

**A CRITICAL ANALYSIS ON THE EFFECTS OF ISLAMIZATION OF
IGEMBE PEOPLE THROUGH MIRAA TRADE IN MERU COUNTY
KENYA**

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Declaration and Recommendation

Declaration

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

Signature Date

KIRIMI MWENDA JOTHAM

PRS-4-0145-1/2015

Recommendation

We confirm that the work reported in this thesis was carried out by the candidate under our supervision

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Signature Date

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my father Silas Kirimi and my mother Janet Silas for their love, and support during the time of my Doctoral study

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During the period of this study, many people have offered essential support. I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to my first Supervisor Rev. Prof. John Kobia Ataya and my second Supervisor Fr. Dr. John Ngige Njoroge for their academic guidance and supervision. In addition, I wish to thank the Directorate of Postgraduate studies, School of Education and Social Sciences, Department of Religious Studies, Theology, and Counselling, lecturers, colleague students, and the entire KeMU community for providing me a good academic environment that promoted scholarly research.

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Abstract

The study proposition was that Islamization of Igembe people had taken place largely due to miraa trade but no research had so far been undertaken in religious studies perspectives to address the issue. The four objectives of the study were determining the extent of the spread of Islam in Igembe, studying the cultural importance of miraa, establishing the contribution of miraa trade to Islamization, and examining the effects of Islamization. Theoretical framework relied on Islamization, Risk, Uncertainty, and Profit, and Immigration theories. The synthesis produced 'Islamization through miraa trade theory'. A qualitative design was adopted with triangulation of methods which included interview schedules, and semi-structured open-ended questionnaires. The instruments were pretested to ascertain their validity and reliability. Stratified, simple random, and purposive sampling techniques were employed to pick a sample of 252 respondents out of a population of 126,000 miraa farmers, vendors, and trade association officials. Content, narrative and descriptive data analysis methods were used in the analysis of the findings. The main finding was that Islamization of Igembe people through miraa trade had taken place with mostly negative effects which included exposure of Igembe women to Islamic law on marriage, selling of ancestral miraa land to Muslims, school dropout, truancy for students, and miraa gang violence among others. The results further showed miraa diacritical marker of Igembe people identity linked to their traditions and history. From the findings, the study concludes that miraa trade is pivotal in Islamization of the Igembe people, and Muslims are doing business in a way that it is oppressing the residents pushing them to abject poverty. The study recommended delinking of Islamization from miraa trade, enforcing existing miraa regulations to mitigate adverse effects, future research to find out if there are healing properties in miraa plant as claimed by respondents, if Muslim children too are affected by Islamization through miraa trade, and if any Muslims have been converted to Christianity or to Igembe traditional religion.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AMISOM	African Union Mission in Somalia
BCE	Before Common Era
BT	Back Translation (into English)
CE	Common Era
EU	European Union
HCDA	Horticultural Crop Development Authority
ICAA	International Council on Alcohol and Addiction
IR	Interview Respondent
KCPE	Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
KDF	Kenya Defence Forces
KEMRI	Kenya Medical Research Institute
KeMU	Kenya Methodist University
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NACOST	National Council for Science and Technology
NYAMITA	Nyambene Miraa Traders Association
SACCO	Savings and Credit Cooperative Organization
W.H. O	World Health Organisation
VQ	Verbatim quote

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Chapter one has provided context in which the entire study of Islamization of Igembe people was situated via the background to the study. The chapter had further provided sufficient information about the research plan covering all major sections, work done by scholars, and the gap that this study is filling. In this connection chapter one has provided the objectives and questions which act as roadmap of the study.

The chapter has also stated the problem of the study explaining how the questions and topic constitute a problem. For instance, why were the effects of Islamization of the Igembe people through miraa trade a problem? The study has recorded the good effects of Islam among the Igembe people but also provided mitigation of the negative effects of the Islamization process. The chapter has considered the statement of the problem as the main reason for the study because the negative effects of Islamization pose dire consequences for the community in terms of religious, cultural, educational, and economical aspects of life.

Lastly, the chapter highlights the significance, limitations, delimitations, assumptions, and definition of terms for the study. This summary provides an overview of the first chapter of this research.

1.1 Background to the Study

Islam was the second biggest religion in the world with an estimated of 1.6 billion followers after Christianity, which by proportion, constitutes a sizeable number of the world population. It was also claimed to be the fastest growing religion in the world (Novak, 1995). The word Islam was taken from Arabic term ‘Salam’ which means ‘peace’, ‘surrender’ or ‘to submit’ (Miller, 1995). That was to submit to the will of Allah as a norm in life. The followers of Islam are called Muslims or submitters. Islam’s actual historical origins can be traced only to the life of Muhammad. However, Muslims object their religion being described as Muhammadanism. They object to this term because they do not worship Muhammad. Muhammad was only a prophet of Allah. Muhammad was worthy of respect but not worship. The name of the founder of the religion was Muhammad.

During the time of Muhammad there was a plethora of religious practices worshipping native gods. There were a variety of religious forces operating in the city of Mecca with Muhammad’s uncle Abu Tahib being a leading businessman in anecdotal piety trade buying and selling gods. The major religious force in Mecca at the time of Muhammad was the worship of native gods. Some centuries before the prophet’s birth, a huge meteorite had fallen in Mecca. The people came to believe that the great black rock of Mecca was a stone sent by divine powers. Soon the stone became enshrined in a building called the Kaaba. A local legend had it that the stone had fallen in the times of Adam and Eve and that the shrine (the Kaaba) had been built by Abraham and Ishmael. People from around Mecca came on pilgrimages to see and touch the stone. The local merchants capitalized on this feat by making idols representing the various gods worshipped to sell them to the pilgrims. The existence

of a multiplicity of religious phenomena at Mecca during this time was akin to the pre-Christian and Islam African religious experience. Many people also believed that besides the many minor gods, one great god, called Allah was supreme to all. Due to this belief Muslims have considered it a divine duty to let all living beings to know and worship Allah. This was the rudiment for spreading Islam through all means including non-peaceful ones even though Islam means salam or peace. Every male Muslim has a duty to participate in the struggle to spread Islam. This requirement had its roots in the time of Muhammad's stay at Medina when the spread of Islam sometimes involved the conquest of the non-Muslim states (Lisa, 2001). The notion of duty to spread Islam was at the core of this study in the sense that Islamization of Igembe people through miraa trade may appear just a commercial activity to a non-suspecting citizen in Igembe but for those Muslims who were engaged in miraa trade it was their duty to Islamize the non-Muslims.

As a grown-up, Muhammad earned his living by driving camel caravans under the tutelage of his uncle Tahib who was a wealthy businessperson. In addition, he earned business and trade acumen from his wife Khadijah. This meant that the young Prophet must have travelled widely in the Middle East practising trade. As he travelled, he must have observed the lives and customs of many people. The strong nexus between Islam and trade had its root in this caravan business of trade. Hence, it was natural as a way of life to the Muslims to conduct trade as they converted others to their religion.

As Roff (2014) asserted that Islam as a religion was spread by Muhammad and his cohorts through Islamic practices with an initial spread being through military conquest, futuhat, or which literally meant new openings. After the death of

Muhammad, Islam disseminated very fast through the formation of several caliphates (Kennedy, 2016) spreading across Arabia and in North Africa. Trade and commerce were highly used as a medium of spread of Islam in many parts of the world (Oxtoby, Amore & Hussain, 2014). The spread of Islam to Africa from the Arab world was particularly attributed to war, trade, and influx of Sufi Proselytizers who integrated with local people. Subsequently, due to the political situation in Africa where many communities were governed by rulers and chiefs it was possible for the Islamic crusaders and proselytizers to convert rulers first who in turn facilitated the conversion of their communities (Kaba, 2005; Otayek & Soares, 2007).

Further, the proselytizers introduced basic regulations of prayer and did not seek to confront the existing traditional beliefs and practices. By enticing the rulers with gifts and trade, the Sufi proselytizers were therefore able to spread Islamic religion to Africans with ease unlike the other religious groups which often found resentment because of their stringent rules which were often contradicting the traditional beliefs of the communities. A study by Basil (1996) showed that Muslims settled at the coast of East Africa by 8th century.

Lodhi (1994) observed that Muslims in Kenya were concentrated along the coastal communities with the majority of the mainland communities being predominantly Christians. After British took over the coastal strip after the second world war which gave birth to British protectorate, both Islam and Christianity grew in the mainland though after Kenya attained its independence. Islam spread at a higher rate due to favourable strategies like good communication, brotherhood concept, trade, and da'wah activities among others (Kobia & Miriti, 2014). After independence, the subsequent demarcation that separated the Somali community into two nations and

the denial of freedom to the Arabs to re-join the Sultanate of Zanzibar, the number of Muslims increased tremendously.

The Kenyan Somali community sought to be part of the Somaliland, but the government forbid them. Immediately after the Shifta war of 1963 – 1967, politics of secession marred the entire North Eastern District (Bakari, 1995). Bakari 1995 alludes that Kenyan of Somali ethnicity began the conflict of seceding some part of Kenya to Somali. The Government of Kenya, branded this conflict 'shifta', a Somali term for 'bandit'. This was intended to swift or divert the real agitation of secession that would warrant the Government to deal with the uprising threat. This show the dreaded GSU forcing the NFD residence into protected and designated areas. Also, a plan to impoverishing the community there was executed by killing of their livestock which was their main source of livelihood. Eventually the war ended in 1967 after the Prime Minister of Somali Muhammad Egal participated in a ceasefire conference with Kenya at Arusha in October 1967, a conference dupped Arusha-Kenya-Somali Conference. (Azumah, 2014).

Still, the banditly fatal attacks continued with intrigues demands for secession that followed in the subsequent years (Bakari & Yahya, 1992). In fact, this caused a political debacle between the Somali community leadership and the government forcing the Kenyan government to abolish all the Somali community affiliated political parties. In addition, a thorough search was done in the 1980s and 1990s to ensure all the Somali members who were aliens were taken back to their country (Davidson, 2014; Abdullahi, 2012). The struggle led to acrimony between Kenya communities and the Somali communities since the government viewed them with suspicion (Abdullahi, 2012). Since independence, Islamization has continued in

Kenya because of business links with the Somali community who were known to be astute businessmen. The Somali community predominantly belongs to Suni sect of Islam which has strong roots in Arabia and Yemen (Azumah, 2014). Similarly, in Maua town in Kenya, which was a core town for this study, there were multiple economic activities by Muslim traders whose influence was not only on miraa trade but also politically and socially. As per the reviewed literature (chapter 2), it emerges that Islam spread through methods which varied from place to place. It was notable that whereas futuhat and caliphate were famous in Arabian Peninsula, trade, assimilation and da'wah work were used in Africa. The five stages of Islamization as cited by (Ibrahim, 2017) were mostly used in the spread of Islam.

