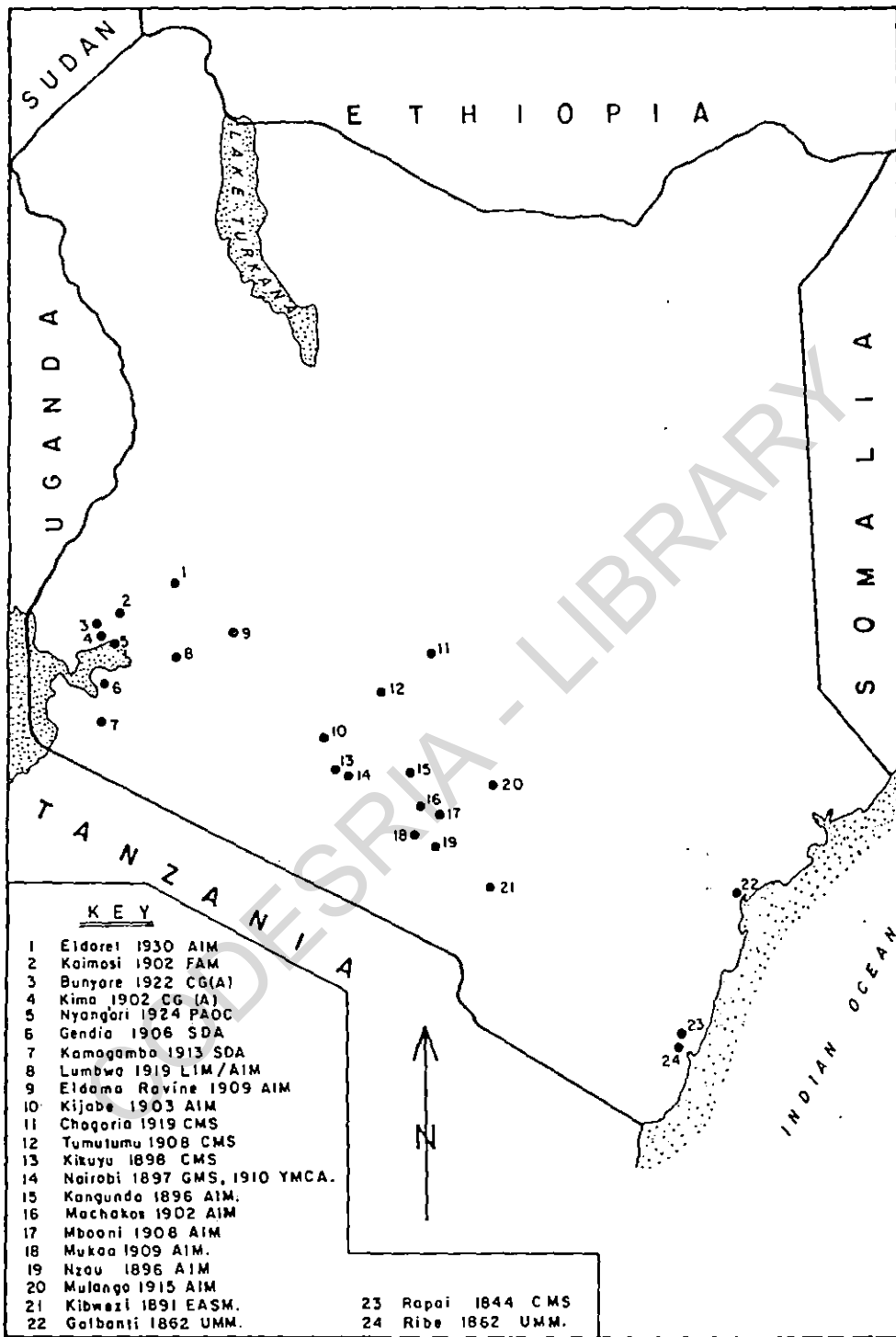
In western Kenya among the Nilotic Luo, Baluyia, Gusii and Kuria, mission stations were opened under the auspices of the Church Missionary Society; at Maseno (1905); Pentecostal Assemblies of God at Nyang'ori, the Friends African Mission; (Quakers) at Kaimosi (1902), the Church of God at Kima, Mill Hill Catholic Missionaries at Nyabururu (1911); the Swedish Lutheran Church at Lumbia (1919), and the Seventh Day Adventist Christian missionaries at Gendia (1906) and Nyanchwa (1913). The maps below show the Christian mission stations in Kenya, in the period under review.

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Source: Kenya Churches Handbook, 1973.

Fig.2a. Catholic Mission Stations in Kenya, 1498—1930.



Source: Kenya Churches Handbook, 1973.

Fig. 2b. Protestant Mission Stations in Kenya, 1844-1934



### Missionary Intrusion and Settlement in Kisii

By 1930, the Roman Catholic Mill Hill Fathers and the seventh Day Adventists were the only Christian missionary groups operating in Gusii. Having entered Kisii, each of these missionary groups established a number of mission stations from where they conducted their missionary work. In the absence of government educational institutions, the development of formal education in Gusii solely depended on the Christian missionaries.

### The Establishment and Educational Activities of the Mill Hill Missionaries in Kisii (1909-1934).

The Mill Hill Missionaries, Dutch by origin, worked for the apostolic vicariate of the Upper Nile, founded in 1894, with their headquarters in Kampala, Uganda. After the completion of the Uganda Railway, and when it reached Kisumu in 1901, the Mill Hill Fathers became interested in Kisumu and Siaya districts, where Fr. Brandsma established the first missionary station in 1903 at Ojola, near Kisumu. It is from this mission station that the Roman Catholic missionaries ventured further into the present day Kisii and South Nyanza districts.

However, the impetus behind the Mill Hill missionary invasion of Kisiiland was prompted by Mr. Northcote, a British colonial officer, who invited Fr. Brandsma to the present Kisii District. Fr. Brandsma enthusiastically accepted the invitation from Mr. NorthCote, and visited Kisii in 1909. He later selected Nyabururu near Kisii "boma" (town) for a

mission station. On his return to Kisumu, he was fortunate to come across a Muganda, Mikaeli Batiko, whom he appointed as a catechist and sent him to build a few houses in the recently selected mission site.

With the selection of a site for a mission, Batiko and Fr. Brandsma helped to put up three square houses some which acted as a catechist class under Mr. Hemstead, a fellow Christian catechist. Batiko was sent by Fr. Brandsma to go around the Kisii country for sons of chiefs and headmen so that they could be trained as catechists. Within a few days, a few boys were in residence. Later Fr. Brandsma decided to send twelve of these youngmen to Mukumu, Kakamega to be taught both reading and catechism. What was frustrating is that all but Saboke, Joyo, Otero and Kitembe managed to arrive in Kakamega in July 1910<sup>7</sup>.

By the end of 1910, the Roman Catholic missionaries had not achieved much in Kisiiland in terms of propagating the gospel. But threatened by the advancement of the Seventh Day Adventists who were opening one station after another at Rusinga Island, Gendia, Nyanza Gulf, and Wire Hill, the Mill Hill missionaries quickly moved into Kisii and in January 1911, Fr. Brandsma had to make an application to the government for land at Nyabururu, for the establishment of a station. They acquired 20 acres of land near Kisii station<sup>10</sup>, and on December 13th, 1911, Nyabururu Mission was officially founded by Fr. Brandsma and Fr. Wall<sup>11</sup>.

Missionary work in Gusii was, to a large extent, a painful undertaking for the Roman Catholic Church and the Seventh Day Adventist missionaries<sup>12</sup>. The community made it difficult to the missionaries because they did not want to cooperate and work as porters and labourers, whenever the missionaries required their services. Their reluctance together with the fact that they refused to sell food to Fr. Wall whenever he wanted to buy it from them, plus the fact that they displayed open hostility to the missionaries, played a great role in frustrating the success of missionary activity in Kisiiland as reported anonymously:

*At first, Nyabururu was not a success, in fact, it gave no promise whatsoever. The Gusii or Abagusii were hostile to the missionaries. This was because they associated the white missionaries with the people who had sent out the punitive expedition (of 1908). Later on, when the first World War broke out, the hostile feelings were intensified<sup>13</sup>.*

Hence, by the outbreak of World War I, missionary work was still far from taking root among the Gusii, despite the fact that missionaries had a misconception of Kisiiland being a favourable place for the success of Christianity. During the war, Kisii town was invaded by German troops forcing Fr. Wall and others to flee Nyabururu to take refuge in Kisumu. When the news spread among the Gusii that Nyabururu had been deserted, the Gusii rushed there and destroyed whatever they could find. They looted and helped to bring down whatever

stood up by tearing everything down; "a punitive expedition this time from their party"!1

Nyabururu remained closed without a priest in residence till October 1919 when Fr. Wall came back again to work full-time at the mission. This time the mission started to make some steady progress and with the coming of Fr. Doyle, tremendous Catholic church expansion was witnessed in Kisiiland.

During his tenure in Nyabururu, Fr. Doyle became very active and instrumental in the revival and re-establishment of missionary work in Kisii. He made journeys which enabled him to cover various parts of Kisii for the purpose of propagating the Christian gospel. In these journeys, he established out-stations, which later developed into out-schools of Nyabururu. These out-stations were: Itibo in Bonchari, Kiorori, Nyangweta and Mwamoriango in South Mugirango. There was also Nyansara and Bombaba in Bomachage, Nyakegogi in Bobasi, Amasago in Nyaribari, Mosochi in Bogetutu and Bonyaiguba in North Mugirango.

Despite stiff competition from the SDA, the Roman Catholic Church was by 1930s, gaining some roots in Kisiiland. On the side of education, the history of present modern education in Gusii started immediately with the establishment of Nyabururu mission. From the early start, the Mill Hill missionaries were aware of the role of education in the

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\*Emphasis by Fr. Burgman

expansion of missionary evangelical activities. The Mill Hill Fathers regarded schools as a vital vehicle by which the Kisii could be weaned from their pagan traditional background to the way of the cross. It is upon this background, that Fr. Brandsma opened a mission-cum school in Nyabururu whose objective was to improve the moral, social and intellectual status of the local natives at the same time leaving the natives as much as possible<sup>14</sup>.

The first concern of the Mill Hill Mission was to use education as a springboard of spreading the Christian gospel to the whole of Gusiiland. Initially, the school at Nyabururu targeted the sons of chiefs and headmen in the belief that the success of Christian enterprises depended on the acceptance of the most influential people within the indigenous community<sup>15</sup>.

The strategy of influencing the Kisii from the top by involving the ruling class in evangelical and educational work had been successfully used in Buganda by the White Fathers missionaries. By, 1912, according to the entry in a Nyabururu Diary, the sons of chiefs and headmen attending Nyabururu Mission School were: Saboke Ongeri, Odera Oketch, Nyamorero Ookwa, Mairura, Kitembe, Nyamusi, Otieno, Otieno Oketch, Okello Oketch, Nyamorero Ombati, Ongeri Nyakoi, Munuku Mitongia, Mogeni Matara and Chogo Mokoro<sup>16</sup>. It can be concluded that five of the sons of the chiefs and headmen in

Nyabururu Mission School could have been coming from Kisii, as per their names.

Those chiefs who had forged an alliance with the MHM especially chief Kasuku, were instrumental in producing porters and labourers who helped to construct the mission station. They further supplied food, clothes and maintained discipline among the boys who attended Nyabururu Mission School<sup>17</sup>.

The Nyabururu Mission School mainly emphasised the teaching of religious instructions, reading, writing, singing and simple arithmetic<sup>18</sup>. These subjects formed the core of the curriculum because the overall aim of the school was to produce catechists to serve in the church. By 1913, the attendance in the school included non-Kisii's<sup>19</sup>.

**Table 1: Pupils by ethnic group and sex attending Nyabururu Roman Catholic mission school in 1913:**

ETHNIC GROUP	NO. OF PUPILS	SEX
<i>Abagusii</i>	26	<i>Males</i>
<i>Abatende</i>	25	<i>Males</i>
<i>Abagwasi</i>	5	<i>Males</i>
<i>Luo</i>	7	<i>Males</i>
<i>Luo</i>	2	<i>Females</i>
Total	65	

Source: S.N. Bogonko, "Christian Missionary Education and its impact on the Abagusii of Western Kenya, 1906 - 1963" (unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Nairobi 1977).

Within a short period of its establishment, Nyabururu started to make some positive progress and achievement. For example, when the District Commissioner of South Kavirondo was writing the 1914 annual report, he noted that the school was able to provide him with boys to be employed as clerks in his office, unlike their counterparts the Seventh Day Adventist of Nyanchwa whose boys could neither read nor write.

