

**C H A P T E R : I I**  
**THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODOLOGY**

## CHAPTER II

### THE RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODOLOGY

#### 1. THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

In Kenya, women's groups have increased over the years . They are the building blocks of the women's movement in Kenya. Similarly, these groups have occupied a prominent place in Kenya's social ,economic and political field.Their significance as agents of change is increasing day by day .However one finds lack of systematic research studies on these groups .In other words, there is paucity of research literature on women's groups in Kenya. Hence, this researcher decided to undertake an empirical research work on women's groups in Kenya.

This work mainly deals with Women's groups, operating at the grassroots level, in Kisii District , Nyanza province , Kenya. This is an exploratory study.

#### 2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the present study are given below :

1. To study the objectives of the selected women's groups in Kenya operating at the grassroot level.
2. To study the organization structure of the selected women's groups.
3. To study the socio-economic background of the

leaders and members of the selected womens' groups.

4. To study the activities of the women's groups.

5. To study the views of the leaders and members of the groups about some aspects of the womens' movement in Kenya.

### 3. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

#### [A] GEOGRAPHICAL AREA COVERED

The present study covers selected women's groups operating in Taraacha and Nyanware sub locations of Keumbu Division in Kisii District, Nyanza Province, Kenya.

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The researcher was motivated to select Kisii as the area for his study for the following reasons.

1. It is the home district of the researcher .

2. It is the area which has, of late, experienced the mushrooming of many women's groups which have largely influenced the rural economy.

3. Women's groups of this region have not yet been studied.

#### [B] THE WOMEN'S GROUPS COVERED UNDER THE PRESENT STUDY.

The groups selected for the present study include

1. Taraacha Women's Group

2. Keoke Women's Group

3. Irondi Women's Group

4. Riamokwobe Women's Group

5. Aveingo Women's Group

6. Irondi Young Women's Group.

**[C] RESPONDENTS SELECTED FOR THE PRESENT STUDY**

The respondents for the present study include the leaders and ordinary members of the women's groups selected for this study.

All the office bearers, including the Chairman, Vice-chairman, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer and Assistant treasurer were treated as leaders of these Women's groups. Again, information collected from representative sample of the ordinary members also served as empirical data base for the present study.

**[D] SAMPLING DESIGN**

[1] Leaders : It was decided to include all the formal leaders of the selected Women's groups in this study. ✓

[2] Members : It was decided to select 25% of the ordinary members belonging to each of the women's groups selected for the study. ✓

**4. DATA COLLECTION**

**[A]. TECHNIQUES USED :**

[1]. INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: An interview schedule was designed keeping in view the objectives of the present study. An interview schedule was preferred to that of a questionnaire for its following advantages.

a) It enabled this researcher to convince the respondents about the purely academic nature and

significance of the study .

b) This enabled the researcher to have an opportunity to come into personal contact with the respondents. In case of any ambiguity about the questions asked, the researcher got an opportunity to clear it.

c) Since the researcher himself conducted the interviews, deeper probing was possible in areas which needed clarification .

[ii] OBSERVATION METHOD: This researcher attended several meetings and programmes of these selected women's groups , during the period of data collection .

The researcher visited the groups places of work and observed the various projects and activities which the groups were carrying out. The researcher also attended some workshops / seminars organized by the Department of Social Services of the Ministry of Culture and Social services in Kenya. This researcher also attended the Kisii Cultural Show held between 20th to 30th of November 1995, at Nyandusi Stadium , Nyanturago. All the selected Women's Groups in this study participated in this show. The groups exhibited some of their Handicraft / craftwork and also took part in the traditional dances/drama and song competitions.

[iii]. SECONDARY SOURCES OF DATA : The secondary sources of data include books, articles, seminar papers, and Reports on Women's Groups Census in Kenya. These were obtained from Maendeleo Ya Wanawake

Organization, District and National level Offices, Booksellers, MYWO leaders themselves and national newspapers in Kenya.