Accordingly, when Muslims arrived in Igembe they did not explicitly set out to convert native people to Islam but rather in subtle ways bought land, settled, some married local people, and continued their profession of trade which incidentally was with miraa commodity. The spread of Islam in Igembe may be considered as a natural offshoot of the growth of miraa trade.

The Igembe people of Meru live around Nyambene hills in Meru County of Kenya. They are a clan of Meru tribe which was of Bantu origin. The Arabs and Somali who mostly brought Islam to Igembe were of Cushitic descent. They were also joined in Igembe by the Habesha Muslim people from Ethiopia. These Cushitic people had little cultural or business contact with Bantu. Therefore, for the Arabs and Somalis to penetrate Igembe was not an easy task let alone introducing a new religion. For this reason, Islamization of Igembe people required planning, infiltration, migration, settlement, and trade with the local communities without announcing their arrival. It was a slow process of assimilation to the host community. Once the Muslims found

places to rent or buy and once their numbers grew then they started to make their presence known. By the time this study was conducted the Muslim communities in Igembe were considered by the native communities as part of their society.

As this study had investigated Islamization of Igembe people it was essential to note that Igembe people did not have a religious vacuum by the time Muslim traders arrived in the region. There were indeed Meru traditional religious beliefs and practices among the Igembe people. In addition, Christianity had arrived earlier than Islam. For this reason, in Igembe some people had abandoned the traditional worship and were now practising Christianity. It may be observed that the presence of Christianity in Igembe may have made easier the acceptance of Islamic religion in the area. One major difference between the coming of Christianity and that of Islam in Igembe was that Christians condemned the planting and usage of miraa while Muslims encouraged the planting, usage, and trading with miraa. This phenomenon of Islamization was not only found in Igembe but all over the world. For example, (Okuto and Otube (2017) observed that in a report compiled by the state department in charge of Religious Affairs of Turkey, it was revealed that around 9,000 new Mosques were actually built across the country in a span of 10 years from 2005-2015.

Some of the indicators of Islamization may be shown in the Turkish and Indian situation. Islamization of the Turkish people had gone without recognition for long. Nevertheless, Islam was said to have had positive effect on Turkey's population because it enabled them raise their standards and quality education. Similarly, Islamization had positive and negative effects on Indian culture and society. In fact, Panikkar (1977) concluded that the introduction of Islam and the Muslim rule in the

Indian society was responsible for the conflicts between Hindu and Muslim followers. The horrible Sat practice was started during the Muslim reign, nevertheless, Panikkar (1977) affirms that Islam effected positively on the lives of Hindu people as it taught the message of universal brotherhood against the Hindu caste system. Similar effects on the Igembe people have been documented in this study to show Islamization affected education, land use, business, culture, and indigenous religion in Igembe.

Miraa trade had attracted many traders and especially Muslims of Somali origin to do business with Igembe people because of its economic value. The business had created an encounter between Muslims and Igembe people. The trade had taken place in several markets in Igembe region with the big markets being Laare, Mutuati, Kiengu, Maili Tatu, Muringene, Kangeta, and Maua which have partly grown due to miraa trade and Islamic influence. Miraa trade had over the years changed its dynamics by becoming the main business of the Muslim Somalis living in Igembe.

Arising from this perceived establishment of Islamic influence in Igembe through miraa trade several negative effects of Islamization have been noted which forms part of the statement of problem rationale. The Muslims of Somali origin have significantly increased in number. Their economic prowess was a major selling point for conversion to Islam. Due to their business acumen they had not only taken over miraa businesses but also other types of businesses in many urban centres in Igembe. For instance, miraa trade had made Muslims to buy land to settle and to build Islamic places of worship. Muslim Somalis could freely lease land from the natives of Igembe. Previously, leasing land to unknown foreign persons was strongly prohibited by the Njuri Ncheke Council of elders. Muslims were known to rent whole estates at

double rent prices because miraa trade has made them very rich and wealthy. People in Maua and other town dwellers who were relatively poor though they grow miraa can hardly afford to rent hence forcing them to the slums of the towns.

The miraa trade also had enabled inter-marriages between the two communities though in different faiths. There were concerns by local people that their women were getting into a strange Islamic and sometimes Arab culture without understanding its practices. These women did not understand that the Islam practice did not allow its followers to marry off their daughters to men inclined to other faiths though their men could freely marry the Igembe Christian or African Religious believing women.

Another perceived effect was that many men, women, and children were now employees of the Muslim traders with devastating consequences of poverty and truancy in schools. This scenario by default led to children dropping out of school which contributes to low transition rates and increasing adult illiteracy. The increased school dropout and child labour both led to other social ills. Oxfam (2004) found out that due to the motivation of earning higher wages, parents took their children out of school and provided the miraa traders with cheap labour. Nevertheless, although parents may get short term gains through the labour of their children there was long-term damage done to these children (Moyi, 2013).

Some Igembe people have already been converted to Islam but Muslims have not been converted to Meru traditional religion practised in Igembe. Thus, Islamization of Igembe people had undoubtedly taken place because Muslims have influenced them to adopt a lifestyle that was agreeable with Islamic beliefs and practices. As

Okuto and Otube (2017) pointed out that one of the ways a country can see the rise of Islamist authoritarianism was the rise of the number of Mosques, pupils' enrolment in schools, and opening of Muslim trade centres coupled with religio-cultural changes. The presence of Muslim adherents settling within the Igembe region may have brought with it effects that other people might have encountered.

Poverty had been in the increase among the Igembe people despite being at the centre of the lucrative miraa trade. There was a gradual takeover of the miraa farms, ownership, businesses, and trade by Islamic actors that had led to loss of income to the indigenous miraa producers. This was happening through repatriation of incomes and profits to places other than Igembe where the foreign investors choose to take away their money and invest elsewhere. This had a direct bearing on unemployment for Igembe people thus leading to an increase in poverty from where many social ills can be traced. These perceived effects have not been investigated and documented. Thus, the need for this research to study these perceived negative effects, record, document, and avail them for posterity.

In order for this study to exhaustively answer the research questions and in order to achieve the stated objectives a new comprehensive theory of 'Islamization through miraa trade' has been proposed in Section 2.5. Islamization through miraa trade theory brings together first, burgers' Islamization theory 1972 that only blamed the native religious situation for Islamization of Igembe people. Second, it scrutinised by Knight's risk, uncertainty, and profit theory 1921 that considered commerce alone as the main reason for Islamization. Third, it considered Lee's immigration theory 1966 that highlights settlement as the main reason of Islamization. Thus, the proposed theory of Islamization through miraa trade synthesised these three theories to fully

explain the Islamization of Igembe people. Islamization through miraa trade theory accounted for effects and particularly the negative effects experienced by Igembe people. The negative effects arise from the pervading of Islamic religious practices, the profit oriented miraa businesses spearheaded by Somali Muslim traders, and the displacement of native Igembe people by immigrants who had either leased or bought land. Therefore, in order to critically analyse the effects of Islamization of Igembe people through miraa trade, it was profound important to determine the spread of Islam among the Igembe people, examine the cultural importance of miraa to Igembe people, establish the contribution of miraa trade to the Islamization of Igembe people, and finally assess the effect of Islamization of Igembe people through miraa trade.

In conclusion, there was a nexus between Islamization of Igembe people and miraa trade, hence this study filled the knowledge gap by critically analysing the effects of Islamization of Igembe people through miraa trade. The problem statement has highlighted the critical effects of Islamization of Igembe people through miraa trade and particularly indicated that the negative effects can only be mitigated through a structured research to avail viable solutions to the problem

1.2 Statement of the problem

The problem that was investigated was to find out whether Islamization of Igembe people had indeed taken place through miraa trade and what kind of effects had arisen thereof. Islamization of native people as a phenomenon required structured study like this research but so far no meaningful studies had been undertaken on Islamization of Igembe people through miraa trade. Nevertheless, Neil (2003) a

British national conducted his doctoral studies on the social life of miraa in Kenya where he traced the social implications of miraa use as a stimulant plant. This study by Neil did not in any way deal with the Islamization of Igembe people through miraa trade. Therefore, the specific problem for this study was to collect, document, analyse, and interpret data on Islamization of Igembe people through miraa trade, highlighting both positive and negative effects of that phenomenon.

Islamization of Igembe people through miraa trade was the process whereby Muslim miraa traders intentionally or unintentionally converted their clients, employees, neighbours, miraa vendors, miraa Sacco members, Christians, and traditional Igembe religious adherents to Islam. The ideal situation would have been miraa to remain a commodity of trade between the Igembe people and the Somali traders but not a means of conversion to Islam of the Igembe people. Miraa trade was the connection between Islamization and the effects that were experienced by Igembe people. Islamization of Igembe people through miraa trade had effects which were mostly not good for them.

Therefore, this study fills the knowledge gap by critically analysing the Islamization of Igembe people through miraa trade using religious studies methods. The study relied on the four main objectives and questions for data collection and analysis so as to ascertain the existence of the problem and to find viable solutions to the research problem.

1.3 Objectives of the study

1.3.1 Broad objective

The broad objective was to undertake a critical analysis on the effects of Islamization of Igembe people through miraa trade.

1.3.2 Specific objectives of the study

The specific objectives were to:

- (i) Determine the extent of the spread of Islam in Igembe;
- (ii) Examine the cultural importance of miraa;
- (iii) Establish the contribution of miraa trade to Islamization;
- (iv) Assess the effects of Islamization through miraa trade.

1.4 Research questions

The following were the research questions:

- (i) To what extent had Islam spread in Igembe?
- (ii) What was the cultural importance of miraa?
- (iii) How had miraa trade contributed to the Islamization?
- (iv) What were the effects of Islamization through miraa trade?

1.5 Significance of the study

The findings of this study have filled the gap and brought about new knowledge in religious studies research on the contribution of miraa trade in the Islamization of Igembe people. Further, the study collected, documented, analysed, and interpreted data on Islamization of Igembe people through miraa trade something that had not been done before. The study findings could become a reference point to benefit scholars intending to pursue studies on the influence of miraa trade on Islamization of Igembe people.