However, the enthusiasm with which the Kisii had taken education started to slow down with the outbreak of the World War 1 as Fr. Wall was later to note:

*I cannot say that the kisii are very keen on reading as I have had considerable difficulty in getting chiefs to see the need of their sons and boys education<sup>19</sup>.*

The Gusii hatred of the white men who had carried punitive measures on them in 1905 and 1907 - 1908, the non-appealing missionary education and the shallowness of the curriculum which did not prepare them for white collar jobs in the civil administration, could have been the reasons for their reluctance in continuing education at Nyabururu.

These obstacles brought about the temporary closure of Nyabururu mission-cum school in the World War I period. The school re-opened towards the end of 1919, when Gusii attitude towards education had positively changed, as observed by District Commissioner of South Kavirondo:

*During the last few months, however noticeable change has come over them, one result being that many of them suddenly expressed a wish to learn, read and write.*

*Their wish is being acceded to and it is hoped that good results may be obtained in due course<sup>20</sup>.*

This new interest and enthusiasm on education was due to those Gusii who had participated in the World War I. They became aware and conscious of the new social-economic opportunities brought by education. After the war, the soldiers could have helped in boosting educational development in Kisiiland by urging the people to attend mission schools in great numbers.

Thus, for the MHM, it is during the time of Fr. Doyle, who arrived in Nyabururu, on April, 20th 1920, that great educational expansion in Kisiiland occurred. Fr. Doyle helped to build a number of schools and encouraged quite a number of parents to take their children to school. Some of the schools he helped to establish were: Nyabururu, today St. Mary's Boys, Mosoch, Amasago, Rangeyo, Nyansara, Bombaba and Bonyaiguba<sup>21</sup>.

These schools, apart from Nyabururu, were all elementary institutions. Nyabururu, for example, started from Standard A, and went all through up to standard six. The number of out or bush schools attached to it continued to rise from 21 in 1921 to 60 by 1927<sup>22</sup>. This remarkable expansion forced Fr. Doyle to start training African teachers at Nyabururu who in turn were posted to teach in the village schools. These teachers were, in most cases, unqualified and were unable to teach anything



more than the very elements of reading, writing and arithmetic.

Unlike the out - schools where elementary or vernacular teachers spent all their energy teaching religious education, Nyabururu taught carpentry, masonry, Kiswahili and English for the higher classes, that is, Standard five and six were being offered in the school curriculum<sup>23</sup>. From 1926 Nyabururu offered both religious and secular education in its timetable, and when the Nyanza provincial inspector of schools, Mr Webb, visited the school in September, 24, 1926, he was greatly impressed by the English knowledge of the teachers and the great number of subjects taught in the school<sup>24</sup>.

Due to the encouraging educational reports of both the MHM and their counterparts, the SDA in a meeting held on October 7, 1927, by the Kisii - Bakuria Local Native Council for the first time, a proposal for an educational grant of shillings 1000/= each for the Roman Catholic Mission Nyabururu and SDA Mission Nyanchwa, was put forward. This proposal was strongly recommended by the DC, Sir Hodge, who in a note to the LNC Minutes, recommended that:

*... this be approved. The LNC realises that they owe a great deal of the work undertaken by the mission in the past and they wish to show their appreciation by making these grants, which are to be used for the purpose of equipment and constructional purpose<sup>25</sup>.*

The grant was approved and given to the two missionary groups. For the Roman Catholic's, the grant was used in running St. Mary's School. In subsequent years, the missionaries continued receiving grants, and Fr. Doyle decided to use the money to develop a junior secondary school at St. Mary's to cater for the Kisii boys who had been sent home from St. Mary's Yala<sup>20</sup>. For the MHM, it's during Fr. Doyle's pastorship in Nyabururu that formal educational development started to gain root in Gusiland. The mission stations and out-schools of the RC, are shown in Figure 3a, below.

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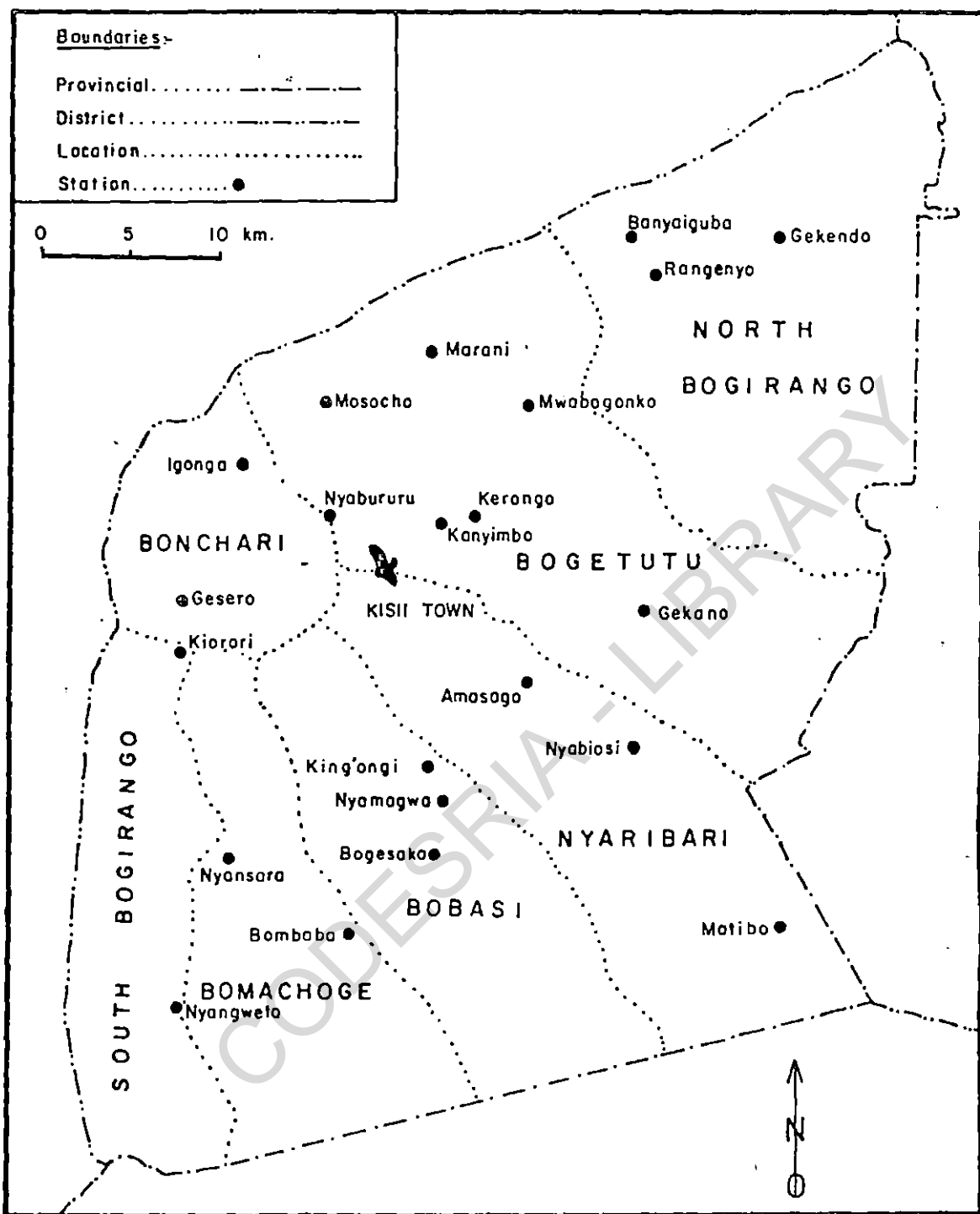


Fig. 3a. Roman Catholic Mission Stations and Out-Schools in Kisii and Nyamira Districts, 1909-1935.

Source: S.N. Bogonko, "Christian Missionary Education and its Impact on the Abagusii of Western Kenya, 1909-1963" (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Nairobi).

The Establishment and Educational Activities of the SDA Missionaries in Kisii (1913 - 1934)

The Christian missionaries of the Seventh Day Adventist were the first ones to arrive in South Kavirondo district, but they were overtaken by the Mill Hill Fathers in starting missionary work in Kisii<sup>27</sup>. Prior to their establishment in Kisiiland, the SDA Christian missionaries under Pastors E. Philip, A. Watson, J.H. Sparks and A.A. Carscallen had opened mission stations at Karungu (1912), the Isle of Rusinga (1912), Kanyadoto (1913) and Kamagambo (1913)<sup>28</sup>.

The first SDA mission in South Kavirondo district was established by Pastor A. A. Carscallen in 1907 at Gendia and Wire Hill respectively. It was from Gendia mission that the SDA activities spread to the rest of South Kavirondo district. Nyanchwa mission was founded by Pastor L. Evanson assisted by A. Delhova from America in 1913. Immediately the SDA acquired two acres within Kisii township, they went ahead by establishing a mission station, a school and residential convertees.

From the time the Seventh Day Adventists established themselves in Kisii, they embarked on the evangelical exercise of propagating the gospel, with the hope of eventually converting and winning the Kisii souls for Christ. Like the case of the Roman Catholic Mill Hill Fathers, missionary work in Kisiiland for the SDA proved to be quite a painful

undertaking. Even before the MRM and the SDA could settle among the Abagusii, Mumboism was flourishing.

Mumboism was a nativistic cult began by a Luo of Central Nyanza, by the name Onyango Dunde, who claimed to his adherents that the god Mumbo, a great serpent in Lake Victoria, had swallowed and spat him after three days on the lakeshore. Onyango was commanded by Mumbo, to announce Mumbo's displeasure at the presence of the Europeans, denounce the Christian religion, attack its doctrines and the European way of life. Mumboism predicted immediate expulsion of all the Europeans in Nyanza, hence experiencing rapid waves of resurgence with fast followings among the Luo and the Kisii<sup>27</sup>.

Apart from the Mumbo cult, the Kisii opposed the missionaries and did not easily allow their children to become involved with them. Far from what has been said, World War I also had its disastrous effects on the activities of SDA missionaries in Gusiland. When the war broke out, the SDA missionaries were forced to flee Kisii and take refuge at Kaimosi in North Kavirondo. Like the Nyabururu incident, the Kisii took advantage of the absence of the Whites at Nyanchwa mission, looted and completely destroyed whatever they found<sup>28</sup>. The mission remained in a bad state until 1916 when Pastor A. Watson reopened it.

By the end of 1916, Pastor Watson assisted by a Luo missionary volunteer, Yakobo Olwa had successfully managed to

get Musa Nyandusi, Samuel Omoke and Johanna Kiyondi who had been educated at the CMS Narok as the first three mento accept the SDA faith. The three were soon called to Nyanchwa for further studies on Christian evengelism where they teamed up with Paul Nyamweya, Mathayo Ratemo, Joel Araka, Joseph Simba, Michael Nyasinga, Joseph Omboga and A. Obegi. Around 1918, Shem Kiyaka, E. Mambe, I. Nyabere, J. Sindiga, J. Osoro, Ayubu Oburi and Stephen Orwenyo also joined others in Nyanchwa Mission<sup>21</sup>.

In 1921, Pastor E. Beavon a graduate of Starborough College, England, arrived in Nyanchwa to replace Watson, and it is during Beavon's time that the SDA Church managed to spread into most parts of Kisiiland. Beavon started by baptising all evangelist students who had joined Nyanchwa from 1916. In 1928, he declared them as pastors who were to work by propagating the Christian gospel to the whole of Kisiiland.

Between 1921 to 1929, the SDA Church had managed to establish numerous branches in various parts of Gusiiland. Some of these earliest SDA churches were at Magwagwa, Nyangweta, Mokomoni, Riokindo, Gesusu, Metembe, Nyanturago, Sengera, Nyakongo, Matongo, Nyaguta, Gionseri, Sironga and Riosiri in south Mugirango. These churches were so referred as Sabbath schools and they were attached to the main central church in Nyanchwa. In 1929, when Beavon was writing his annual report, he remarked that the SDA Church had about 42

Sabbath schools with a total average attendance of 3080 converts.

With regard to education, when the SDA Christian missionaries arrived, settled and started work among the Kisii, they were very much aware that it was only through education that they could be able to propagate their Christian gospel to the local inhabitants:

*The chief work of the SDA is to promulgate the gospel to the tribes of Africa. Realising that this can be most effectively done through enlightening people, the SDA mission had made education a fundamental in its policy<sup>32</sup>.*

Like the MHM, the SDA Christian missionaries in Kisii used education as a vital weapon of propagating the Christian gospel among the Kisii people. With the re-opening of Nyanchwa in 1916, a boarding school for married and unmarried students was established to teach religious education, writing, reading, simple arithmetic, principles of agriculture and nature study among other things. The local vernacular (Ekegusii) was used for those students who stayed longer in school. Those students who advanced a little bit higher than others could be instructed on English but this was not always the case as the SDA did not believe in teaching English to the natives<sup>33</sup>.