[iv]. ACTUAL DATA COLLECTION : The data collection of this study commenced on 20th April and ended on 22nd December 1995.

As planned, this researcher made an attempt to interview all the leaders of the selected groups included in the present study. However, out of the 23 leaders identified earlier, seventeen [ i.e. 74% ] were actually interviewed. It was not possible for this researcher to interview the remaining 6 leaders due to various reasons, including sickness and their staying away from their homes for a long time during the course of the present enquiry.

The total number of ordinary members was belonging to all the groups was 231. It was not possible for this researcher to contact and interview all of them. Hence, a representative sample consisting of 25% of the members from each of the selected groups was selected, by adopting random sampling procedure, on the basis of a list of the names of the respondents prepared for this purpose. The lists of the names of the members of the selected groups were obtained from proper authorities.

The details regarding the number of leaders and members belonging to each of the selected group and the number of respondents actually covered under this study

WOMEN'S GROUPS AND RESPONDENTS COVERED UNDER THE STUDY

TABLE 1.1

Sr. No.	Sub-Location of the group	Name of the Leaders	Number of Leaders	Total Memb- of Leaders	Actual Numb. of Memb.	Actual Numb. of Memb.	% of Lead- Cover.	% of Memb. Cov.	Total % of Respondents Covered.	
1.	TARAA CHA	TARAA CHA	5	46	3	12	60	26.09	29.40	
2.	TARAA CHA	KEOKE CHA	4	32	3	8	75	25	30.55	
3.	TARAA CHA	IRONDI CHA	3	52	2	13	67	25	27.27	
4.	TARAA CHA	RIAMOK WOB	3	18	2	5	67	27.78	33.33	
5.	TARAA CHA	Irondi YOUNG	3	30	3	8	100	26.67	33.33	
6.	NYAMW ARE	AV#INGO	5	53	4	14	80	26.42	31.03	
			TOTAL	23	231	17	60	74.83	26.16	30.82

are furnished in the Table 1.1

## A BRIEF PROFILE OF KISII DISTRICT

In order to make ourselves familiar with the region and socio-economic and cultural characteristics of the people in the region, a brief profile of Kisii district [Nyanza province, Kenya] is presented below.

### (i) LOCATION

Kisii District covers an area of 2196 square kilometers [855 square miles]. It borders Kericho district to the East, South Nyanza to the West, Kisumu district to the North and Narok district to the South.

### (iii) PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND CLIMATE

Ecologically, the district zones lie between 1500 M to 1800 M above sea level. Owing to its comparatively high altitude, the district does not experience high temperatures, despite its proximity to the Equator. The minimum night temperature average about 50.2°F [range 46.6°F to 52.0°F] and the maximum day temperature average 83.6°F through out the year. Rainfall is high with 2000mm in the highlands and a probability of over 90%. It is fairly evenly distributed and only January and August receive less than 100 mm. April with over 300 mm, has the highest precipitation. There is abundant surface and ground water. Much of the water is found in the drainage systems of rivers: Gucha, Sondu, Mogonga, Mogusi, Riana,



lyabe and the numerous marshlands evident in the district. The rivers are a source of water for domestic use , industrial use and for livestock watering. The marshlands are centers of bricks and tiles making , although these activities are carried out on the highland areas far from the swampy areas.

A good proportion of the soils are volcanic which are generally fertile. Others are clay soils, red loams, and black cotton soils.

**(iii) ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS AND DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE**

Kisii is the smallest in size but the second largest in population of the five districts that make up Nyanza province. Its area constitutes 17.6% of the total land area of the province.

Administratively, the district has been subdivided [upto 1980] into 5 divisions, nineteen locations and seventy five sublocations.

Presently, the district is politically divided into 10 constituencies . The constituencies are Nyaribari Chache, Nyaribari Masaba, North Mugirango/Borabu, West Mugirango , Kitutu Masaba, Kitutu west, Wanjare, South Mugirango, Majoge and Basii. The district has a population of about 1.8 million people. It is populated almost exclusively by one tribe namely Abagusii. The Luo and the Luhya tribes occupy second and third spots numerically.