The study findings have potential to become an orientation text to National and County governments, policy makers, Miraa Traders Associations, Miraa Taskforces, education and health officials, and leaders seeking to institute changes in the areas of miraa trade and how it affects Igembe people due to Islamization.

With regard to miraa trade policy, the existing miraa regulations will be impacted by the findings of this study particularly with a view to full implementation or revision of the regulations. Further, both levels of government will be at liberty to institute new regulations on miraa trade, farming, harvesting, marketing, and transportation to ensure there are positive impact to the local people and economy.

The study findings will impact practices in Igembe area whereby religious coexistence, tolerance, and respect for each other will be empacisized. Islamization will be addressed in a systematic manner to ensure other religious practices are not negatively affected. Educational sector will be impacted to ensure truancy, school dropout, and malnutriation will be curbed. The local economy will benefit from the study once miraa trade is delinked from Islamization.

1.6 Scope of the study

This study was undertaken in the three Sub Counties where Igembe people live which included, Igembe Central, North and South. This study confined itself to analysing the research variables. In specific terms the study determined the extent of the spread of Islam among the Igembe people, culturaly examined the importance of miraa among the residents of Igembe, established the contribution of miraa trade to the Islamization of Igembe people, and assessed the effects of Islamization on Igembe people through miraa trade.

1.7 Limitations of the study

There were a number of methodological limitations noted in this study. One, the Igembe area studied was not the only region either in Kenya or the world where miraa was planted and traded. There were other areas where miraa was found yet this study was not able to include them. However, this limitation was mitigated by the fact that data collected from Igembe areas and the results of the study were generalizable. Two, although Islamization of Igembe people may have taken a long period of time to take effect the study did not apply longitudinal research due to limitation of time to conduct repeated observation. This limitation was addressed by having a representative adequate sample of respondents involved in the study to represent the entire population of Igembe. Three, there was a language challenge to some of the respondents because they did not understand English which had drafted the questionnaires but this limitation was addressed before data collection whereby the English questionnaires were translated into Kimiiru and respondents encouraged to answer questions in their mother tongue.

1.8 Delimitation of the study

The study undertook a cross-sectional dimension where data samples were collected from the population of Igembe people only. The data was collected at a specific point in time. The physical location was Igembe and not the whole of Meru County accounting for a specific boundary of study. The study targeted miraa farmers, miraa vendors, and miraa association officials in Igembe North, Central, and South Sub-Counties. The study did not conduct case studies which could have brought about diversity in the data collected and possibly show how miraa was traded in other regions such as Mbeere in Kenya and some parts of Ethiopia where miraa was cultivated in large scale.

1.9 Assumptions of the study

The following assumptions guided this study. It assumed that Islam had spread among the Igembe community. It further assumed that Igembe people had been Islamized through miraa trade. Lastly, it assumed that Islamization of Igembe people through miraa trade had effects.

1.10 Operational definition of terms

Id-ul-Hajj	Refers to the Muslim celebration in commemoration of Prophet Muhammad's journey to Mecca.
Igembe	Refers to the people of Igembe ethnic origin
Igembe people	Refers to one of the 9 clans of Ameru of Kenya living on the Eastern slopes of Mount Kenya.
Imam	Refers to a Muslim religious leader of prayer and the head of a Muslim ummah.
Islam	Refers to the religion of the Muslims.
Kaaba	Refers to the black stone in Mecca which was considered by Muslims as holy place and nowadays a mosque in Saudi Arabia.
Kalaa	A single stem of <i>Catha edulis</i> or a respectful term referring to miraa
Kalimah-tayyibah	Refers to a declaration of one's belief that Islam is the true religion.
Madrassa	Refers to a Qur'anic school.
Mahaji	They are among the early three pioneer Meru Muslim convertees.
Mbaine	Miraa of highest quality from the miraa oldest trees

Meru	Refers to a Bantu ethnic group living mostly on the wind ward side of Mt. Kenya.
Meru County	This is County No.12 of the 47 Counties in Kenya.
Miraa	Refers to an evergreen scientifically known as Catha Edulis that grows in Igembe, Eastern Africa, and Arabian Peninsula.
Sample	Extraction from the raw data

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Chapter two covered reviews of related literature to Islamization, specifically Islam as a religion, spread of Islam, how trade aided the spread of Islam and the effect of Islamization among different world communities. In addition, literature related to the spread of Islam among the Igembe people, their historical background, miraa trade, and its role in proselytizing of Islam religion was studied. Moreover, theoretical and conceptual frameworks were studied in this chapter. Research gaps were identified and this study addressed them. The gaps identified included no studies done in Religious Studies to deal with Islamization of Igembe people through miraa trade. The gaps acknowledged were incorporated in the objectives, questions, and data in this study to ensure findings addressed them.

There were terms and concepts highlighted in this chapter that were pertinent to the understanding of the objectives. These included but not limited to Islam, Islamization, trade, miraa, and Igembe people. These terms and concepts were

undergirded by the Islamization theory by Bungler 1972 and other complementary theories by Knight 1921 on Risk, Uncertainty, and Profit and by Lee (1966) on immigration theory. There was sufficient literature on Islam but insufficient on Islamization, miraa, and Igembe people. This shortfall was mitigated by considering other materials such as data collected, related recent research papers, newspapers, magazines, and government policies.

2.1 Overview of Islam as a religion

Nawwab, Speers, and Hoye (2014) asserted that Islam wasn't a new religion per se but the one which was brought to the world by the Prophets. Muslims consider Islam as a religion and a practice. For Muslims, Islam provides forgiveness, humility, love and peace to the world therefore religious extremist, terrorism has nothing to do with it. According to John (1988), Semitic and prophetic religious traditions believe in monotheism and God's revelation, ethical considerations, prophets, accountability, and judgment day which Islam relies on. Muslims, Christians and Jews, were Abraham's descendants as they all trace their religion to him.

Islam was the 2nd biggest religion in the world with an estimated of 1.6 billion followers after Christianity, which by proportion, constitutes over 23% of the world population. In fact, Islam just like Christianity had been extensively studied since its inception in the year 622 CE in the 7th century (Armstrong, 2007). The revelations that formed the foundation of Islam as narrated by Muhammad however date much earlier to the year 610 CE when Muhammad had the first revelation.

2.1.1 Brief historical account of Islam

Miller (1995) stated that Islam was an Arabic word, which denotes peace, surrender, and submission to Almighty God (Allah). This means surrendering of one's will to Allah, which brings the attainment of peace. Hence, a devoted Muslim must be the one who is submissive and who observes the Islamic law to the letter. In relation to secular history, Islam's origin can be traced back to Middle East in the 7th century (Karabell, 2007a) making it one of the youngest religion in the world. The religious situation by 7th century CE was commonly used to tell the origin of Islam religion and Muhammad's da'wah was credited for its origin and growth (Fisher, 2011). Muhammad, was born in the year 570 CE, in Mecca on the Arabian Peninsula to a family in Quraysh clan, a city in North Western Arabia, Hijaz region. Lippman (1995) alluded that Abu Talib (Uncle) raised Muhammad after the death of his father and grandfather. In the year 590 CE, Muhammad in his twenties married Khadijah a merchant widow of whom he served by trading caravans to the North.

Nawwab, Speers and Hoye (2014) pointed out that when Muhammad reached his forties; he began to withdraw from the society and went to Mt. Hira outside Mecca to meditate. It was in this place that Muhammad heard malaikah Gibril's command to make the pronouncement in His name who created man where Muhammad pleaded his incapability thrice but finally recited. These words are found in surah 96 1-5 of the Qur'an. As Muhammad experienced more revelations of proclaiming God, Islam continued to grow and attracting the lowly members of the society like the slaves and later it spread amongst prominent men of Mecca (Angelika, 2010).

Muhammad had publicly preached in Mecca for some time until opposition to his message grew stronger mainly from the traders who sold gods for religious worship. They realised Muhammad was about to put them out of business if he continued to

preach that there was only one God and that was Allah. The people of Mecca began persecution of Muhammad together with his followers. This made Muhammad's followers travelled to the town of Yathrib, Medina as it came to be known later. He was hoping to begin a new point for a revamped Islamic movement (Miller, 1995).

Further, Muhammad would take the opportunity of various groups of inhabitants from Medina who came to Mecca to offer their annual pilgrimage to listen to him as the Prophet and accept Islam. Later in 622 CE, Muhammad with a close colleague Abu Bakr al-Siddeeq went to Mecca where a plan to kill him was plotted by the leaders but they had taken sanctuary in a cave. They later proceeded to arousing welcome by Medinans and the Meccans (Nawwab, Speers & Hoye, 2014). This marked the Hijrah the Muslim era through planned migration that brought forth a new life to Muslims. From that time, the community was no longer organized by blood kingship but by the greater Muslim brotherhood. Muhammad was in the company Muhajiroon and Ansar the helpers (Nawwab, Speers & Hoye, 2014). As Lippman (1995) pointed out, as Muhammad and his supporters settled in Medina the Muslim community grew exponentially. Once Muhammad felt his group was strong enough, they moved against the pagans of Medina. This led to a battle near Badr in the South West of Medina. After an inconclusive siege, the Medina residents gave up and they were totally submerged in the new religion, Muslim.

Further, Lippman (1995) noted that in 629 CE, after reorganisation of his conquest team Muhammad went back and with easy and no blood shed took over Mecca. He stamped his authority and he was accepted and respected there he later destroyed gods, idols and brought to the end the practices and worship of pagan there.

Muhammad died in 632 CE on 8th June in the presence of his third wife Aisha after a short illness and it was a great loss to the Muslim community which had grown to a formidable force. Some (Spellberg, 1994; Anthony, 2012) proposed that Muhammad must have been poisoned but no evidence had been provided to proof this claim. Muhammad was the exemplar in practice and action as guided by Qur'an which is the sacred text for Muslims (Bowker, 2013). He brought the teachings of Allah on countless societies that led to a unique period in the history of Islamic progression in the Muslim world. Indeed, Muhammad was credited (Miller, 1995) as a human and the prophet as the one whom Islam is believed to have originated from after an encounter with a revelation from God through Angel Gibril. During this visitation and subsequent other religious experiences Muhammad recited the Qur'an, Islam's sacred texts that Muslims belief came from Allah's perfect pre-existent words.