By 1919, a teacher training programme had already started in Nyanchwa and Musa Nyandusi who was later sent to teach at Omaobe, Samwel Omoke who taught at Gesambe out-school and Paul Nyamweya who remained at Nyanchwa were the first students to

graduate from the teacher training programme to become teachers<sup>24</sup>.

By 1929, the SDA Church had established about 80 village or out-schools in various parts of Kisiiland. Some of these earliest schools were built at Matunwa and Nyaiguta in Nyaribari, Bonyunyu and Tonga in North Mugirango, Gionseri in Bobasi, Riokindo and Kebera in Machoge, Kebirichi in East Kitutu, Sengera in West Kitutu, Matongo in Wanjare and Nyangweta in South Mugirango<sup>25</sup>.

In each of these schools, the SDA mission assigned a teacher-cum evangelist whose duty, apart from teaching, was to lay a foundation for more village schools. These schools were mainly religious institutions, since the SDA educational programme emphasized the "*gospel of work*". Thus, industrial and practical education was part and parcel of the school curriculum. The SDA believed industrial education was morally good for their students since it promoted the virtue of hard work and kept pupils busy from idleness which nurtured sin.

Industrial education was also said to have helped and equipped the African converts with relevant knowledge which could enable them improve their environment while at the same time ensuring that the mission stations were self-sustaining and supporting in terms of a steady supply of labour, bricks, furniture and food both for sale and consumption. The training of the heart, the hand and the eye was said to make a balanced and ideal Christian convert<sup>26</sup>.



By 1930, the SDA Church had achieved remarkable educational expansion. However, its dividends were not as pleasing<sup>77</sup>. The reason was that, education was not stressed with any degree of seriousness, since most teachers were only those pupils who had mastered 3R's, who after a short course at Nyanchwa were appointed in charge of the village schools.

Eric Beavon occasionally used to visit the village schools to supervise their progress and sometimes organized inservice courses at Nyanchwa for the teachers. In 1930, when Beavon left for his home, Nathaniel Nyanusi, an African adventist who had trained at the Jeans teacher's school Kabete, took over from him the supervision and inspection of the SDA schools in Kisii. Nyanusi worked as a supervisor between 1932 and 1942 when he finally retired from that work.

The map in Figure 3b below shows the location of SDA mission stations and schools in the period under review.

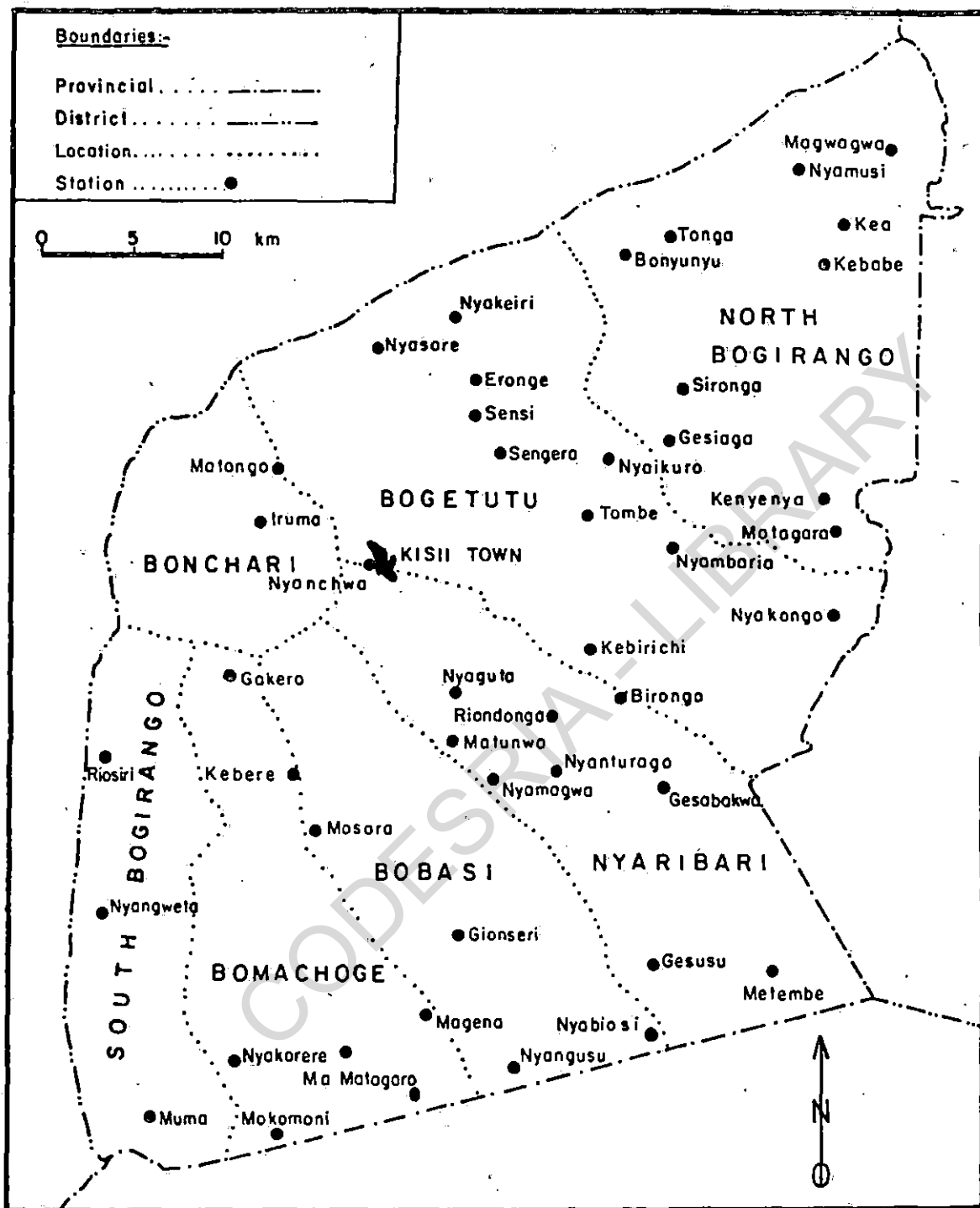


Fig. 3b. Seventh Day Adventist Mission Stations and Out-Schools in Kisii and Nyamira District, 1913—1935.

Source: S.N. Bogonko, "Christian Missionary Education and its Impact on the Abagusii of Western Kenya, 1909-1963" (Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Nairobi).

### Aims of Missionary Education

At whatever place that the missionaries settled, most of them engaged themselves in evangelical as well as educational work<sup>36</sup>. The Roman Catholic Mill Hill Fathers together with the Seventh Day Adventists who opened mission stations in Kisiiland were no exception. In educational work, the Christian missionaries saw the success of evangelization since they believed that a person's ability to read and understand the Bible made him a better Christian.

In Kisiiland, as in all the parts of Africa, when the Christian missionaries arrived, they found that Africans had their own religion, ways of worship, customs, beliefs and traditions. The missionaries then branded African practices as being barbaric, heathen, superstitious and satanic. They felt that it was their primary duty to fashion the African character and way of life after the pattern of Christ<sup>37</sup>. Thus from the start, the Christian missionaries preached the gospel with the aim of converting the African so that he could abandon his old way of life and live according to the way of the cross. However, the missionaries realized that for conversion and civilization to take place formal education was very necessary. Therefore, they saw education as an important weapon, a vehicle through which Christianity could be effectively propagated<sup>38</sup>.

E.T. Hole of the Friends Africa Mission (FAM) Kaimosi commented on the relationship between education and Christianity. He said:

*A very close relationship can be seen between evangelization and education work. While educating the native does not christinize him, yet it is most often through teaching that opportunity is offered of making a direct and effective appeal to the native to leave his old way of life and live for Christ<sup>41</sup>.*

Education helped in facilitating the Christian gospel. Hence the MHF and the SDA missionaries from their time of settlement in Kisii adopted the use of education for evangelization purpose. Discussing on the MHF and the SDA mission's stand with regard to education, S.N. Bogonko writes:

*... missions saw education as a means through which they could physically teach the local people. And indeed it was by education that the early missionaries managed to teach their pupils the basic principles of Christianity as well as the rudiments of writing, reading and arithmetic<sup>42</sup>.*

Missionary evangelization enterprise relied heavily on a person's ability to read and understand the Bible. This in itself forced the Mill Hill and the SDA in Kisii to establish village schools in which children of all ages could be given elementary education alongside religious instruction leading to baptism and increased church membership. Their early schools grew out of the desire to train African catechists and workers, and create an African middle class<sup>43</sup>.

Despite the fact that education was looked at as a vital means of propagating the Christian doctrine, little was done

by the early missionaries to stress the importance of education for its own sake<sup>44</sup>. Christian missionaries believed that education was only useful to them as long as it helped in hastening the spread of Christianity. The education for an African person was not a priority but was seen as a means to that end<sup>45</sup>.

### S u m m a r y

In this chapter, we have dealt with the aim, content and educational activities of the MHF and the SDA in Kisii land from 1909 to 1934. We have shown that the two Christian missionary groups pioneered in the establishment of the present day modern education in Kisii.

Missionary education, as we have shown, was to a large extent evangelical and little was done to offer literary education. Apart from religious education, the missionaries also offered industrial education with the aim of equipping Africans with relevant skills that could enable them to improve their environment and at the same time work for the general good of the mission.

Missionary educational programmes were generally supported by the colonial government policies. But as from the end of the World War I, the Kisii like the case of other communities, the Luhya, Kikuyu and the Luo started to challenge the type of education given to them in the mission schools and supported by the colonial government policies as we shall discuss in the next chapter.

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## CHAPTER THREE

### COLONIAL GOVERNMENT POLICIES, PRACTICES AND PARTICIPATION IN AFRICAN EDUCATION IN SOUTH KAVIRONDO TO 1925

In the present Kisii Nyamira, Migori, Homa Bay and Kuria districts, Christian missionaries, for a long time virtually enjoyed the monopoly of establishing, providing, financing and controlling formal educational development for the Africans.

Fearing financial implications and burdens that they could have incurred in shouldering African education, the colonial government was contented to leave the education of Africans to the Christian missionaries. The role missionaries had played in the education of the children of the working class in the eighteenth century Europe, was to ensure that these children developed good moral character. As good Christians, they accepted their status in society while looking towards heavenly rewards<sup>1</sup>. Through Christian instructions and teachings, the missionaries were able to pacify any feeling of popular dissent and rebellion that could have led to an uprising by members of the lower social-economic class. Therefore, against this background the British colonial government in Kenya left the task of educating Africans to the Christian missionaries.

With time, as the Christian missionaries began to find it increasingly difficult to shoulder and finance African education, missionary - government cooperation in African education emerged at the turn of the twentieth Century<sup>2</sup>. In this pattern of cooperation, the missionaries came to largely

depend on government educational policies and financial support, while the state relied on the missionaries for supervision, management and partial financing of schools<sup>3</sup>. In an attempt to discuss colonial government educational policies and practices in the case of South Kavirondo District, we shall examine the response of the inhabitants of this area to colonial government educational policies and practices.

### Colonial Government Policies and Practices on African Education

The British established a protectorate over a large part of the present day Kenya in 1895<sup>4</sup>. The government was mainly concerned with establishing effective control and administration over its newly acquired territory. For strategic and economic reasons, the colonial government constructed with utmost speed the Uganda Railway at the cost of nearly six million sterling pounds than the actual estimated cost of four million.

The great expenses incurred in the construction of the railway line brought about an outcry by the British taxpayers who condemned and called the whole venture a 'financial fiasco' and a waste of taxpayers money. Now that the railway was complete, its expenses had to be paid without involving the British taxpayers again. Hence, this meant that part of the protectorate had to be developed for economic exploitation.

Sir Charles Eliot, Commissioner from 1900 to 1904 thought that the best solution to the above issue was to encourage

European settlers to move into the Kenyan highlands which had an ideal climate and favourable conditions for large-scale farming. In part of his encouragement, Eliot is reported to have noted that:

*The native population is very small, only two districts (Kavirondo and Kikuyu) can be said to be thickly populated, large areas are uninhabited and these areas with others are climatically suitable to European colonization.*

The arrival of the settler community forced the colonial government to alienate from Africans several thousand acres of land which they sold to the former cheaply. But despite the availability of capital and land, the development and success of the settler economy in Kenya was largely to depend on the availability of African labour force.

Therefore, the settlers led by the British aristocracy among whom were, Lord Delamere, Francis Scott and Cavendish Bentick successfully campaigned for a share in the running of the government so that they could get a forum for pushing forward their settler grievances. In 1908, the colonial government gave in to the settler demand by setting up a Legislative Council where laws and policies governing the colony were made. The establishment of Legislative Council imposed financial and educational policies which in the long run forced the African to enter into the labour market. Like the Christian missionaries, the settler community held deeply rooted racial ideas about the educability of the native Africans.