#### **(iv) THE PEOPLE'S STAPLE FOOD**

Ugali made from maize and millet flour has been the staple food for a majority of the district's adult population. There now appears to be an improvement in the nutritional status especially from the late seventies. The use of processed foods to feed infants is still not extensive. Most mothers still breastfeed their babies, often upto slightly over a year. At the weaning stage, the child is normally feed on porridge, the main ingredient of which is maize flour. The child is also introduced to the simple protein containing foods. In general, the threat of Marasmus or Kwashirkor or a combination of the two is only moderate, say 35%. This is particularly so because there is really no scarcity of a variety of food stuff to be cooked.

#### **(v) LITERACY RATE IN THE DISTRICT**

Specific data showing the rate of literacy for the district is not available. It is however, most probable that there has been an improvement in the literacy level over the years since the eve of independence, as can be deduced from a fair proportion of the people who attend school in the district (over 56% of the total population) and rather encouraging response among the illiterate adults to join the adult education classes. According to the state of world population 1993, UNFPA, 80% of adult men and 59% adult women in Kenya can read and write.

In Kisii the literacy among the younger generation is certainly higher than the national average. However, in general, the district suffers from a significant rate of illiteracy, probably estimated at 20%, the majority being illiterate women.

[vi] MAJOR SOURCES OF FUEL

The use of electric power for domestic lighting is another measure of advanced welfare among the Kenyan welfare status in the community. However, in Kisii, firewood still forms the backbone of cooking fuel while paraffin lamps are the major source of domestic lighting. Over 80% of the district population still depends on wood for fuel and paraffin for home lighting.

[vii] GENDER DIVISION OF LABOUR

With regards to sharing of workload among the family members, the general pattern among the Kenyan communities whereby women do more work on the side of production of food crops and handling domestic chores, while men concentrate on cash crops and tending to domestic animals, seems to hold true of Kisii. Nevertheless, everybody, both men and women, seem to be equally working in whatever they do.

[viii] ECONOMIC RESOURCES

The most important economic resources and therefore basis of economic development of the district are its generally high potential agricultural lands, comprised of good soils and supported by abundant

rainfall which is geographically well distributed throughout the year. There is availability of large supplies of labour, arising from the large rapidly growing population.

Owing to the ecology, climate and heavy rainfall, a variety of crops and livestock production are sustainable [GOK:1989A]. For instance, pyrethrum and tea do very well in the highland areas such as Nyaribari, Basii, Majoge, Manga and Tombe. Coffee is grown in the lowlands of Nyaribari Chache, Wanjare, Kitutu Chache. Food crops such as maize and banana grow almost everywhere in the district.

However, owing to the presence of certain topographical and geographical factors such as rock outcrops, steep slopes, swamps and need to set aside some land for the development of physical infrastructure not all the available area measuring 2196 square kilometers is used for agricultural activities. The rapid population and public demands for land discussed above have, therefore, resulted in frequent and continuous fragmentation of land available, thus posing a threat to future developments of agriculture. Nevertheless, agriculture is still the main stay and revenue earnings in the district. Both crop farming and livestock husbandry are practised by the majority of the district's small holder communities. And owing to the small average size of landholding per family, ranging from 1.40 ha. to 2.2 ha. farming is based on intensive method.

Besides agriculture , however ,there are other economically important industries. The most important in terms of employment generation and revenue earning is the service industry based on Finance, Insurance, real estate and related business services, Wholesale and retail trade , restaurants and hotels. Such industries are mainly found at major service centers, eg.Kisii town and Keroka Urban Centre [Report on women's group census in Kenya, 1992:5 ;GOK 1989[9], kisii Development Plan 1989-1993 MPND; Dalhgren [SIDA] and Wijkman [SAREC] ,1994:43].

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