Islam's faithfuls believe that their religion was a revelation from Allah through malaikah Gibril to Prophet Muhammad his prophet peace be upon him. Hence Muhammad was highly revered among the Muslim faith up to date and his teachings continue to resonate well for all who read Islam's Holy text, the Qur'an. Moustafa (2014) affirmed that Mohammad recitations were recorded verbatim by a scribe as revelations. The Qur'an gave evidence of itself given by Allah to prophet Muhammad through mailaka Gibril as mentioned in (Surah Al- Baqarah, Ayat 97). The Qur'an bears witness to this assertion in Sura 26: ayat 192-195. Abraham's first-born son by Hagar Ishmail was the one from whom Muslims trace their lineage. Kaaba the holliest shrine in islam was a place that is believed Abraham almost sacrificed his son Isaac. At this same place is where a revelation was made to

Muhammad by Allah, this is contrasting the Biblical narrative as recorded in genesis 22 (Paul, 1993).

2.1.2 Islamic doctrinal teachings

The most important teaching and doctrine of Islam was acknowledging the Oneness of Allah, as the foundation of the Islamic faith and the anchor to their belief. All Muslim teachings and doctrines were derived from Qur'an and other sacred texts such as hadith (Jonathan, 2003). Qur'an was the text from Allah through Muhammad while hadith was the writing about the works of prophet Muhammad. A central teaching was that there was only one God (Qur'an 5:73) Allah (Qur'an 5:73) who sees all things (Qur'an 40:20) and He is omnipresent (Qur'an 2: 115). Allah is the sole creator (Qur'an 3:191) He is Omniscient (Qur'an 2:268; 10:61) and Omnipotent (Qur'an 6:61-62). Islamic teachings and doctrines of salvation and judgment, say that all people will be judged on judgment day by Allah (Qur'an 35:33-37), and that one may go to heaven if their good deeds outweigh their bad deeds and they sincerely repent their sins (Qur'an 3:135) though there is no last-minute repentance (Qur'an 4:18).

The Qur'an taught that there was Gehenna that is hell reserved for those who don't practice Islam and are not Muslims (Qur'an 3:77). Hell is a place of eternal punishment, a place believed has boiling water and fierce fire (Qur'an 4:56) for unbelievers and Jinn (Qur'an 11:119). Muslims believe there is an after life (Qur'an 75:12) and there are angels from Allah and forever obedient to Him where one of angels known as Gibril brought the revelation of the Qur'an to Muhammad (Qur'an 2:97). Muslims acknowledge Jesus as a great prophet but they don't believe He is

God's son, that He is divine or He was crucified (Qur'an 4:157). Muslims also believe in the prophets who were the messengers of divine revelation and law from God with Muhammad being the seal of all prophets and messengers (Rasul, 2012). Zakir (Qur'an, 2012) attests that Muslims believe in Qadar which means Allah has declared whatever happens in the universe is according to His will. The following are al-Qadar beliefs:

- a) The belief that Allah knows everything from his actions and actions of His slaves;
- b) That the book of al-Lawh al-Mahfooz was written by Allah;
- c) That what happens is from the will of Allah;
- d) That what happens is from Allah in their invariable nature, virtue and movement. Matt (2016), further explains that Muslims believe in strictly observing fasting while alcohol consumption and gambling are forbidden (5:93-94).

According to Richard (1999), within the boundaries of Divine Decree. There are 5 pillars that Muslims believe in. These pillars are the principle of worship acts necessary to practice faith. Pillar number one is the pillar of Islam which is the declaration of Faith (Kalimah Shahada) which is faith and believe in one God, Allah and Muhammad as a prophet of God. Muslims recite that there is only one God, Allah and Muhammad is a servant of God.

Pillar number two of Islam is Prayer (Salat) which is the Islamic concept of direct communication and supplication to the divine being. Salat is constantly and regularly conducted in worship. In fact, salat is done by all Muslims five times in a day according to sacred teachings. The five times of prayer included fajr, dhuhr, asr,

maghrib, and isha. The dawn prayer is done before sunrise, and noon prayer is for midday, afternoon prayers are done before sunsets, evening prayers are done after the sunsets while night prayers was performed at night. These recited prayers were done while facing Mecca. All Muslims are expected to wudu everytime they went for these prayers. During prayers they prostrate, stand, bow and sitted but not on one's heels or buttocks. Muslims can perform these prayers anywhere though a Mosque is the preferred place as it allows fellowship of many.

The next pillar of Islam is on fasting (saum). Spiritual and physical purification of Muslims during saum is of importance as it elevates one's soul and closeness to Allah by denying the body daily food and drinks. For Muslims to understand the state of the suffering, the poor and the needy they need physical sacrifice of which they believe that God appointed Ramadhan for that spiritual purpose. Actually, it was during this month when the Holy Qur'an was first revealed to Muhammad. During the month of Ramadhan Muslims abstain from the luxuries like sexual relations, drinks and food.

The fourth pillah of Islam was Giving Alms (Zakaat). Zakaat is giving according to one's wealth. This is done on one's own volition to atleast eleviates others economic suffering. Muslims are free to give their donations to the charitable organisations or to homes of the destitutes. In Islam this giving is guided by the five principles of Zakaat, namely:

- a) An individual intending to give Zakaat must declare so to God;
- b) Zakaat is to be offered on the due date;
- c) One should not exaggerate by spending more than usual after the Zakaat;

- d) Zakaat giving must be done in kind, for a wealthy giver it is good to give a portion of his fortune; and
- e) The Zakaat must be shared back to the community it was collected.

The fifth pillar of Islam was pilgrimage (Hajj). Jeffrey (2009) argued that Muslims strongly believed in pilgrimage or Hajj to Mecca where a healthy and able Muslim was supposed to pay pilgrimage once in one's lifetime. Muslims believe that they have a right to have a non-interfered communion with their God without necessarily interference by human beings. It is Muslims believe that any follower of good character had an equal chance to access God and would even become an Imam or a Sheikh of a Mosque. Muslims' education backbone is reciting of the Qur'an in the rural schools whereby Arabic religious education is taught and instilled into the young Muslims. It is the responsibility of every Muslim to win new converts as one strives the repeated command to be loyal in the path of God until loyalty to Allah is won. Muslim task was aimed more at strengthening their converts and encouraging them to be an enthusiastic follower than at winning new souls. The increased number of Muslim followers was seen as a product of population explosion and resettling of people and not necessarily out of conversion or proselytization (Lipka & Hackett, 2017).

2.1.3 The spread of Islam

Roff (2014) explored the idea that the spread of Islam originally took place from Arabian Peninsula all the way to the modern Spain in the West and Northern India in the East. The spread took place in many ways through these regions. At times it was transferred through military conquest (futuhat), the formation of caliphates, pilgrimage, and the work of proselytizers. Trade had been a significant medium for

spreading Islam since the religion started in the 7th century (Pye, 2013). The city of Mecca was known for merchant traders and leading in commerce. The merchants' residents at that time was the Quraysh tribe, were renowned merchants and leaders in commerce. They extended their influence to other regions including Abyssinia and Syria (Simon, 1989).

Muslim traders traded beyond their borders with a record in Malaysia by 1120 CE. By the 16th century, they had set up stout communities in the Malaysian, Philippine and Peninsula islands (Houben, 2003). The spread was attributed to better technology like effective transportation, communication, information technology, electronic, and print media among others. The Islam traders had economic superiority (Wilson, 2007) which gave them competitive advantage thus hedging out most of the other religious groups in urban settings. Trade and commerce had more influence on the spread of Islam in some territories than others (Pratt, 2014) For instance, in East Africa, the most evident method that Islam spread within the coastal strip and into the mainland was through contacts of trade and some da'wah work (Alatas, 1985).

Muhammad spread the teachings of Islam in Arabian Peninsula where initial spread was through futuhat (Roff, 2014). According to Majid Khadduri (1955), Al-Futuhat referred to the early Muslim conquests as a way of spreading Islam. Futuhat arose in the 7th century with the Islamic prophet Muhammad. There were several important stages of the military strategy of spreading Islam. Ibrahim (2017) identified five stages which were being used in the spread of Islam up to today. The arrival stage was the Muslim's entry in a new place where they keep of the limelight hence, they are not noticed at all and they don't demand or complain on anything. These will include professionals, students and business people. Their first intention is to make

good first impression while becoming perfect in whatever they do hence gaining respect and honour in the eyes of their host.

Following the arrival of Muslims, and having gained professional favour and with sufficient numbers of local people, Muslims would request, demand, and lobby for restoration of Islamic religious institutions, recognition of Islamic festivals, and general application of Sharia Law within their areas of influence. To avert looking suspicious and being mistaken for any ill intention they had to strategize by publicly advocating for inter-faith dialogues and peaceful co existence of communities. They were commonly supported by their host societies' leaders who would not like to be seen as retrogressive. Penetration stage comes immediately after they gain recognition. By this time, having increased in numbers and gained new followers, they started creating avenues that forged their common agenda of unifying them to be able to lobby host governments or local authorities or communities for more rights, opportunities and representation. They would continue agitating for inclusion of imams in the armed forces, prisons, universities and colleges as chaplains. The penetration and recognition led to confrontation stage. Here was where Muslims gained significant minority recognition in the community of their residence. All along they have been having the most formidable idea of having some aspects of Islamic law included in the host authority's judicial system. When such demands were not met by the host community the Muslims then turned to confrontational and violent means of spreading Islam.

Imposition (Ibrahim, 2017) stage was the final stage in the Islamic modern "conquest" strategy where the Muslim population becomes the majority leading in

the local area. This situation allowed Muslims to have full control of the host society locking out the Non-Islamic practices and suppressing the host society completely.

In Kenya however, there has been disagreement on the Muslim population in the country. There are different statistical figures on the Muslim population from different quarters. According to Ndzovu (2014), it had been alleged that the Muslim population in Kenya was between 5% to 8% while Muslims themselves insist their population was between 25% to 35% of the country's total population. From elsewhere, different figures trend. In U.S., State Department in a report in 2007 indicated that over 80% of the population subscribe to Christianity faith while 10% practiced Islamic faith with 1% belonging to Hindu and the others fall under various traditional indigenous religions (Kithao, 2015). Back in Kenya, Muslims rejected 2009 population census results which showed they were 10% of the country's total population. They alleged the results underestimated their numbers. According to Donal and O'Brien (1995), Muslims argued that they at least represented 30% of the 2009 country's total population.