The White community in general saw that Africans were a primitive race of savages who had stagnated at the genesis of the evolutionary process. This attitude was further strengthened by the outbreak of pseudo-scientific racialist theories in mid - nineteenth century Europe. The base of these theories rose as a result of studies carried out by anthropologists and ethnologists about the educatability of the African. In these studies the cranial capacity and comparative head sizes and shapes were made as a guide to intelligence and ability. In their findings, it was allegedly revealed that an African brain was darker than that of a Caucasian and that it was covered with brown spots. Hence the studies reinforced the belief that African brains and skulls were less developed in comparison to those of the Europeans.

In this line of argument, it was generally held that an African lacked the power of reasoning and therefore could not be able to cope with secular education. To expose an African to an academic curriculum was considered to be a futile and hopeless venture, rather his mental 'deficiency' made it prudent to expose him to practical education where the use of the hand and eye was predominant.

The pseudo - scientific racists argued that an African was much like a child, easily fooled, had short memory of sorrows and cruelties and provided he is well fed, easily becomes happy<sup>7</sup>. The emergence of the evolutionary theory as

advanced by writings of Charles Darwin in the '*The Origin of Species*' no doubt provided yet another strong weapon to support the idea that Africans were inferior, semi-barbarians and were completely incapable of attaining the European standards of living.

The European community in Kenya was completely influenced by these racists ideas. They believed that it was a useless venture to educate the Kenya Africans. Most of the settlers believed that the African mind therefore they were convinced that the best education for an African was the one geared towards manual occupations, which they considered attuned to his arrested development, and child-like bearing characteristics<sup>e</sup>.

It was strongly felt by the European community in general that the best educational needs of an African were to resemble those of the European working class in Europe who in rank and need were at par. Therefore, a system of education which emphasized dignity of work, self-discipline, punctuality, reliance and responsibility was transferred to Africa as a way of shunning idleness, laziness and helplessness which Africans were said to be suffering from.

In Kenya, as was the case with other British colonies, the provision of industrial or vocational education to the Africans was in conformity to the beliefs of all the White community. They believed that through industrial and

vocational education, the perceived 'natural laziness' that the African suffered from could be eradicated.

Furthermore, the provision of industrial and vocational education was seen as a means of promoting the virtues of humility and encouraging manual labour which Africans were said to be lacking. It was along this line that the Frazer report of 1908, the Education Commission of East African Protectorate of 1919, the Advisory Committee of 1923 and the Department of Education in Kenya all supported industrial and vocational education as the best system of education for the Africans. In 1924, for example, the Department of Education issued the following statement:

*... education through industry is the only right system of education for the African in this present state of development. It is scientifically correct and in accordance with the dictates of psychology. The mentality of the African is underdeveloped and it's universally admitted that handcrafts and manual training are especially valuable in developing the motor centre of the brain and for this reason, feature: largely in Kindergarten and in schools for defective children.<sup>9</sup>*

The provision of secular education to Africans was strongly opposed by a wide cross section of the Europeans. Secular education was seen as politically dangerous as it exposed Africans to ideas above their station in life which in the long run could make them compete for the same jobs and equal treatment like them.

*The fear of competition for jobs and demands for equal rights pushed some white extremists and they asserted that the education for the native should not be the kind that would enable him to forsake his place in the tribal community. If he must be*

*educated, his education should not encourage him to be anything beyond a good servant*<sup>10</sup>.

Convinced of the White superiority and fearing the dangers of giving secular education, the European community in Kenya prescribed vocational oriented type of education for the Africans. For them, vocational education would facilitate subjugation and instil discipline in the African. In India and Natal Province of South Africa, where the British government had made a mistake of giving Africans metropolitan academic school curriculum, political uprisings had broken out, hence in the Colonial Office in London a powerful anti-academic group emerged to oppose the provision of secular education in the new colonies.

The anti-academic group further believed that the provision of literary education could make an African directly accessible to the mysteries of the White man which in turn could make him big-headed and subversive. This attitude was at times expressed in such terms as the best African was the one who was ignorant and therefore with no challenge to the White man<sup>11</sup>. In his evidence before the Education Commission of East African Protectorate, Rev. J. Bergman stated clearly that *'he did not believe in the education for clerkship for the natives for sometime to come and that the natives themselves could not do anything because they lacked initiatives'*<sup>12</sup>.

The success story of the vocational education programme at Hampton and Tuskegee colleges for the Negroes in the Southern States of America served as a good example for its suitability to Africans. The European community in Africa were thus convinced of creating a similar education programme in Africa as those of Hampton and Tuskegee colleges of the Southern States of America believed that Africans as the Negroes of the Southern States of America were to be educated according to their environment so that they could be a constant source of labour in the European farms and not in politics.

During the colonial era in Kenya, education development for the Africans largely adopted a techno-religious character on the basis of preparing humble, hardworking, disciplined and responsible Africans for the services of the white people. In both mission and government schools during the period under review, the contents of education given to the African was largely affected by the factors we have already discussed here.

#### Government Participation on African Education (1911 - 1925)

African education in Kenya was closely interwoven with Missionary work. Government participation on policy guidelines and control of the African education only started to emerge in 1911, the year when the Department of Education was established and its first director appointed.



Prior to 1911, the government had neither a policy nor a development plan, nor an organization to guide its participation in the field where Christian missionaries had gained extensive experience particularly in regard to the education of the Kenyan Africans<sup>13</sup>.

In Kenya, the colonial government was concerned with the pacification of the various ethnic groups and inculcation of proper respect for European interpretation of law and order<sup>14</sup>. In 1904, Sir Charles Eliot did observe that:

*Education is entirely in the hands of the missionaries with the exception of small European schools at Nairobi belonging to the railway. Perhaps this encouragement will be found sufficient for sometime to come, for the missionaries are many and native population scanty<sup>15</sup>.*

Therefore, Sir Charles Eliot and Hayes Sadler proposed a system of education throughout the protectorate whereby mission institutions could be provided with grants-in-aid to undertake industrial and vocational education for the Africans.

The first step towards the provision of the proposed efficient system of education was undertaken by the Protestant missionary group who in 1908 formed a joint committee known as Missionary Board of Education to discuss common problems in language, discipline, textbooks, grants-in-aid and method. The formation of an educational Board by Protestant churches under the leadership of Henry Scott coincided with the Frazer Commission of 1909<sup>16</sup>.

The Frazer Commission under Prof. J. Nelson Frazer, a long experienced educational officer in India, was the first officially sanctioned inquiry by the colonial government into the status of education in the colony. Frazer was commissioned to recommend a structure of education for the colony along the lines put forward by the Giroulds Commission which envisaged a racial approach in the development of education in the protectorate<sup>17</sup>.

Armed with fresh experience from India, where literary education to Indians had led to an uprising against the colonial government, together with the strong encouragement from both the settler and Christian communities in Kenya, Frazer in his report recommended different educational systems for the various racial groups in Kenya namely; Europeans, Asians, Arabs, and Africans. In writing his report, he strongly recommended industrial education for the Africans which he felt would equip them with relevant skills needed in the world of work in the European farms<sup>18</sup>.

Frazer's report on government - missionary cooperation recommended that it was desirable that educational facilities for the Africans should be provided by various mission societies on the ground that education of any kind, industrial or technical was bound to be mischievous without morality hence a complete education for Africans was therefore to include some religious instructions<sup>19</sup>.

In line with the recommendations of the Frazer report, the Department of Education through which government grants-in-aid were to be administered was established in 1911. J.R. Orr was appointed the first Director of Education. By 1912, eight mission schools which administered basic industrial training in smithing, carpentry agriculture and even typing were receiving government grants-in-aid through the Department of Education. Some of these mission schools were those of the Friends Africa Mission (FAM) in Nyanza, the Church Missionary Society (CMS) at Maseno and those of the Church of Scotland Mission (CSM) at Kikuyu and Tumutumu.

In areas which were not adequately served by the missionaries, the colonial government through the Department of Education went ahead to open its own schools. Some of these schools were opened at Kitui (1909), Machakos (1915), Narok (1918) and Kajiado (1925). The opening of these schools marked the first attempt by the government to provide educational facilities to the Africans.

In almost all these first government schools for Africans, the curriculum included religious education, simple agriculture, crafts and industrial education. Upon the establishment of the Department of Education, one of the major features of government policy regarding African education was its technical nature.

To promote this kind of education, an education commission of the East African Protectorate was appointed in

1919 following the 1918 proposals in which various views had been presented with regard to the nature of education in the East African Protectorate. The 1919 Commission was commenced on 8th July 1918 by the acting Governor Sir C.C. Baring and was Chaired by J.W. Bartor.

This commission, like that of Frazer, was supposed to report on the best possible means of effecting the educational needs of the East African Protectorate. After listening to evidence from the Christian bodies and individuals, it was proposed that the best way of furthering education among the natives was through the already existing missionary bodies. It further recommended grant-in-aid subsidies in respect of pupils at technical schools. It also felt that Education given to the natives should adopt technical lines but it was apprehensive of the:

*... great danger of secular education divorced from moral and religious instruction. The natives require something more than abstract moral code in place of primitive moral laws and definite religious belief is necessary if he has to become an honest and reputable member of the society*<sup>20</sup>

According to the commission's recommendations, education for Africans was to be based on techno-religious lines. This was to enable them enter the field of labour rather than pursue academic education which could "ruin" them by preparing them for clerical and other related jobs. With regard to teachers, the commission recommended their training and went ahead to suggest frequent inspection of schools and called upon District Commissioners to visit schools within

their jurisdiction and inform chiefs, elders and parents of the value of education.

In the case of South Kavirondo, the colonial government's participation was very minimal as there was no school to cater for a class of children growing up in Kisii township and the trading centre. The South Kavirondo Annual Report noted:

*I would strongly advocate the establishment of a government industrial school at all District Headquarters. Apart from the opportunities which would be afforded to natives of the township and trade centre to whom some form of industrial education is a vital necessity<sup>21</sup>.*

It was not until 1920 that there was increased government involvement in African education in the district, especially the inspection of the mission schools. In a nutshell, the colonial government education policy was largely to promote industrial education. To this end, in 1922, the Department of Education announced the establishment of grant-in-aid to those missions which gave industrial education and which also met the required government standards.<sup>22</sup>

In 1924, the members of the Phelps Stokes Education Commission visited East Africa and after making a detailed educational investigation from various Kenyan communities recommended co-operation between the government and the missionaries in the running of African education. They also recommended an educational curriculum adaptable to the African environment so that the African could be prepared for manual work which was beneficial to him and his community as a whole<sup>23</sup>.

To promote industrial education for adaptation, the government established two central training institutions. The Native Industrial Training Depot (NITD) in 1924 and the Jeans School, Kabete in 1925.<sup>24</sup> The NITD offered advanced training in technical subjects which were taught in the village schools, while the Jeans School trained Africans to be supervisors who were meant to go around a circle of schools advising, stimulating and supervising the village school teachers<sup>25</sup>.

These educational institutions were also supposed to be models of similar institutions which were to be established in the colony. It can be seen from the above discussion that the colonial government like the Christian missionaries prescribed techno-religious education at the expense of literary education to the Africans.

#### The African Quest for Secular Education: The Case of the Abagusii

As already discussed, in most parts of Kenya, South Kavirondo included, Christian missionaries were largely responsible for the provision of educational facilities to the Africans, while conforming to the colonial government educational policies. The education they gave was primarily evangelistic for acquiring converts. Hence the provision of schools by the missionaries was complimentary to their desired objective of promoting the tenets of Christianity and increasing the number of Christian followers.

Since the Christian missionaries were convinced that schools were the best instruments of promoting evangelization, they went ahead opening one school after another. Commenting on the nature of mission schools and education they gave, Bogonko notes that:

Not only did missionaries fail to supervise their schools satisfactorily but they also had inadequate supply of teachers, let alone qualified ones, many available teachers were also unpaid and underpaid. This very factor produced poor quality education...."<sup>26</sup>

These factors made education at the mission schools inefficient, inadequate and meagre. Hence general disenchantment and opposition from the Gusii, Luhya, Kikuyu, Embu, Meru, Luo and Abukuria broke out as a result of techno-religious bias of the education that they were subjected to.

Most of the Africans who participated in the World War I came back home equipped with some experience related to educational matters. At the War, some Africans were able to see Europeans doing all sorts of things with considerable ease. They were convinced that the Europeans capability was as a result of his academic education instead of techno-religious education. Back home, the War veterans started to demand for academic education which was given to their European counterparts. In their view, literary education was the most direct route to a better salary and good status as that held by their white counterparts.

Accordingly, for the greater part of the 1920s, most Christian missionaries were pre-occupied with attempts to improve their schools especially on the technical side as a way of securing government grant-in-aid, a condition which had been set by the Department of Education. Hence, they were not ready to listen to African demands for literary education.