Pew's Research Projections (2015) alludes that Islam was the fastest growing religion in the world. As of 2010, Christians were by far the largest religious group estimated at 2.2 billion faithfuls that was nearly 1/3 of the world population with Islam's 1.6 billion followers. At the current growth rate Islam religion might surpass the other religions by 2050 where the new world population is estimated to be 9.3 billion people. As a result, this will be making a new history as it has never happened before. Statistics according to Pew's Research Projections (2015) shows that Muslims will be approximately 2.8 billion while Christians will be 2.9 billion. This close parity between these two giant religions will be an interesting occurrence and it

will be eager to see how they will co-exist in the world. Islam didn't spread by trade only, but also by the establishment of almost permanent Muslim dynasties in other regions. Important trade routes were made by the proselytizers who helped in the spread of the Islamic religion to the East. In the 10th century, Sufism rose to almost a mystical practice that generated much of the early activity as they travelled on trade missions and settled on the new conquered lands where they set up several social amenities like schools, hospitals etc. Sufi Muslims were significant as they spread Islam to many parts of the world that included North Africa and China.

Nimtz (1980) asserted that Islamic laws were made to create a chain of command as their empires grew. For protection from the Muslim rulers the non-Muslims were forced to pay tax, jizya to be allowed to practice their religion. Those who defied this were intimidated to either abandon their religion, faced execution or forced to leave the area. Conversion by communities could be ascribed to the desire for better trade by non-Muslims. Parolo et al (2012) asserted that the spread of Islam was highly attached to politics and economic spread. From the very start, the spread of Islam was regarded as both political and religious. For instance, Mohammad facilitated the spread of Islam by conquering the various kingdoms and forcing his subjects and the subdued kingdoms to adopt Islam as their religion. As battalions of soldiers intermingled with the population there it became a fertile ground to spread Islam which enabled them to win back Iraq from Persia in 636 CE whereby many Persians converted to Islam after their local religions could no longer withstand the wave of the Islamic movement.

Robinson (2014) affirmed that in the modern day, the spread of Islam has taken diverse approaches from that employed in the past. It had been expanding globally

especially in Western democracies where the new trend is gaining momentum. This spread of Islam was led by the Muslims' brotherhood and other vibrant Islamic organisations who were keen to spread Islam religion and Islamic law. This was done to targeted communities with little detection which would raise suspicion. Strategically Muslims began their big movement to countries with few or no Muslim followers at all where on landing their cultural conflicts occurred. This was followed by many migrants and host communities' converts demanding for equal share of recognition and employment in all sectors (Fay, 1987). This was not taken with jubilation by the host communities as shortly violence arose. These agitations and demands for implementation of Islamic law, restriction of practicing local culture, open campaigning against the host local authorities and maligning other religions lead to more conflict and violence. Finally, Islam became the pivot upon which society hedges and functions. The local cultural practices were often in conflict with the incoming Islamic and sometimes Arabic cultures.

Islam had started spreading to Northern Africa by the middle of the seventh century after Muhammad initiated the movement from Mecca to the Medina. The spread was facilitated by Arab traders and travellers, who then were African clerics. The spread was considered from its multifaceted approach rather than a unified whole because it was dependent on the movement and activities of these clerics (Insoll, 2003). The spread of Islam to Africa was particularly attributed to trade and influx of Sufi Missionaries who integrated with local communities consequently converting them into Muslims. This was well blended with the political situation in Africa where the conversion of the rulers was almost a guarantee that the community would also convert (Kaba, 2005; Otayek & Soares, 2007). By enticing the rulers, the Sufi

Muslims were therefore able to spread Islam to the Africans with ease. The Sufi Muslims were the first to assimilate the Berbers and converted them to Islam. This was attributed to Islamization in North Africa. Islamization started in the coastlines of the Mediterranean Sea and Red sea before it moved to the mainland. By 630 CE, Islam was already controlling much of North Africa, especially in the current day Egypt and Sudan. Conventional historians such as Bulliet (1979) believe that the establishment of Islam in North Africa successfully dealt a serious blow to Catholicism between 647 CE and 740 CE.

Becker (2014) concluded that the growth of Islam was attributed to their strategy of reproduction, converting and enlisting the converts in subsequent conquests of the regions. The charity of the Sufi proselytizers was not extraordinary since the Muslim faith has over the years been characterised by charity and caring for people from across the religious divides which often entices people to convert to Islam. The mastery of this trick was evident in the manner Islam spread to West Africa and North Africa where there were already established dynasties. The Islamic religion spread through the influence of leaders who commanded great respect among their subjects.

It was apparent from literature therefore that trade activities were fundamental in the spread of Islam in the world (Karabell, 2007b). While the initial spread could have relied immensely on sword and conquest, with time the spread was greatly associated with the economic activities. The Oman Arabs and the Ottoman Empire which controlled the Coastal regions of East Africa bear evidence of this strategy. The insurgence of these Islam communities in the coastal region led to the control of the economic activities of the region by the communities who practiced Islam. These

communities introduced new crops like cloves to the coastal region. Although little has been researched on the role this control of the economic activities had on the spread of Islam, the control of trade, and other economic activities by Muslims compelled the local communities to convert to Islam. These economic activities were similar to miraa trade in Igembe Kenya whereby it was largely controlled by Muslim adherents. Today the Igembe residents have very little say in the trade though they do the greatest part of the miraa production. They have since converted to Islam in large numbers. This study sought to critically analyse the effects of Islamization of Igembe people through miraa trade.

Saulat (2011) pointed out that Islamization to the East African countries was attributed to early Islamic influence through the acquisition of education and control of economic activities by Muslim. Historically, it was evident that early Islam civilisation was defined by the political organisation, trade and architectural designs. The East African coastline was occupied with these Islamic enterprises which were suggestive of the Muslims habitation in these regions during the pre-colonial era. It was unfortunate, however, that scholarly articles detailing the emergence and spread of Islam in East Africa remain insufficient despite its vital part it had in civilisation in the region. Islam, in fact, was the first religion to be practiced in East and Horn of Africa along the coastal region before the coming of Christian missionaries and explorers in the 15th century. Islam in East Africa was particularly strong in the Kenyan and Tanzanian coastlines including Zanzibar (Nehemia & Randal, 2000). In the mainland, Islam was the main religion in the Northern part of Kenya which was mainly inhabited by the Cushitic speaking communities like the Somali, Borana, and

the Galla. Like in North Africa, the spread of Islam was systematic where it followed the coastline before spreading to the mainland.

The Islamic revolution in East Africa can broadly be divided into three periods. The first years were the early habitation of the Coastal region by Muslims. Later it eventually was subsumed by Bantu tribal leadership (Brown, 1971). Some Bantu tribes adopted the Islam religion, especially among the urban areas. The subsequent years were marked by the establishment of numerous small dynasties along the coastline and in the Comoro islands. This period reached a peak between the 13th and 15th centuries. Their lingua franca was currently the Swahili language which was predominantly associated with coastal people of East Africa (Mazrui & Shariff, 1994). The sea trade route was between the Persians and the Arabs, and therefore the conversion of the Bantus was basically through the intermarriages and to lesser extent trade activities. The year 1502 ended with the invasion of coastal region by Portuguese explorer and eventual colonisation by the Portuguese (Levtzion & Pouwels, 2000).

The last years of the historical Islamization of the East Africa region was in the 19th century and was characterised by the discovery of Zanzibar Island which rose with the decline of the Portuguese influence. Hadrami Shafi'i Islam was established by Islam leaders from the contemporary Yemen before the inhabitation of the East African Coast by the Oman Arabs. Islam leaders established their authority and control over the seaports of Lamu, Pate, and Mombasa through Sultan Sayyid Said of Oman who extended his influence to Mombasa in 1828. Later, courts were transferred from Oman to Zanzibar in 1840 (Levtzion & Pouwels, 2000). There was widespread Islamization of every facet of the coastal region.

The Oman Arabs influence was not only evident in trade but was also felt politically and socially. There was intense and extensive growth of coastal towns particularly Zanzibar and Mombasa which served as international seaports for slave trade and spices. Mwakimako (2009) says that it was not clear the role of the Oman Arabs in the Islamization of the interior. Nevertheless, the period marked great penetration of the interior and the establishment of several seaports to link with the great lakes of the East African region. Islamization spread to the interior through the conversion of the slaves and the slave traders from the interior. This distinct spread of Islam to communities that greatly participated in slave trade and the other forms of trades with the Arabs was evident to the role trade employed in the Islamization process. Unlike in Northern and West African states where much of the conversion was through assimilation and charity work, the conversion of most coastal communities was rather passive and was compelled by the trading activities between the communities and the Arabs (Levtzion & Pouwels, 2000; Mwakimako, 2009).

According to Vittori et al (2009), Germans and the British intensified the spread of Islam in the East African interior after the decolonization of the region in the latter years of 19th century. The Europeans established communication networks between the coastal regions and the interior especially through Tanganyika which was considered the gateway to the mainland. Though the Europeans effectively ended slave trade Muslims did not, they nonetheless provided a better opportunity for other forms of trade and especially the Indian Muslims who penetrated the interior establishing more contact with the mainland communities. There was therefore, marked extensive Islamization of the mainland communities since the contact was no longer restricted to the coastal communities. This was particularly evident in the

modern Tanzania where Islam was practiced across the whole mainland (Vittori et al., 2009).

Besides trade, the Arabs were involved in the early stages of British colonisation of East Africa as leaders, and therefore their influence was strengthened. In the Modern-day Kenya however, there was limited contact between the Arabs and the mainland communities because Arabs settlements were concentrated on the coastal strip even after the coming of the Europeans. In addition, the communication networks in Kenya were less developed compared to Tanzania thus restricting trade activities along the coast.

2.1.4 The spread of Islam in Kenya

By 13th century when immigration from the Arabian Peninsula arrived to the Eastern Coast of Africa, a cultural unit was formed generally referred to by historians as the Swahili community. Sperling (2013) stated that over time Muslim settlements in East African Coast increased and became independent though they kept contact with their original overseas homeland. Hadhrami *sharifs*, who had settled on the coast in the 14th and 15th centuries, gradually performed a significant mandate on the well being of the local Muslim culture whereas varying degrees' towns became centres of Islamic influence. In towns where both Muslims and Non-Muslims resided, conversion of Non-Muslim to Islam occurred through assimilation that took place particularly through marriages. Indeed, it was this intermixing that was considered to have given rise to the Swahili people, who were Bantu-speaking Muslims.