When it was evident that the missionaries were not ready to offer literary education in their schools, some of the mission educated Africans formed political associations to pressurize for their grievances. Such associations included the Kikuyu Association (KA) (1920), the Young Kavirondo Association (YKA), the Kikuyu Central Association (KCA), the Kavirondo Tax Payers Welfare Association (KTPWA), the Native Catholic Union (NCU) and the North Kavirondo Central Association (NKCA)<sup>27</sup>.

These associations, apart from articulating the african social, economic and political grievances, took educational matters as one of their major concerns. In a memorandum presented to Sir E. Grigg, the then Governor of Kenya, the Kikuyu Association is reported to have said that:

*We in Kikuyu province pay a very large amount annually in Hut and Poll tax of this large sum, we see very little coming back to us in direct benefits. We are grateful for the assistance given to mission schools by government to enable them do more for us in the way of education. We wish however to have Central High school established somewhere in our country to which sons can go for more advanced education on leaving elementary schools<sup>28</sup>.*



Besides the looming political agitation by Africans who generally demanded for equality in all aspects of life, conflicts also broke out between the White settlers and the Indians as from 1920. Among other things, Indians complained of unfair political representation in the Legislative Council and economic suppression which reserved the fertile Kenyan Highlands for the White settlers.

As this struggle persisted, the Colonial Office in London, after examining the situation in the colony, was forced to issue a statement which came to be known as the Devonshire White Paper. This Statement clearly defined the British colonial policy in Kenya. It declared that:

*Primarily, Kenya is an African territory and its majesty's government thinks it necessary definitely to record their considered opinion that the interests of the African natives must be paramount and that if and when those interests and the interests of the immigrant races should conflict the former should prevail<sup>29</sup>.*

Although the Devonshire White Paper did not lead to serious political changes in Kenya, the commendation and passing of the Native Authority Ordinance of 1924 was largely due to it. The Ordinance was to give the Africans more powers to make decisions on matters that affected them. This led to the establishment of the Local Native Councils in 1925 which were seen as the most legitimate bodies to represent the African interests. In South Kavirondo, through this body, money and materials were collected by the inhabitants of the

area to establish GAS Kisii which was to be run outside missionary but under colonial government umbrella.

### S u m m a r y

Before the Frazer Report of 1909, the colonial government's contribution towards African education was negligible. However, as a result of the report the government began to directly contribute to the development of African education by establishing the Department of Education in 1911, giving grants-in-aid to some mission schools, issuing policy and establishing its own schools in areas which were not well-catered for by the Christian missionaries. Owing to the fact that Gusiiland was well-served by the Roman Catholic and Seventh Day Adventist missionaries, the government did not bother to establish its own schools in the area.

Therefore, in Gusiiland, and South Kavirondo in general, government contribution to African education was in terms of policies which tended to prescribe techno-religious education to the Africans. By the end of the World War I, the Gusii had become dissatisfied with the type of education offered in mission schools. Hence when the Native Council Ordinance was passed in 1924 and the Local Native Councils established, through this Channel, Africans were able to establish their own schools in Kisii outside the missionary and Government control as we shall discuss in the next chapter.

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## CHAPTER FOUR

### ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF GOVERNMENT AFRICAN SCHOOL KISII 1925-1945

Immediately the Local Native Councils were inaugurated in 1925, Africans started to utilise them to enhance their educational needs and wants.<sup>1</sup> The LNCs were, therefore, seen as the best forum through which Africans were at long last able to air their views to the government especially as to what type of education their people wanted. In North, Central and South Kavirondo districts of Nyanza Province and those of Kiambu, Murang'a and Nyeri districts of Central Province, Africans in these areas strongly demanded through the LNCs the establishment of government schools outside missionary control.

The LNCs in these districts contributed money through self-imposed cess for the establishment of their own schools, a sign which demonstrated that in no uncertain terms did they wish to be educated in institutions under the Christian missionaries. The 1926, Education Department Annual Report States:

*The Local Native Councils in various districts have raised a voluntary cess for the establishment of the government schools which it is hoped to start in 19282.*

It was as a result of this strong demand for education from the LNCs that the government finally accepted to allow Africans to establish their own schools. We will now endeavour to discuss the background to the establishment of Government African School, Kisii and as well as consider

educational developments at the school up to 1945, the year it was upgraded to junior secondary school status.

Background to the Establishment of Government African School - Kisii

In Chapter Three, we discussed the need for a government school in Kisii Town to provide adequate technical education, which the mission schools were not offering. With the passing of 1910s, the desire of having that proposed school had died out<sup>3</sup>. However, as from 1925, there was a strong demand by the peoples of South Kavirondo District for a government school, in reciprocation for the taxes they paid to the government. The area District Commissioner M.F.G. Campbell, supported the idea and in In December 1925, he raised the following concern:

*I believe that the government will soon or later be placed in a position of some embarrassment, if the policy of laissez - faire at present adopted be persisted. That a district populated by 274,133 and paying willingly a sum of Shs. 1,158,168/= should not possess one Government school, is to my mind, a staggering situation, deserving everything unfavourable which can be said or thought<sup>4</sup>*

The DC further warned the government that, the youth in South Kavirondo if not given a chance for education then, they were bound to be disloyal, inefficient, dangerous and discounted mob who would not assist it.<sup>5</sup>

As the demand for a government school hotted up, the two Local Native Councils of South Kavirondo: the Kisii-Bukuria, and Luo-Basuba decided to take the lead in this plight. They collected money from self-imposed taxation which they voted to

the project. By 1926, the Luo-Basuba had earmarked a sum of Shs. 20,000 for the establishment of the school.

The issue of a government school among the Kisii-Bukuria Council, first came up during the meeting which was held in August 8, 1927. During the meeting, the president of the Kisii-Bukuria LNC who was the DC of South Kavirondo tabled a circular letter from the Chief Secretary concerning the government agreement towards the establishment of a government school by the LNC. The Council deliberated on the letter and reached a common agreement that such a school was both necessary and desirable. They, therefore, decided on an annual sum to be raised until a sufficient amount would be realised for the construction of the school.<sup>e</sup>

By the end of 1927, the Kisii-Bukuria had netted Shs. 25,000 for the construction and maintenance of the proposed school, while the Luo-Bakuria's vote was Shs. 20,000/-<sup>f</sup>. In the 1929 and 1930 estimates, the two LNCs had realised Shs. 53,000/= and Shs.100,000/= respectively for the purpose of building and equipping the intended school<sup>g</sup>.

It is remarked that almost all the chiefs were very vocal in their support of the intended school. Chiefs Onsongo of Bogetutu, Aoga Angwenyi his successor, Direre of Bassi and Musa Nyandusi of Nyaribari were strong supporters of establishing a government school in Kisii, except chief Martinus Maina of North Mugarango, a Roman Catholic by faith. The latter, on his part, wanted the Christian missionaries and in particular, the Roman Catholic Church to

control formal education in Gusii, leave alone the school to be established.

Although the chiefs were rallying round an LNC sponsored school, soon rivalry broke out as to the site and location of the school. In the Kisii-Bukuria LNC meeting held on march 21st 1930, the president of the LNCs informed the meeting that the Luo-Busuba who had contributed towards the establishment of the intended school, wanted it established at Yala. However, the Kisii-Bakuria considered it inadvisable for their children to learn at Yala in the Luo country, due to tribal differences and that the Kisii invariably felt sick when living in Luo country.

On that account, the Kisii and Bakuria no longer wished to participate in the Luo-Basuba Scheme and were determined to go it alone. Consequently, they decided to vote funds towards the establishment of a Kisii-Bukuria school in their country. By 1931 they had voted shs 13,500/= for the school. By 1932, a sum of Shs. 66,500/= had been set aside by the Kisii-Bakuria Council towards the construction of the school.

The Council selected a Sub-Committee consisting of chiefs Musa Nyandusi, Kereu Abaga, Aoga Angwenyi, Wambura Munanka and Nyakichanga Tendeka. The purpose of the committee was to present the Kisii-Bakuria grievances on the proposed school to the colonial administration and to select a suitable site where the school was to be constructed. With the help of chiefs Musa Nyandusi and Aoga Angwenyi, the Abagusero clan



donated 532 acres of land in Kisii township for the establishment of the school.

The Debate on the Nature of Government African School Kisii

Although the District Commissioner of South Kavirondo had shown his solidarity with the Kisii-Bukuria LNC over the establishment of the school, it was not plain sailing.

The LNC had a lot of problems to contend with, regarding the nature of the proposed school.

The greatest obstacle was the attitude of the Christian missionaries especially the Roman Catholics who were opposed to the establishment of the school in Kisii for once the Catholics and Seventh Day Adventists, not usually known for their friendly relations, found themselves on the same side of the fence, fighting for total monopoly and control of African education.

They argued that, since Kisii land was well-catered by mission schools, the government had no business of establishing a school in that area. The missionaries reasoned that, since they had European staff, building and native teachers to organise for necessary educational expansion in Kisii, the government was only to support them by giving them the cost of education instead of allowing the establishment of the school which would not only be a heavier drain on government resources but also duplicating what the mission schools were already doing.<sup>10</sup>

In the LNC, the missions had some powerful allies especially among the Catholic members, who did everything

possible to prevent the establishment of a government school in Kisii. For example, in March 22, 1932, the chairman of the school committee and the DC of Kisii, Major C.E.V. Buxton called a meeting to get views on the nature of curriculum the school was to offer.

Fr. Doyle, a Roman Catholic priest at Nyabururu suggested that the intended school should be a medium one, teaching all trades and disciplines. He warned against the school offering elementary and primary education which the missions were successfully offering.<sup>11</sup> In summary, he tried to save what could be saved by striking a compromise between the government schools and the mission ones.

Contrary to the missionary views especially that of Fr. Doyle of Nyabururu the Kisii chiefs had mixed reactions. For example, Chief Musa Nyandusi in particular:

*...wanted to see the school ready to provide the priceless commodity of education ...was pleased at the prospects of a school being built and asked if the pupils might be taught English, since the knowledge was of growing value to the Africans who left their reserves to seek for work.<sup>12</sup>*

Chief Nyandusi's views as well as those of other members of the school area committee were that the proposed school should run along non-denominational lines where all branches of knowledge could be offered. This could enable the pupils to learn better skills of agriculture, domestic science and how to conduct themselves with providence and generally how to raise the standard of life in the village reserves.<sup>13</sup> Even though it had been agreed unanimously that the Kisii-Bukuria LNC should establish the intended school, yet there was

another battle, fought outside the Council mainly by Pastor W.W. Armstrong, of the SDA Mission Nyanchwa, Fr. H. Doyle a Roman Catholic Priest at Nyabururu, McInnes and R. Gethin a businessman at Kisii town over the curriculum the proposed school was supposed to offer.

Pastor W.W. Armstrong's memorandum, dated April 18th, 1929 welcomed the government move in sharing with the missions the great task of educating the Africans. He pointed out that since it was not possible for either the government or mission to educate Africans alone, these called for co-operation between the two in developing African education. He went on to say that the birth of LNC school should be complementary to the work of the missions but not competitive. He suggested that such a school should be built so that adherents of all faiths could attend without sacrificing their religious principles.<sup>14</sup>

Armstrong hoped that the school would bring a new understanding of the African mind as well as reveal to him (African) a new world of ideas, values and open to him, a great store of knowledge. He expected the school to teach the natives how to become practical citizens by giving them a good knowledge in handcrafts which was necessary in making the reserve better places to dwell in. Regardless of the school being non-denominational, it was to teach religious education and moral instructions which he believed could influence the formation of character. The standpoint of

Pastor W.W. Armstrong represents the typical missionary views of those days towards their attitude towards Africans.

Contrary to the liberal and progressive views of Armstrong, Fr. Doyle in his memorandum dated 12th April 1932, seemed to confine education of Africans as a missionary preserve. In his opinion, since the Gusii were industrious people, the government should support the missionaries to promote those areas where the latter had failed. Doyle wanted the missionary to control African education and went a head to call for community based education where parents as well as children were included. He felt that schools should not take pupils away from their homes and tribal life, which in the long run would bring unrest to the old and the young. He called for relevant education which could benefit the whole reserve. He said that such education "*must relate its message to every side of village life*".<sup>15</sup>

Fr. Doyle hoped that such education must not be boxed up within the four walls of the schools. "*It must flow out into the river of the tribal life, sweetening it, ennobling it, enriching it spiritually, materially and sanitarily*".<sup>16</sup> He felt that the school must be able to deal with vital forces at work in the village life and be able to educate parents and the community as a whole.

With this type of education, the Kisii were bound to be good farmers to grow crops, breed cattle; have ventilated houses with and bring up healthy families.