Since then Islamic influence had grown exponentially having been embraced by coastal, Northern, and innercity communities. The biggest Muslim population in

Kenya live at the Coast, North Eastern, and Nairobi mainly in Eastleigh. Islamization took place in towns, and those Non-Muslims who became Muslim were assimilated into town life (Sperling, 2013). According to Sperling (1976), as early as the middle of the 17th century, Muslims in the Lamu archipelago area particularly the inhabitants (Swahili) of Pate had trading contacts with the Oromo and Pokomo of the mainland. The Oromo supplied ivory to the Swahili, and the Pokomo were also trading with the Swahili of Pate and Lamu, from whom they obtained cloth and iron in exchange for ivory. The existence of the Pokomo Mosque in Pate town, dating back to the 18th century, was evidence of Islamization among urbanised Pokomo. At the beginning of the 19th century, Muslims had greatly increased in number in Mombasa making it a Muslim controlled town. Its population was made up mainly of Swahili with some Arabs and a small number of Indians. There were eight Mosques in the town, six of which had originally been built by the Swahili and two by the Arab community. A ninth Mosque was said (Sperling, 1976) to have been constructed in the nearby Swahili village of Kilindini. This discourse indicates that trade brought about Islamic influence into the interior of the Coast region.

Lamphear (1970) pointed out that during the first three decades of the 19th century, the pattern of trade in the Kenya's coastal region was remarkably uniform. Trading activity dominated urban-rural relations and was the principal reason for contact between Muslims and Non-Muslims. It also helped to establish political, military, social, and other non-commercial entities. The Saudi Arabian market demanded grain and timber while the Indian market needed ivory and gum copal from the East African coastal market. Lamu and Mombasa had direct shipping contact with Arabia and India and were centres for overseas export. The increase of the Islamic presence

on the mainland greatly extended the restricted areas of Muslim settlements, as they had existed for the preceding two centuries. Muslim communities in the new mainland settlements found themselves living closer to Non-Muslim rural people. Swahili-Arab caravans began penetrating into the inland from Mombasa and by 1860s they had dominated trade (Lamphear, 1970). Muslim traders were no longer simply content to receive goods from rural people as in the past but tried to increase their supply, seeking commercial advantage at its source.

As competition increased, Muslim traders sought contractual arrangements to ensure continued supplies and thereby their rural counterparts, in turn, acquired a market power which led to the Muslims movement and settlement to the interior (Bachmann & Honke, 2009). Despite the increasing Muslim population in the coastal region and their entrepreneurship, Islamic penetration into the interior was hindered by the nature of the Non-Muslim indigenous' religious beliefs and their practices. Other aspects that hindered the spread included unfriendly tribes, harsh climatic conditions, and cultural regulations preventing trespassing their land. Other hindrances included unfavourable health environment and poor transportation means.

Nonetheless, the Muslims penetrated to the interior as the Europeans had deployed Muslim agents as subordinate labourers, who in themselves were instrumental and were well placed in favourable colonial stations in the country. For places where European installed a military camp, government centres or plantations, the Muslims were keen to establish themselves and make their influence felt (Launay, Soares, & Otayek, 2007). Africans in the interior embraced Islam freely through the interaction with Islamic religious way of life. Hence, Islam gained a few converts by fostering good relations and close integration with the local people (Bakari, 1995). It was

noted here that the increase of Islamic influence at the coastal region through trade did not happen quickly but took a long time to take root and bear converts.

Ideally, the Islamization in the main towns increased between 1880 and 1930 CE (Bakari, 1995) when a majority of African communities in the interior had contact with colonialists and trade merchants from foreign countries. This increased contact with different tribes and races contributed to the expansion of their social space and consequently widening the African worldviews. As such, old paradigms and social structures had to change and usher in changes that included new economic practices, new systems of government, new education systems, and new religious orientation. Islam introduced new religious values too such as charity work, truthfulness, daily prayers, and visiting the vulnerable people. In the light of such changes that were sweeping across the African communities, Africans who mingled with Muslims and converted to Islam were not viewed as aliens. This facilitated penetration of Islam into the inland (Insoll, 2003). Pioneer Muslims first conducted their trade activities and Islamic preaching on the settlements in Nairobi along the railway line, Makindu and Kibwezi. Charton-Bigot and Rodriguez-Torres (2010) affirm that Mtondo a Tanganyika was the 1st Muslim to convert Africans to Islam and was instrumental in establishing of Pumwani which was a Swahili village and he built a Mosque where Islam was preached. Many people of Kikuyu and Kamba communities became his disciples and one Suni prominent convert was Khamis Ngige who became Imam of the Mosque.

The Islamization process was hindered by a number of issues that ranged from warring tribes such as the Masaais, hash tribe rules preventing foreigners from trespassing their land, the various Bantus cultures, vast settlement area, unfavourable

climatic conditions, poor transportation infrastructure and uncondusive health conditions. The locals limited Muslim traders' movement and it was not until when the Europeans came in the area and interacted with them that they were able to do some business and spread abit of Islam. This process was further hampered by the bad memories of the slave trade in the area which made the locals to suspect any foreigner. Some of the Kenyan communities viewed Muslims with suspicion hence being a "Muswahili" was derogatory.

From 1900 to 1920, Islam was introduced in the Mt. Kenya region, for instance in Embu, Meru, Nyeri, and Murang'a. Thus, Islam became a religion of social status and economic opportunity in these areas. Non-Muslims converted to Islam not due to the spiritual message but because of being impressed by the Islamic way of life, ties, and associated with becoming part of the Jamaa (family in Swahili language). A great number of Muslim converts were impressed by the bonds of brotherhood that cut across the ethnic lines. Further, Islamic festivals like the Idd, Maulidi, Ramadhan, and the Friday prayers helped to gather large groups of people some of whom became Muslims (Levtzion & Pouwels, 2000).

Islamization process in the Mt. Kenya area unintentionally aided by the establishment of colonial administrative stations. Many of the centres established evolved to become dwellings for the less privileged, what is known today as Majengo where the Muslim communities were established. The earliest station was at Fort Hall in 1900. The next station was opened at Embu in 1906.

Edward Butler Horne (commonly known as Kangangi) moved to Meru in 1908 in a bid to control the people living on the slopes of Mount Kenya. Similarly, Islam

spread throughout Meru during the early years by way of Imams who taught Islam in Majengo (slum). Kubai (1995) declared that the month of May 1908, marked the arrival of Muslims in Meru. On 4th June, Horne and the King's African Rifles established their operational headquarters in Boma, Meru. This is where the first Muslim converts were registered, where by, by 1912 a good number of Asian and African Muslims constituted the very first mosques.

After the establishment of Meru commercial trading centre, Maua was the next trading centre to be opened in 1910. Other trading centres that were opened in a row were: Njangwa, Muthaara etc. More trading centres continued to be opened in different parts of Meru. Soon the Swahili men married indigenous women and at the same time influencing a few Merus to convert to Islam. The new converts influenced other Meru families to convert to Islam. Some Muslim converts became Imams of the Mosque, teachers, and even performing the responsibilities of Khadhi to officiate marriages of African women and Muslim men (Alpers, 1973).

Bernard (1988) argued that the trade between the Somali Muslim community and the Meru people was commonly livestock, agricultural farm products and miraa. Miraa, a psychoactive plant started featuring as a prominent item of trade in the 1960's when its commercialisation by Somali tycoons led to miraa exports to nearby Somalia. Miraa business interest of the Somali Muslims in Meru contributed greatly to their settlement in the region. Miraa evolved from a social and ceremonial role to an economic commodity and led to establishment of trade routes. Barter trade was practiced through exchange of miraa for goatskins (Barkan, 1984). Goldsmith (1994) pointed out those exterior factors that had affected the trading networks were revived

and the traders of Igembe maximized that chance of trading with the foreigners (Ambler, 1988).

Isiolo, served as the gateway to major Northern Kenya towns of Garissa, Moyale, Mandera and Wajir. This made it to become the major transit for Meru miraa headed for Northern Kenya and beyond. Igembe households were at that time self-reliant and perhaps more so than the other Meru Sections and the miraa business was simply an income complement and not an occupation. However, this had changed as miraa farming as become the mainstay of the people and most rely on it for livelihood and it plays a key role in poverty eradication (Goldsmith, 1994).

By the time this study was concluded, the popularity of miraa had gained acceptance in different regions of the country where in the recent past people were slowly embracing miraa farming. For example, in Laikipia, farmers now grow miraa in Pesi, Mutara, and Matigari areas and in Homabay County there was a 50-year-old farmer Tom Sikah who grew miraa in his farm since 2010. According to Karimi (2013), apart from chewing, some Muslim countries (Yemen, Djibouti, and Somalia) use miraa for various purposes including feasts, birth ceremonies, marriages, circumcision, and vigil for the dead. Additionally, miraa chewing was a friendly way of promoting social interactions among the Islam members who chew it. According to Gebissa (2010), East Ethiopian Muslim culture emphasizes that miraa was holy; hence, was referred to as "the flower of paradise". Among the Muslims of Harar in Ethiopia, there was a time no ceremony that took place without miraa chewing. According to Nassim (2014), the Qur'an has not prohibited miraa chewing. He further, argues that Islam favours anything that was of benefit to the society. However, Salah (1997) say that miraa falls in a grey category and it was up to the

individual interpretation of the Qur'an. This was to say miraa could be both prohibited and allowed at the same time and therefore depend on individual's perspective and their interpretation of the Qur'an.

Gebissa (2010) stated that the leafy stimulant first became popular among devout Muslims who used it as an aid to worship. In the memoirs of a 19th century Egyptian officer stated that they read Qur'an and they bowed to the Prophet because this plant was known to the Saints and it permits them to keep vigil long through the night to worship Allah (Gebissa 2004). From the preceding information, it was evident that miraa had attracted a host of people into its farming for its cultural, social and economic benefits it confers upon its growers and the stimulant effects it gives the chewer. Miraa in Igembe region was a commodity of much significance and it was part of the social-economic fabric of the people in the region.