With regard to his views on literary education, he felt that mission schools were supposed to have full control than the government. He suggested to be build hostels for pagan pupils in Nyanchwa and Nyabururu, where they could eat and sleep but join up with mission pupils for purely secular subjects. He proposed that if the government went ahead to build the proposed LNC school, then the missionaries and their catechists were to have the right of entry to the school for religious instructions of the pupils.<sup>17</sup>

Fr. Doyle believed that Africans should not be educated for jobs which were non-existent. Quoting the governor, Sir Edwards, he remarked that *"what happened in England and India should not be repeated in Kenya"*.<sup>18</sup> In his memorandum, Fr. Doyle looked more of a community builder. This helps to explain why he opposed the establishment of the Government African School Kisii.

Despite the Christian missionaries' monopoly of development of African education Messrs. McInnes and Gethin, who were living in Gusii were opposed to them. In their memorandum presented to the Director of Education, they called for the establishment of the intended Government African School, as the mission schools had failed in their responsibility of imparting education to the Africans.

In his memorandum, dated 27th March, 1932, McInnes started by defending himself that contrary to what missionaries thought of him as being against them, he had

alot of respect for the missions, their work, organisation and personnel.<sup>17</sup> He noted that most Kisii people were pagans with no interest to mission controlled schools. He opposed the idea of Christian missionaries trying to impose themselves on the Africans against their wishes.<sup>20</sup> He wondered how the Abakuria who had not got missionary education, could benefit from technical education. He felt that if this was applied, then those areas with mission education could get literacy education at the expense of those areas without Christian missionaries. He believed that the best the government could do was to give the pagans what they were asking for. He called for the establishment of a central non-denominational school.<sup>21</sup> The proposed school should be a district center for dissemination of culture and enlightened ideas. To him, the proposed school was to create good citizens who were going to be high potential earners.

Like McInnes, Gethin who was not particularly known for his strong religious views, urged the government to go ahead and grant the Kisii people the school they were asking for. He reminded the Christian missionaries that whenever they wanted land to establish either a mission or a school, Africans had already provided.<sup>22</sup> He noted that Africans had joined the mission schools with an aim of escaping from any sort of manual labour and for the sake of getting Christian names. This meant that majority of them were

completely unreliable and a menace who needed strict supervision in their places of work.<sup>23</sup> The only way to discontinue this habit was to have a school run along the *"same lines as the English boarding schools to which pupils should be admitted when young enough so as to leave at the age of 16"*.<sup>24</sup> He stressed the application of strict discipline which was to inculcate self-respect and racial pride and virtues which he felt were absent among the Kisii.

Despite the missionary opposition, the majority of the members in the Kisii-Bukuria LNC pushed the government to allow the establishment of the school.<sup>25</sup>

#### The Establishment and Development of the School

The financial problem which could have prevented the establishment of Government African School Kisii was quickly solved. The Luo-Busuba decided to join the Kisii-Bukuria project, after their project at Yala, Central Nyanza aborted. In a joint meeting of the two LNCs of South Kavirondo held in January 1933, they both agreed to contribute on equal basis to a common pool, 3,000 pounds for the school's construction, which was estimated to cost 8,426 pounds based on the actual cost of Government African School, Kagumo.<sup>26</sup>

The official permission to start the construction of the school was obtained early in 1934 after the site of its location was approved by H.O. Weller, the supervisor of Technical Education.<sup>27</sup> His recommendations were further endorsed by H.S. Scott, the Director of Education, and Sir,

Phillips Cunliff Lister, the Colonial Secretary of the State.<sup>28</sup>

With official permission, the building of the school started and the Native Industrial Training Depot Kabete (NITD) trainees were used in its construction. An inscription on the main building of Kisii school reads:

*This building was erected by the Native industrial training Depot from funds provided by the Local Native Councils of South Kavirondo in the year 1934.*<sup>29</sup>

Towards the end of 1934, the building was already complete and the first principal of the GAS Kisii, H.A.W. Chapman, officially opened the school in February 1935.

When GAS Kisii was finally established a joint meeting of two LNCs was held at which Mr. H.A.W. Chapman the principal recommended the entry requirements to be standard 3 pupils aged between 10 to 13 years. The meeting also endorsed that Entrance Examination to be administered to all candidates and an annual school fees of Ksh. 18/= per pupil. The money was to be paid once and not by instalments. In January 1935, an Entrance Examination was attempted by a fairly large number of prospective candidates. They were given papers in arithmetic and Kiswahili. Out of the twenty-two Kisii candidates who sat for the examination, only one managed to qualify for the primary course; but even with this one, he was judged by the then principal C.A. Baring as being too old.<sup>30</sup>



This poor performance clearly reflected poor educational of mission schools in Kisii. It was against this background that the school committee recommended the GAS Kisii to begin at substandard A and B and standard I and II. The committee further proposed that an equal number of Luo and Gusii could be admitted to the school and then progress on to the primary Level.<sup>21</sup> Table 2 below shows that at elementary level, the Luo students were predominant in the lower classes.

Table 2 GAS, Pupils 1936 and 1939

Standard	Gusii	Luo	Standard	Gusii	Luo
III	1	63	VI	3	25
II	8	18	V	17	20
I	13	17	IV	16	13
Sub A	26	10	III	18	13
Sub B	18	2			

Source: Br. Anthony Koning "The Foundation of Kisii School" (Bulletin No. 120. 29.2.95)

By 1945, it was still proved by the Entrance Examination that there were insufficient candidates of the requisite educational standards from Gusii mission schools who could join the GAS Kisii. For example, out of more than 350 candidates who applied to join the school for 68 vacancies, 67 of those who qualified were Luos, and only One Kisii managed to qualify:<sup>22</sup>

The poor performance of Gusii students could be attributed to the community hatred of the White man and their resistance to missionary education.

Along with the problem of recruitment, there also occurred the problem of finding a name for the school. Paul Mboya, a member of the schools sub-committee suggested that since the school had been established by funds from the LNCs of South Kavirondo, it should be called "*South Kavirondo Local Native Council School*".<sup>33</sup> But the colonial government generally wanted the school to be named "*Government African School*", just as the other secular industrial schools at Machakos, Kitui; Kajiado, Narok Kabianga, Kapsabet, Tambach and Kapenguria.<sup>34</sup> Like North Kavirondo, the Africans were generally opposed to the name "*Government*"; but in his ruling, the president of South Kavirondo LNCs and DC of the area, said that there was no option in the matter as it was an order from the Secretary of State that schools of this type should be called "*Government African Schools*".

When GAS Kisii opened and started to operate, financial aid did not look much of a problem to the school. In the first year of operation, school fees was charged as already discussed. In addition, the LNC voted a grant of 35 pounds for "*wages of menials*" at the school, 360 pounds for boarding cost and an addition of 883 pounds for maintenance. The LNC continued supporting the school through grants-in aid but in 1936, it was agreed that the Central Government would be

responsible for expenditure on primary education and the LNC for elementary and sub-elementary education in South Kavirondo.<sup>35</sup>

In 1938, the Central Government found it difficult to support both the GAS Kisii, Nyabururu (RC) and Kamagambo (SDA) primary schools; hence in 1940, the Inspector of Schools, T.G. Benson made it clear to LNC members that parents were going to be responsible for the payment of school fees in the primary level. Those who had children at the GAS Kisii found school fees raised to Shs. 25/= bringing it in line with other schools in the district.<sup>36</sup> The increase of school fees was seen by chiefs Musa Nyandusi, Gideon Magak and Paulo Mboya as unjustified. However, the Inspector of Schools did not waver.

Apart from the above problem, the attitude of the Christian missions towards the GAS Kisii remained hostile. This hostility continued to worsen as GAS Kisii started to produce promising academic results, which could not be matched by the mission schools. With the establishment of primary sections in Kamagambo (SDA) and Nyabururu (RC), their promising pupils in elementary school who wanted to join GAS Kisii were prevented from doing so:

*...the SDA and RC Missions, both having primary schools of their own, do their best to keep most promising pupils, inspite of the poor results yielded by their tuition, and to let the duffers go to the Government African School. But it now begins to appear that Government African School can do as were or better with the duffers than the mission with clever boys.<sup>37</sup>*

The relationship between GAS Kisii and Mission schools was not therefore a happy one. From 1939, it was obviously clear that the GAS Kisii was doing better in terms of academic performance and sports compared to mission schools. Hence when some parents noticed this, they started to shift their children from mission schools to GAS Kisii.

In the Primary School Examination (PSE) breakdown, as given in the table below, the GAS Kisii had better results than Nyabururu (RC) and Kamagambo SDA Mission schools. With some other schools in the colony, the school compared well.<sup>43</sup>

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Table 3: Primary School Examination Results 1942 - 1945

District	School	PSE	PSE	PSE	PSE
		1942	1943	1944	1945
North Nyanza	GAS Kakamega	16	21	19	28
	FAM Kaimosi	5	4	9	20
	PAG Nyan'gori	11	7	7	11
	CGM Kima	6	0	5	9
	MHM Mumias	0	1	0	0
	% Pass by GAS	42	64	48	41
South Nyeri	GAS Kagumo	28	30	31	34
Embu	CSN Tumutumu	4	4	4	14
Muran'ga	CMS Kahuhia	2	3	6	3
Kiambu	CCM Nyeri	1	8	6	28
	CCS Kabete	4	0	2	5
	CSMS Kiambu	0	1	3	0
	% Pass by GAS	60	60	53	37
South Nyanza	GAS Kisii	9	9	16	21
	MHM Nyambururu	3	2	1	8
	SDA Kamagambo	2	6	5	8
	% Pass by GAS	69	53	73	54

SOURCE: S.N. Bogonko: A History of Modern Education in Kenya, 1895 - 1991 (Evans Brothers' (Kenya) Ltd., 1952, .cw12

### Summary

This chapter has dealt with the origin and development of GAS Kisii. It has been shown that provision of education in Kisii land was the work of the colonial government, the missionaries as well as the Africans themselves. With

inadequacies of missionary education in both content and quality. Africans collected money through self-imposed taxation to establish their own non-denominational schools, in spite of missionary opposition. Therefore, with local support and that of the Inspector of Schools and the Director of Education, the Africans established GAS Kisii in 1934.

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## CHAPTER FIVE

### DEVELOPMENT OF GOVERNMENT AFRICAN SCHOOL KISII (1945 - 1963)

In spite of the initial problems that the GAS Kisii faced during its formative years, it soon overcame them and turned to be a shining star in extra-curricular activities and academics.<sup>1</sup> The Kavirondo District Annual Report (1939) states that:

*More promising pupils will instead be attached to the Government African school and in such an event the mission will either have to increase their efficiency or see their schools regarded as second bests<sup>2</sup>.*

With excellent performance staged by the school as will be revealed in this chapter, the mission schools were compelled to improve their standards in order to compete with the former.

#### Achievement in Music

In 1945, the school choir tied for the first place in Nyanza Musical Festival. Paul Nyachieo, a student of GAS Kisii composed a song, which became the first ever Gusii song to be recorded. The Song 'OMOSOKO ERIERA RIRE NYOMBA<sup>3</sup> went as follows':

1. *Iyaiya Iyaiyaa Iyaiya Iyaiyaa Iyaa  
omaturumi mokamarungu agaturuma  
Okaria amarungu  
Omosukuyio nario akoywora  
Nare na Onchwari gakoywora  
Nare Gesora gakoywora  
Nare nkomoria gakoywora  
Nare na obanyi gakoywora  
Iyaiya Iyaiyaa Iyaiya Iyaiyaa Iyaa*
2. *Omaturumi mokamurungu agaturuma  
akaria amarungu  
Omosukoyio nairo akoywora*

*Nare Omogaka gakoywora  
Nare Subano gakoywora  
Nare Maraga gakoywora  
Iyaiya Iyaiyaa Iyaiya Iyaiyaa Iyaa*

3. *Omoturumi mokamarungu agaturuma  
akaria amarungu  
Nare nkomoria gakoywora  
Nareno Osumo gakoywora  
Nare N'Omworokia gakoywora  
Nare Nyachieo gakoywora  
Iyaiya Iyaiyaa Iyaiya Iyaiyaa Iyaa*

The English translation goes as follows:-

1. *Iyaiya Iyaiyaa Iyaiya Iyaiyaa Iyaa  
Iyaa, the wicked one  
Marungu's wife  
Committed the abominable  
then ate him up  
On the day he was going to battle  
with Onchwari to fight  
with Gesora to fight  
with Nkomoria to fight  
with Obanyi to fight  
Iyaiya Iyaiyaa Iyaiya Iyaiyaa Iyaa*
2. *Iyaa, the wicked one  
Marungu's wife  
Committed the abominable  
On the day he was going to battle  
with Mogare to fight  
with the Old one to fight  
with Subano to fight  
with Nyacheio to fight  
Iyaiya Iyaiyaa Iyaiya Iyaiyaa Iyaa*
3. *Iyaa the wicked one  
Marungu's wife  
Committed the abominable  
then ate him up  
On the day he was going to battle  
with Nkamoria to fight  
with Osumo to fight  
with the teacher to fight with Nyachieo  
Iyaiya Iyaiyaa Iyaiya Iyaiyaa Iyaa*

This song was meant to encourage the Gusii to keep up fighting with books as they did during battles.