The social-economic interactions intensified between Muslims and the indigenous people of Igembe and Islamic religious institutions have been built. A number of Mosques have been built there for over a decade now. According to Panikkar (1977), prayers and evangelizing meetings were held regularly at shopping centres freely with strong overhead public speakers. There was an encroachment of Christian dominated territories by Muslim clerics who were trying to Islamize the region. Further pointers were that Muslim dressing attires were slowly sneaking into the residents of Igembe. It had been observed that some of the local residents were slowly adapting to this dressing code where some were donned in kufi caps, arafat scarfs and kanzus with some changing their names to Muslim names, for example, a man from Kiegoi changed his name from 'Francis Mutwiri' to 'Abdi Mutwiri'. This trend was not fully supported by everybody including the Muslim leaders. Corcoran

(2015) quotes Hassan Ole Naado, Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims (SUPKEM) chairman who said that there was fear that Muslims were stepping on other people's toes for demanding to practice their faith in places that don't belonged to them. This phenomenon was experienced across the world with many countries struggling how to deal with the Muslims migration.

2.1.5 Arrival of Islam in Meru

Laughton (1944) defined the term Meru (pronounced as *Miiru*) as the language of the Kimiiru-speaking people, the administrative unit or County. Meru town is the Meru County Headquarters. Meru County is 250 kilometres from Nairobi. The Meru ethnic group comprises of the Igembe, Tigania, Imenti, Igoji, Mwimbi, Muthambi, Tharaka, and Chuka. The Meru dialect is Kimiiru, the language spoken by the Meru people. Recently, the Meru region was divided into two counties namely Tharaka-Nithi and Meru counties though Meru town had continued to serve as the biggest trade centre and communication hub to counties in the Northern parts of the Eastern of Kenya.

Fadiman (1979) noted that Edward Butler Horne (commonly known as Kangangi) moved to Meru in 1908 in a bid to control the people living on the slopes of Mount Kenya. Similarly, Islam spread throughout Meru during the early years by way of Imams who taught Islam in Majengo (slum). Kubai (1995) declared that the month of May 1908, marked the arrival of Muslims in Meru. On 4th June, Horne and the King's African Rifles established Boma as their operational headquarters in Meru town. Meru town at mjini there were also some Muslims with Sundanese heritage. They were called the Nubians. The history of Nubians in Kenya started at the end of First

World War (WWI), when those who came to the country were rewarded with land in Kibera in Nairobi for their successful service in the British Army. Nubians had been recruited to serve in the King's African Rifles by Captain Fredrick Lugard in 1891. The Nubians settled near Meru hospital where they also practised Islamic religion and traded in the miraa business.

Horne's administration firmly controlled the entire Meru. He established Maua station in Igembe South Sub-County. This was the Maua town which much later came to be a renowned miraa market. It became a major destination for affluent Somali Muslim miraa traders. Fadiman (1979) asserts that many prospective traders flocked the new trading centres to set up businesses. In 1912 while reporting the progress of the new station, Horne said that there were 35 Asians and over 100 Muslims of African origin (Fadiman, 1979).

By this time many people wanted to settle in Meru due to favourable living environment. Mahaji people made their way to Meru too and they were demanding to be settled. They were offered land 8 Kms away from Meru town. They turned down this offer as the place was inhabitable. They tried to settle at Gakoromone but they were chased away by the locals. Nkirote (1995) asserted that Mahaji while referring to the basic human rights of owning land, they were settled at Majengo in the precincts of Meru town (slum settlement). This densely built up area that stands even today.

Laughton (1944) pointed out that Maua was the next trading centre to be opened in 1910. Other trading centres that were opened in a row were: Njangwa, Muthaara etc. More trading centres continued to be opened in different parts of Meru. In these

trading centres there were also the Abash Muslims of Ethiopia, who were the followers of Shaykh Abdallah. The Ahbash had emerged as important political actors in Lebanon and within the Islamic orbit where they presented a clear alternative to the powerful Islamist trend (Alzamil, 2012).

According to Nkirote (1995), after Mutuati trading centre was opened in 1929 the Ahbash established themselves which culminated in putting up a Mosque at Kabachi. There was an increased trading volume between the indigenous Igembe businessmen and Garba Tulla where it was very easy for the Ahbash traders to link up for trade through Marsabit.

Another Mosque was built at Laare, a trading centre which was set up in 1940, this remained the only known public Mosque in Igembe region. With many Islamic activities and festivals, it attracted many indigenous people who were converted to Islam. It was in the recent decades when other Mosques started coming up in other parts of Igembe like Maua, Kiengu, Karama and Muthara. Some of this convertees became teachers, Imams and sheikhs.

Nzibo (1986) attested that the coming up of the Muslim triad the Mahaji, Swahili and the Nubian brought a new aspect to the existence of the Muslims in the region. In the trading centres that they settled continued to flourish and he played a pivotal role in the Islamization process in Meru. These Asians started very successful businesses in these trading centres, for instance Mohammend Moti set up a posho mill at Maua besides meeting the needs of the residents attracted many people hence making his business grow and some converting to Islam religion. At that time, there was almost no Muslim family outside the trade centres consequently living up to the Islamic

repute of being a town religion until 1970s. The image of Islam to the Meru society could be summed up by a saying that he who walks with a fisherman smells fish (M'Imanyara, 1993).

2.2 Islam and trade

Trading was significant medium for Islamization since the religion started in the 7th century. Muslims extended their influence to other regions of the world including Abyssinia and Syria (Simon, 1989). Muslim merchants traded beyond their borders and in particular they increased in number in Malaysia by 1120 CE. By the 16th century, they had set up unfaltering communities in the Malaysian, Philippine, and Peninsula islands. It was customary for Muslims to spread Islam as they conducted business, a trend that remained relevant up to modern times.

The spread was attributed to better trade advancement like effective transportation through caravans. From the early Islamic beginnings camel caravans were the main mode of transport and due to its advancement, it promoted business in all the areas surrounding Mecca and Medina. The Muslim traders had economic superiority which gave them competitive advantage thus hedging out most of the other religious merchants such as Christian groups in urban settings. Trade and commerce had more influence on the spread of Islam in some territories than others.

2.2.1 Trade and Islamic beginnings in Mecca and Medina

The city of Mecca was an important trading centre with a vibrant community of merchants. Being Prophet Muhammad's home and business town, Mecca was an

important setting for emergence and growth of Islam. Mecca and Medina provided a vital setting for Islam's connection to trade. Since the days of Prophet Muhammad, the growth of Islam had been linked with trade. The city of Mecca was known for great merchants from the Quraysh tribe which was led by Muhammad's uncle Taib. The merchants of Mecca were renowned and became leaders in commerce. Trade and its growth in the Muslim world was associated with Muhammad preaching's in the city of Mecca.

Islam's cohesiveness in establishing their religion in new settlements facilitated trade (Essid, 2009). The main trade established by the Muslims in Mecca were maritime, spice, and silk which helped establishment of rich trading cities such as Baghdad. The Quraysh tribe was leading in trade extending to Abyssinia and Syria. According to Hadith about the Prophet, Muhammad himself was a merchant before preaching the revelations he received from Allah (Laguerta, 2012). Mohammad's prominence and power enabled him to seize caravans from the Mecca and other Arabians forming an Islamic empire.

2.2.2 Trade routes and settlements as a means of spreading Islam

Muslim traders established trade routes that eventually became the highways for Islamization. The trade routes were found in all continents. For instance, the maritime trade routes in Asia, the red sea, the Persian Gulf, the Indian Ocean, and the great Trans-Sahara were some of the routes that had assisted in spreading Islam.

In Africa, trade tremendously transformed the continent's landscape (Kresse, 2009) and greatly helped to introduce technology, goods, and services that led to improvement in the quality of life. Equally, trading did serve as a very convenient

platform upon which Muslim merchants found a reason to travel into non-Muslim territories. Muslims easily settled in new places during their business tours and mingled with the local people. This contributed to the locals appreciating the new world-view brought to their culture and led the Muslim traders to preach their religion (Mason, 2014). Muslim communities in the new mainland settlements found themselves living far closer to non-Muslim rural people. Swahili-Arab caravans began moving inland from Mombasa, and by the 1860s Swahili-Arab caravans had dominated the trade. Muslim traders were no longer simply content to receive goods from rural people as in the past but tried to increase their supply to have a commercial advantage at its source. As competition increased, Muslim traders sought contractual arrangements to secure supplies. In turn, their rural counterparts acquired market power. This led to Muslims movement and settlement to the interior. Mingling with Muslims during the exchange of goods resulted to conversion of non-Muslims to Islam. From these communities, Islam slowly penetrated inland.

Muslims on the Kenyan coast did not intend to Islamize the coast people but to trade. The purpose of the Africans who accompanied Arabs was for trade and they used Swahili lingua franca and some got converted to Islam during their escapades. Thus, the Swahili language played a pivotal role in uniting the two groups from both sides of the religious divide. The Swahili language grew faster in adoption than the religion of Islam in many regions within the immediate interior of the coastal strip. The growth of the Swahili language helped carry Islam further into the hinterland as those who enthused knowing it in depth had to delve into Arab-African traditions that brought about the language of the Swahili. It was true that even in the modern times businessmen dealers in petroleum products were Muslims of Somali origin and

whenever they settled in a new place, they set up a makeshift mosque where as few as five adherents can congregate for prayer.

Muslim merchants worked together with their Muslim converts who helped traders to gain valuable customers who helped expand their businesses. Government regulations guiding the working conditions favoured the Muslims more than natives, which made more non-Muslim traders to convert in order to have better trading conditions. Thus, it can be inferred that trade helped the Islamization process allowing Muslims to conquer and win more regions through trade which gave them resources to foster the process.

Notably, as early as the middle of the 17th century, some Muslims in the Lamu archipelago area, particularly the Swahili of Pate had trading contacts with the Oromo and Pokomo of the mainland. The Oromo supplied ivory to the Swahili. The Pokomo were also trading with the Swahili of Pate and Lamu, from whom they obtained cloth and iron in exchange for ivory. During the first three decades of the 19th century, the pattern of trade in the Kenya coastal region was remarkably uniform.

Trading activity dominated urban-rural relations and was the principal occasion for contacts between Muslims and non-Muslims. Political, military, social, and other non-commercial contacts were relatively infrequent. Overseas demand for indigenous produce especially grains and timber came mainly from Southern Arabia, while demand for ivory and gum copal came from India. Lamu and Mombasa had direct shipping contact with Arabia and India and were centres for overseas export.