In 1946, the GAS Kisii choir team retained the cup they had won in the previous year and in June 10th 1953, when it hosted the South Nyanza regional Music Festival, both the school team and that from the teacher training section won in their respective classes. When they participated in the provincial Music Festival in Kisumu held on 20th June 1953, both teams were placed third overall.<sup>4</sup>

#### Achievements in Sports

In 1953, the school won the Ndege Chai Football shield which was open to all teams in the district. In the same year, GAS Kisii athletics team was placed 3rd overall in a provincial athletics meeting held at Siriba. This was an extremely good performance for a comparatively junior school.<sup>5</sup> In another triangular athletics competition held at Kapsabet, the school took a runners-up position. In 1957, the Cross Country team won the inter-schools athletics Sports held at Siriba.<sup>6</sup>

In 1958, the school went further to win the district athletics cup, though entering as a separate team for the first time. It also won the Inter-School athletics competition at Siriba. The GAS Kisii athletics team also helped South Kavirondo to win the provincial athletics cup for the first time after several years. In 1959, the Cross Country team became third overall while the athletics team won both district and inter-school Athletics championship.<sup>7</sup>

### Achievement in Agriculture

The GAS Kisii also took a leading role in agriculture from the time it was established. At least, a half an hour each day and every Wednesday afternoon was devoted to agriculture on the school farm. Each boy was allocated a small portion where to grow green vegetables, wimbi, potatoes, maize and coffee.

The school farm also had dairy, poultry, and a pig section. In November 1949, the school was honoured to stage a highly ambitious and successful District Agricultural Show which was extensively reported in the press. The following is an extract from the report about the show appearing in the East African Standard:

*... the two - day show held at Kisii this week was an outstanding success and is considered locally to have been the best of its kind yet attempted in Nyanza Province. While it was less ambitious than provincial show at Kaptagat last year.... It certainly achieved no less... as an education movement to encourage better agriculture, more home industries and a wider interpretation of school education in district school.8*

Agricultural education was encouraged and greatly stressed in the school syllabus. For practical agriculture, the students were supposed to attend the government agricultural and dairy farm which adjoined the school one. The skills they acquired were supposed to be used to raise the yield production both in their farms and that of the school. The boys' efforts in the subject always earned them prizes and credits in District Agricultural Shows.

### Crafts and Discipline

The school also excelled in trades such as: carpentry, tailoring, brick making and handwork. For example, in a combined exhibition entered with the teacher training college, they managed to acquire first prize during the District Agricultural Show.<sup>7</sup> The carpentry skill which the boys acquired enabled the school to construct an outdoor gymnastic apparatus, making the GAS Kisii the third school in the colony to be equipped along that line.<sup>10</sup>

As for discipline, the boys maintained a high standard of discipline and respect among themselves, to the teachers and the general public. It is only once in May, 1960 when the boys refused to take part in their daily routine which led to their suspension for two weeks and expulsion of six by the Board of Governors. The relationship between the immediate community and the school was always good. On many occasions, the school used to host a lot of community activities, for example, it offered in-service training facilities, welfare seminars and workshops.<sup>11</sup> Apart from this, the school also benefitted from guest speakers from all walks of life.

### Demands for LNC Schools

The great achievement of the GAS Kisii, over the mission schools in various fields made the school the pride of the district. Hence, there was a strong desire for more government or LNC schools in the district to replace mission schools. Most people in the district were convinced that the

only way they could improve themselves educationally was through non-denominational schools like the GAS Kisii, which they believed offered sufficient education as compared to that offered by the mission schools.

The pressure on the colonial government by the inhabitants of South Kavirondo led by Paulo Mboya and Musa Nyandusi asking for more LNC schools was supported by the then DC of South Kavirondo Mr. W.A. Perreau. In his dispatch to the PC, Nyanza he wrote:

*... you perhaps think that I am being too keen on these schools but I have little experience of Independents, they are a hot bed of anti government activity and only arose because the government refused to allow these non-denominational schools to function and they were unable to implement their threat to stop them.<sup>12</sup>*

Perreau's working experience among the Kikuyu in the Central Province in the early 1930s had made him witness the emergence of independent schools under the Umbrella of Kikuyu Independent Schools Association (KISA) and the Kikuyu Karinga Educational Association (KKEA). The inauguration of Independent Schools was purely a sign that the Kikuyu were totally opposed to any form of government or missionary control of their education as the two were opposed to female circumcision.<sup>13</sup> The settlement of the Agikuyu in Kisii made Mr. Perreau to fear that the Gusii were bound to be politicized by the former to establish their own independent schools, if the colonial government refused to listen to their grievances.

Given this type of situation, which the colonial administration found itself in, it went ahead to allow the establishment of new LNC schools. Like the case of GAS Kisii the Christian missionaries rose up in arms to oppose their establishment. However, the opposition was eventually overcome and Africans went ahead to set aside land, materials and cash for the new LNC schools. These included Ongalo in Karachuonyo, Kereri, Agoro Sare, Gionseri and Kwabwai.<sup>14</sup>

The establishment of Kereri in 1946, led to the transfer of standard I to V, from the GAS Kisii to Kereri leaving the former with higher primary (intermediate) and junior secondary school status. Kereri served boys who could not afford primary boarding and in 1956, the school came under the District Education Board (DEB) management. In 1961, boys at Kereri were transferred to a new primary school, Nyaura near the present-day Kisii Teachers' College to give room to Kereri girls boarding school.

With the establishment of LNC schools a new era of remarkable educational performance ushered in the district. For example, out of 60 candidates accepted by GAS Kisii for secondary school education in 1948, 29 of them were from the newly established LNC schools.<sup>15</sup>

#### Challenge to Mission Schools

The mission schools were in turn challenged by those of the LNC to improve their academic performance. The missions had to do this in order to compete for grants-in-aid from the



DEB and LNC. The appeal for better schools like the GAS Kisii or the newly established LNC schools was made with excellent response from many mission school managers who tried to limit the uncontrolled expansion of their schools and stepped up their efforts of training their teachers.<sup>16</sup>

Besides compelling mission schools even with the adamant SDA to improve their results, the GAS Kisii together with the inaugurated LNC schools, made the colonial government to open senior secondary schools in the district to cater for pupils sitting for the Common Entrance Examination (CEE) in the area. These schools included GAS Kisii, Kamagambo, Nyabururu, Nyanchwa mixed, Agoro Sare and Mirogi.<sup>17</sup> However, with the implementation of the Beecher Report in 1952, which structured the system of education into 4 years in primary, 4 in intermediate and another 4 in secondary school, GAS Kisii remained the only secondary school in the district until the opening of Homa Bay (1960), Cardinal Otunga Mosochi (1961) and Sameta (1963) Secondary schools<sup>18</sup>.

In 1949, the GAS Kisii attained senior status of secondary school. In 1950, a teacher training programme (training T3 and T4 teachers) was opened. The T3 programme took two years and the T4 took a year. In 1951, the college had 16 students in second year, and 15 in first year. At the end of 1951, 12 of the students qualified as T3 teachers and were posted to various parts of the district as the first group of teachers trained at the GAS Kisii Training College.

In 1957, due to lack of accommodation, the colonial government transferred the college to Kabianga, but in 1967, Kisii High School donated 50 acres of land on which Kisii College now stands.<sup>17</sup>

The available data on student enrollment in GAS Kisii as given in the table below, shows the Luo as majority population in the school till 1960s.<sup>20</sup> Even with the introduction of the quota system in 1946 to save the Gusii, educational standards in the area was far below that of the Luos. 1962 shows marked increase in the Gusii student enrollment. This increase is probably attributed to the strict rules of the District Education Board (DEB).

**Table 4: Student Enrollment by tribe at GAS: Kisii 1957  
1958: 1959: 1960: and 1962:**

Year	Ethnic		Groups		Total
	Luo	Kisii	Mixed*	Nubian	Total
1957	150	44	11	-	205
1958	180	49	10	-	239
1959	163	74		-	238
1960	173	55	8	-	236
1961	159	72	3	-	243
1962	145	110	5	1	261

\* Mixed refers to non Luo/and Kisii Students.

#### Academic Achievements

With regard to examination, the school performed quite well both in the Kenya African Secondary School Examination

(KASSE) and Cambridge Overseas School Certificate Course. In 1953, out of 29 candidates in KASSE, 24 passed.<sup>21</sup> In 1954, out of 51 candidates, 45 obtained passes. Of these, 20 were accepted at GAS Kakamega and 6 at Maseno.

In 1956, the GAS Kisii registered 62% passes in the Cambridge School Certificate Examination the first time. In 1957, all 26 candidates passed and two of them, one in arts and the other in sciences got admission to Makerere College.

In 1958, 11 candidates got 1st division: of these, 4 were admitted to Makerere and 6 to the Royal Technical College, Nairobi.<sup>22</sup> In the same year, GAS Kisii was placed under the Board of Governors (BOG) who met twice a year to consider estimates, improvement and general matters related to the school's development. In the subsequent years, GAS Kisii performed quite well compared to GAS Kakamega (Table 5).

**Table 5:**  
**Cambridge School Certificate results for GAS Kisii and GAS Kakamega**

School/year	1st DIV	2nd DIV	3rd DIV	GCE	% Pass	Fail ure	% fail	Tota l
GAS Kisii 1959	5	17	24	-	73.9	12	20.7	58
1960	11	22	12	2	83.9	9	16.1	56
1961	11	22	2	9	100%	-	0	56
1962	7	15	21	-	79.6	11	20.4	54
1963	11	20	17	4	92.9	4	7.1	56
GAS Kakamega/1959	1	9	11	5	83.9	5	16.1	31
1960	2	11	22	4	63.9	22	36.1	61
1961	5	23	27	3	93.5	4	6.5	62

*% For percentage pass and fail.*

For Higher School Certificate (HSC) examination attempted in 1963 for the first time, 9 candidates passed, while the other 10 managed to get a statement of success.<sup>23</sup>

#### Socio-economic Contribution of GAS Kisii

The establishment of GAS Kisii which the Africans had really campaigned for, helped a great deal in improving their social and economic standards of life. The school provided an avenue through which students acquired instruction and knowledge in various subjects such as: English, History, Geography and Religion.

The contribution of GAS Kisii can be seen in the success of those who passed through it. GAS Kisii products were employed as teachers, office messengers, agricultural

technicians, clerks chiefs and others became public figures as discussed below.

#### Contribution of GAS Kisii Ex-Students

Nelson Nyanchoka,<sup>24</sup> a retired chief joined GAS Kisii in mid February 1935 and was admitted as Student No. 5. After GAS Kisii school, he was employed as a teacher between 1942 - 53 by the Kenya Tea Authority in Kerenga, Kericho. In 1953, he was promoted to become a Supervisor of primary schools in Kericho Tea Estates. However, within a short time Nyanchoka was appointed a Social Welfare Officer, mainly dealing with women clubs and activities.

Later, Chief Mathayo Rateme retired in 1959, Nyanchoka was appointed as the next Chief of Bassi location. As chief, Nyanchoka encouraged his people to plant tea, coffee, pyrethrum and to keep grade cows. Through Nyanchoka's efforts, Samwel Menge, a business partner in Masaba General Stores, Nelson Nyariki of Nyansiongo Investment Company, Magembe of Satellite Hotel and Morris Nyamongo of Masige Tea Estates ventured into business and agriculture. With regard to education, he helped in establishing many primary schools in his area and was the force behind the establishment of Sameta Secondary School in 1963. With regard to other activities, he influenced the appointment of Mrs. Tabitha Ogega to the Chairperson's position in 'Maendeleo Ya Wanawake' (Women's Development) in 1960, for Kisii district branch.

Lawrence G. Sagini<sup>29</sup> was admitted to GAS Kisii, from Sengeru SDA Primary School as Student Number 293. After Kisii where he was a junior prefect, Sagini joined Holy Ghost Mangu High School in 1945. From Mangu High, he was admitted to Kagumo Teachers College where he graduated as a KTI teacher in 1949. In 1952 Sagini was appointed Headmaster of Nyabondo Intermediate School. Being an assiduous Character, he studied by correspondence and in 1956, when the Institute of International Education advertised its scholarships, his application was accepted. With the help of a two thousand shillings bursary from the South Kavirondo African District Council, he proceeded for further studies in the United States of America at Alleghary College. In 1958, he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in sociology. In 1959, he was appointed Supervisor of Mill Hill Primary Schools in Kisii. He became one of the first Kisii to own a Volkswagen Car.

In 1961, he ventured into politics by winning the Kisii parliamentary seat. Sagini served Kitutu as a member of parliament until 1969 election when he was defeated by a 29-year old ex-St. Mary's Yala student Dr. Zacharia Onyonka who had come back from the USA and briefly lectured in the Department of Economics University of Nairobi. Mr. Sagini has served the government in various capacities as a Minister for Education and Local Government and as a Chairman, of Board of Directors, Firestone (E.A.) Ltd., Agricultural Finance Corporation, Kenya Power and Lighting Co., and Kenya African

National Union (KANU) Kisii Branch. Recently, he chaired a presidential committee appointed to investigate the causes of School Strikes and indiscipline in the Country, currently, Sagini is a nominated MP and Chairman of the University of Nairobi Council.

John Henry Okwanyo, <sup>26</sup> the former Minister for Regional Development was educated in GAS Kisii between 1946-1950. After GAS Kisii, Okwanyo joined the Medical Training College in Nairobi in 1951 for a medical course. After his graduation in 1953, Okwanyo worked briefly in King George Hospital (Present day Kenyatta National Hospital) before going into politics. Between 1956 and 1963, he served as a Councilor for Migori Ward and at the same time chairman of the South Nyanza Chamber of Commerce.

In 1969, Okwanyo was elected a Member of Parliament for Migori and was appointed as an assistant Minister for Health. Okwanyo re-captured his seat in the 1979 general election which he had lost in 1974. Thereafter, he was appointed Minister for Water Development and Energy. In 1982, he was elected the President of United Nations (UN) Conference on new and renewable sources of energy. He is a member of the Red Cross, Family Planning Association of Kenya and the Scouts Association of Kenya.

Simeon Nyachae, <sup>27</sup> a career Civil Servant who retired as the Chief Secretary in December, 1986 joined GAS Kisii in the mid 1940s after which he was employed as a clerk. In 1957,

Nyachae was awarded a government scholarship, through the influence of his late father, Senior Chief Musa Nyandusi to study at Torguys College then a constituent of College of Exeter University in the United Kingdom (UK). On his return to Kenya in 1958, he joined the civil service briefly before he became the Welfare Officer with the East African Breweries Ltd for two years. Later, Nyachae rejoined the Civil Service as a District Officer for Kangundo, Machakos. He rose through the ranks and in December 1964, he was promoted to Provincial Commissioner. In 1979, Nyachae was appointed Permanent Secretary in the Office of the President in Charge of Development, Co-ordination and Cabinet Affairs. In 1984, Nyachae was appointed the Chief Secretary. Up-to-date, Nyachae takes pride of his former school, Kisii and apart from supporting the school financially and materially, he is an active member of Kisii School Old Boys Association (KOBA). Currently, Nyachae is the MP for Nyaribari Chache and Minister for Agriculture, Livestock Development and Marketing.

Ex-products of GAS Kisii include: Professor Douglas Odhiambo, <sup>2<sup>nd</sup></sup> former Head of Chemistry Department University of Nairobi, Vice Chancellor Moi University and currently Chairman of Kenya Pipeline Cooperation; Professor Shellemiah Keya currently Vice-Chancellor of Moi University; Professor Sorobea Bogonko Nyachieo (no: 1264), former Acting Registrar Kenyatta University, and currently, a Deputy Principal in charge of Academics, Maseno University College; Dr. N.



Orwenyo, Senior Lecturer, Department of History at Kenyatta University.

Others in the list include J.D. Nyaema,<sup>20</sup> Principal Kenya Technical Teachers College (KTTC); L.O. Kinaro, Headmaster Kisii School; D. Motanya, Headmaster Kisumu Day Secondary School; P.Okundi, Managing Director of Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC); J.N. Simba, Chairman National Bank of Kenya and A. A. Adongo, Secretary General, Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT); former M.P.'s: M. Onsando Majoge Boss; Late G. Morara and D. Onyancha, West Mogirango, Abuya Abuya, Kitutu Masaba; D.O. Kombo, South Mogirango and W. Mwita, Kehancha are also ex-students of GAS Kisii.<sup>21</sup>

### S u m m a r y

The establishment of GAS Kisii was indeed a blessing and a milestone in the development of African education in the district. It effectively provided competitive education. The mission schools had to improve their academic performance in order to reach its standards. The study has also demonstrated how positively GAS Kisii has contributed to the standard of living in the rural areas and the Nation at large through its ex-students.

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## CHAPTER SIX

### SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

#### Summary

In this study, we have looked at the development of secular education in colonial Kenya. In order to bring out this factor clearly, the establishment of Government African School, Kisii and its development between 1934 and 1963 was chosen as the main theme of the study. However, secular education cannot be discussed in isolation. Hence, analysis of the social, economic and political factors has been done to show how they have influenced the theme of the study.

It has been clearly shown that formal Western education was introduced in Kenya, as in other parts of Africa by the Christian missionaries. The chief object of the Christian missionaries was to convert the African and win his soul for Christ through education. Hence, education to the Christian missionaries was a vehicle or weapon of propagating the Christian gospel. The missionaries did not stress the importance of education for its own sake, as long as it enabled them to get more Christian converts.

At the start, the Kisii people as the study has revealed displayed an element of suspicion, indifference and mistrust of the Roman Catholic and SDA Christian missionaries. They associated the Christian missionaries with people who had carried a punitive expedition on them, and hence refused to have any dealing with them. But, as time went by, they came

to realise the new socio-economic opportunities associated with the education introduced by the missionaries. They changed and started to attend school in large numbers.

In the mission schools, Africans came to realise that they were only subjected to education mainly stressing on the 3Rs i.e. reading, writing and simple arithmetic. This education apart from enabling them to become ardent Christians denied them opportunities of aspiring for white-collar jobs. Therefore, they started to ask and long for a secular education which could enable them to get better jobs like their white counterparts. Before the Fraser Report of 1909, government participation in African education was minimal and negligible. With the establishment of the Department of Education in 1911, the government processed grants, issued policies and went as far as establishing its own schools in areas which the missionaries had not catered for.

The contribution of the the government to African education as revealed in the study was greatly influenced by social, economic and political forces. For example, owing to the fact that the Europeans naturally felt superior to the Africans, the former believed that educational practices between the two races were then to be different. The Europeans in this case were to get literary education to prepare themselves for administrative roles while the black man was to be subjected to techno-religious education which was not capable of preparing and equipping him with relevant

skills to enable him serve the colonial government as an administrator.

The Africans were totally dissatisfied with the type of education they were being offered. Hence, with the establishment of the Local Native Councils in 1925, they were able to get the proper channel of airing their grievances as to the type of education they wanted. With the inauguration of the LNC's, they were able to express the need of establishing a purely secular educational institution outside missionary control. The Africans in South Kavirondo taxed themselves and contributed labour, materials and land for the establishment of a non-denominational school, that is, GAS Kisii. This was not an easy task especially with the increased opposition from the Christian missionaries. The unwavering stand taken by Africans, coupled with the local support and that from Kisumu and Nairobi, enabled them to establish the school. The study further shows the initial problems that also threatened the establishment of GAS Kisii and how these problems were later solved.

The study has revealed that GAS Kisii, became a milestone in the development of African Education in South Kavirondo despite teething problems. This argument is proved by the quality of education given at the GAS Kisii which soon outshone the mission controlled schools, in academics and sports. There was a general outcry in South Kavirondo District that missionaries should pull up their socks and give quality education as the one found in the GAS Kisii. The

call was favourably responded to by the Christian missionaries who started to improve their schools' performance in order to compete with the GAS Kisii and other newly established LNC schools. The subsequent result of this was the improvement in the quality of education in the district.

Besides all these, the graduates of GAS Kisii have served the society in various capacities, as clerks, technicians, engineers, doctors, lawyers, administrators and entrepreneurs. Therefore, the school has acted as a catalyst of socio-economic advancement in the country since its establishment.

#### Suggestions and Recommendations for Further Research

In this study, apart from the SDA and RC missionary groups, other missionary groups were mentioned as having provided education to the Africans after 1930s. There is, therefore, a need for a thorough study to be carried out on each of these Christian missionary groups in order to bring out their respective roles in the development of education for the African people. We further discussed the role of colonial government in establishing the first government African schools like Narok, Kapsabet, Waa and Kabianga. There is need for other studies to be carried out along this line to establish to what extent did the colonial government contribute towards the establishment of these schools and other Government African schools established in the colony.

The establishment of Kereri Girls Secondary Boarding School shows that it was an offshot of GAS Kisii. This study did not undertake a detailed account of its historical development. It is, therefore, necessary that a study on this school be carried out.

At the same time, the study also discussed about the teacher training programme started in 1950 at the GAS Kisii. This study only traced the transfer of the training facilities to Kabianga in 1957 and later to present-day Kisii College in 1967. It is imperative that a more detailed study should be carried out to establish more about this teacher training college.

Elsewhere in the study, we looked at the establishment of secondary school education in the district especially in 1960s. There is a need, therefore, to carry out a detailed study on the development of secondary school education in the area since the 1960s.

Finally, this study only focused on the growth of GAS Kisii in the period between 1934 - 1963. Nothing about the school has been discussed beyond this period. There is, therefore, a need to carry out a further study on the school's history from 1964 to date.



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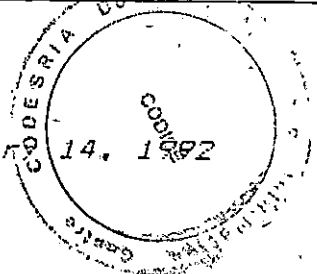
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APPENDIX 1

Interview Schedule EX-Students of GAS - KISII

Name:

Occupation:

Age:

Tribe:

1. Between which years were you in GAS Kisii?
2. At what age did you enter GAS Kisii?
3. Where were you schooling before joining GAS Kisii?
4. For how long were you in that village school before you entered GAS Kisii?
5. Which subjects were you taught in the village school?
6. Under which religious domination was the village school?
7. What educational facilities were found in the village schools?
8. Do you know anything as concernsthe teachers' qualification (those who taught you in the village schools)?
9. What were the entry requirements of GAS Kisii and at what class did you join the school?
10. Who sponsored your education at GAS Kisii?
11. Which subjects were you taught in GAS Kisii?
12. How different were they from those of the village school you were previously?
13. Do you know anything about the teachers' qualifications who taught you in GAS Kisii?
14. What can you say about the educational facilities at the GAS Kisii?
15. Which year and class did you finish your education at GAS Kisii?
16. Currently, what is your occupation?

Interview Schedule EX-Teacher's of GAS - Kisii

Name:

Occupation (Present):

Age:

Ethnic Group:

1. Between which years did you teach in GAS Kisii?
2. What were your academic qualifications as a teacher?
3. Which subjects were taught at GAS Kisii and which one were you teaching yourself?
4. Did GAS Kisii fall under any religious domination?
5. Did you use any of the following criteria to admit students to GAS Kisii?
  - (a) Age
  - (b) Sex
  - (c) Ethnicity
  - (d) Denomination
  - (e) Academic requirements/class or entry?
6. What problems did you experience from your students in regard to the above?
7. Did mission school's restrict their students from joining GAS Kisii?
8. Who provided or financed the general development of the school?
9. What can you say about the educational facilities at GAS Kisii, in comparison to the mission or village schools?
10. How was the general academic performance at G.A.s., Kisii in your time?
11. Apart from academic how did the school perform in extra-curricular activities?
12. What are some of the benefits of establishing GAS Kisii?



APPENDIX 2

Headteachers of Government African School Kisii  
1934 - Present

<u>Year:</u>	<u>Headteacher:</u>
1934	A.W. Chapman
1935	C.A. Berridge
1936 } 1937 } 1938 }	-
1939 } 1940 }	E.G. Kess
1942 } 1943 }	G.G. Hutchinson
1944 } 1945 } 1946 } 1947 } 1948 }	D.H.C. Newton
1950 } 1951 } 1952 }	A.U. Hutfuld
1953 } 1954 } 1955 } 1956 }	R.A. Lake A. Wallace
1957	T.W. Sharad
1958 } 1959 } 1960 }	C.E. Westwell
1961	M.C. Grounds
1962	W.C. Gillespie
1963	J.G.M. Bundred
1964 } 1965 }	J.C. Appley J. Bowles
1966	B.W. Brown
1967 } 1968 } 1969 } 1970 }	G. Walobwa

1971	}	
1972	}	
1973	}	<i>J. Mwaura</i>
1974	}	
1975	}	
1976	}	
1977	}	
1978	}	<i>J.D.N. Nyaema (Ex:Student)</i>
1979	}	
1980	}	
1981	}	
1982	}	
1983	}	
1984	}	
1985	}	<i>J.I. Kinyua</i>
1986	}	
1987	}	
1988	}	
1988	}	
1989	}	<i>C.N. Barongo</i>
1990	}	
1991	- PRESENT	<i>J.L.O Kinaro (Ex: Student)</i>

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