2.3 Igembe people and miraa trade

Igembe people of Meru were intrinsically connected to miraa crop and trade. In Kenya, the cultivation of khat or miraa was associated with the Meru people. The merchants who traded with miraa were often referred to as ‘Baite’ as a colloquial reference to Meru people. However, in Meru miraa was associated with the Igembe people who live in Nyambene Hills.

Due to favourable climatic conditions in miraa growing areas, the crop had largely dominated due to high returns compared to other crops. It had a high per-capita income of Ksh.234, 504.98 and employs a large number of people in Igembe region (Sabina & Galcano, 2015). Further, Sabina and Galcano asserted that the acreage under miraa in Nyambene region at that time was estimated to be over 80,000 hectares and over 120,000 farmers were directly engaged in the farming.

In addition, other players in the industry including brokers, transporters, traders, and consumers are indirectly employed in the sector. The fact that miraa is largely grown in Igembe region though a few can be traced in other parts of the Country. Thereafter it is transported mostly by road to various markets destinations. However, as a result of exploitation by middlemen and lack of organized structures in the business, full gains have not been realized by the farmers. Further the ban of miraa export into some European countries especially UK and Netherlands which were the major markets had adversely affected the returns.

2.3.1 Igembe people of Meru

The Igembe were a Bantu speaking people and among the nine sub-ethnic groups that form the old Meru, living in the North Eastern part of the slopes of Mt. Kenya

(popularly referred to by the dialect as Kirimara). After the 2010 Constitution, the larger Meru comprised of nine main clans, it was divided into two main counties of Meru and Tharaka Nithi with each having nine and three constituencies respectively. It was believed that the nine clans were closely related to the Kikuyu and Embu people. According to Njeri (1985), the language of Meru people was Kimiiru while the Igembe usually speak a Kimiiru dialect called the Kiiembe. The Meru land lies to the North East of the slopes of Mount Kenya and constituted a large area stretching Northward to the volcanic Nyambene hills and Southward to the Thuchi river. The land was known for its fertile soils, well-watered agricultural areas to low-lying semiarid lands. Igembe, with three sub counties lies between latitude 0° and 0.17° N. and between longitude 37.8° and 38.3° E.

The origin of Igembe people was traced through the Ameru as it was told in several myths trying to explain their origins. Some claim their roots to be from the North, others from the coast, and some even from the Arabian Peninsula, ancient Egypt, or Israel. Fadiman (1994) recorded narrations by the elders from the Tigania and Igembe on their origin as it was told by their forefathers. According to Fadiman, generally the people of Meru originated from Mbwaa, an island community which sat on an edge of huge water joining a great sea. Some oral tradition sources say that present day Yemen was the place where Mbwaa was located while others say Mbwaa was Manda Island near Lamu with the ocean channel being the great waters. The Mbwaa highland was prosperous although it was surrounded by bitter water which no one was able to drink. However, Nyaga (1997) said that the major oral tradition of the Meru community origins was an eccentric tale combining basics of some truth

and fiction. Mbwaa Island was believed to have been a peaceful place and the Meru people lived there harmoniously before they were incarcerated by the 'nguu ntune'.

Following the enslavement by the Nguu ntune for a long time, the Meru people escaped from Mbwaa with assistance of one of their great leader called Koome Njue who was helped by God. It was believed that Koome Njue was given a stick, a spear (itumo) by a god (Mugwe) which he used to strike the water and separated it for people to cross over to the other side of the dry land. The escape of the Meru people had received many interpretations with some people comparing it with the Israelites escape from the Egypt and their crossing over the red sea through Musa's magical means. This was similar to the exodus bible story (Exodus 13–17) (*Quran 19:51–53*).

Nyaga (1997) found out that this history had made several people to believe that the Meru may be the remnants of one of a tribe in Israel. Nyaga (1997) further understood that migration of the Meru people was from the ancient area of Ameroe people who were black Jews referred to as farasha situated South of Egypt. They came along the river Nile through the present-day Sudan and to the Northern part of Uganda. When they arrived in Uganda, the Uganda Bantu; the Baganda and Banyoro parted ways and settled in Uganda while the other team continued to move until they crossed the rivers and arrived to the present-day Kenya following the sea shore of Lake Victoria. The Abagussii, Abaluya, and Abakuria established their settlements on the Western part of Kenya.

Another team of the Meru continued with their journey until they arrived at Meru Arusha in the Northern part of Tanzania where they settled. This was in Meru Arusha

where the Ameroe from Mbwaa changed their name from Ameroe to Ameru. The settlement of Ameru in Tanzania gave them an opportunity to multiply into large numbers and later, some of the Ameru started moving North East of Tanzania which was the present-day Mombasa. Many of the Ameru people settled in Mombasa such as the Giriama, Digo, Chonyi, and other Bantu people of the coastal region of Kenya. Still, another team continued to move along the Indian Ocean and through the Tana River to Ukambani. Some remained and settled in this place while the others crossed the river and continued moving to the interior until they arrived at Igembe side. It was at Kigairo that all the nine clans of Meru migrated going to their present locations. For instance, the Igembe continued to move towards the Nyambene hills where they settled while the Tigania clan settled on the western part of Nyambene hills. The rest moved to Imenti, Igoji, Mwimbi, Muthambi, Chuka, and Tharaka.

Other myths on the origin of Meru tribe have been documented by M'Imanyara (1992) who brought a new version of the Meru origin in his book. He argued that the origin of Meru can be traced through the ancient Nilotic empire of Meroe, a swampy Island South located south of Blue Nile. M'Imanyara (1992) further postulated that at the Meroe might have given birth to the present Meru due to the similarities between the two words with some evidence suggesting that Meru might have come into contact with civilization early enough. Actually, the older generation in Meru have been referring to Misiri, the present-day Egypt as their early origins which gives similarities of the Arab community. Looking at how the Meru used to describe the directions in those older days was suggestive Meru originated from North which the elder call 'Meruo Nthii iri iguru' (Meroe the land in the North).

The Northward expansion of Meru people show them veer along the coastal region where they encountered with the Oromo-speaking people. Due to the Oromo people's expansion, the Meru people were pushed further and continued along the Kenyan coastline to Tanzania, where they turned inland. It was at this point where they splited with meru of Tanzania at Mount Kilimanjaro and took route back to Kenya settling on the North East of the slopes of Mount Kenya.

According to Chege (1985), Igembe people held in high esteem the cultural values. They had their own rites of passage which every individual in the community had to undergo for the social, religious, and political development. During these significant occasions, the individual and the community had opportunities to offer sacrifices to God and the spirits of the ancestors. Some of the occasions which were highly valued by the Igembe were birth of a child, circumcision, marriage, and death. Each of these ceremonies was performed according to their customs and each tied to a culturally important religious root.

According to Igembe tradition, a birth of a new child was highly valued where a ceremony performed by the family and community to dedicate the child to God. The mother held the baby that had just come out of her womb, faced towards the Nyambene hills which was believed to be sacred and God dwelling place. The child was offered to God where the mother spitted on the it, *gwickia mata* which was an act of blessings to the child's entire life.

Kobia (2009) during an interview advocated that circumcision to the Igembe was a mark of a rite of passage of both boys and girls transiting them from being children to adulthood which determined their status in the community and all the respect and

responsibilities that go along with it hence full membership of the tribe. According to Kobia (2009), who was also cited by Chege (1985) an uncircumcised person regardless of his/her age, was regarded as immature and a child and, therefore, not a full member of the Igembe community. It was after circumcision that the male members of the community were given the mandate to protect the community from enemy attacks and also to go on raids for their community. After circumcision, all the newly circumcised male members of the community became warriors (Chege, 1985). The girls were circumcised before puberty and the risk of getting pregnant before one was circumcised was avoided. Circumcision acted as a gateway to get married and to be initiated into the different juridical and political governing councils. "Marriage was an important social function that was highly regarded by Igembe. Young women were subjected to marriage immediately after they had healed from their circumcision. They offered both prayers and sacrifices to God and the spirits of the ancestors so that they could bless the marriage and make it a success. Members from the same clan were not allowed to marry each other due to the blood relations" (Chege, 1985).

The Igembe people traditionally viewed death as a will of God depending on the individual person who had died. A death of a successful person culminated into a well lived life while a death of a person who was not accomplished in life was treated as incomplete and needed some rituals, prayers and sacrifices to prevent the family and community from curse. Bernard (1959) asserted that following death of a member in Igembe, funeral rituals were performed according to the age of the dead person defined by an age-grading system, which was related to the age and generation classes.

The secular and sacred leadership of Igembe people was anchored in a well-defined structure of Njuri Ncheke which was both a representative of the traditional religion leadership and a council of elders, which ruled the entire nine clans of Meru from Thuchi to Ntonyiri. Thuchi river and Ntonyiri marked the two opposite ends of Meru. Consequently, Njuri Ncheke became the secular rulers of the Ameru. Orina (2018) affirmed that for a person to qualify as a member of the Njuri Ncheke, one had to attain the highest rank in the society which a man would aspire having been a member in the general elders' council. The mandate of the Njuri Ncheke was to maintain the society's traditions, norms, effect tribal laws, settle disputes & conflicts, administer oath, and pass new knowledge to the new members. To date, Njuri Ncheke remains powerful organization which was referred to in vital and major political, economic, and socio-cultural issues affecting the Igembe and the entire Meru Community. It was good to note that these traditional organizations such as Meru's Njuri Ncheke, Kaya from Mijikenda, Council of Elders from Kikuyu among others (Orina, 2018).

2.3.2 Religious orientation of Igembe people

Chege (1985) in her research study on the religious beliefs and practices of the Igembe clan, found out that there were at least six noticeable features associated with Igembe religion namely the belief in God, belief in spirits, rites and ceremonies, magical and medicinal practices, the sacred social and ceremonial laws/prohibitions and the religious specialists. According to the traditions, the Igembe people believed in a supreme being called Ngai, or Murungu who was the creator of the world and to whom prayers and sacrifices were being offered. Mugwe were the Murungu divine leaders of the Ameru. Mugwe were respected persons who made sacrifices and

performed healing on behalf of the tribe. This God being an omnipresent had localized dwelling places where sacrifices and certain rituals were being done (Icheria, 2015).

Baikiao (1977) postulated that the name Ngai according to the Igembe mean rain and was attributed to God for rain or mbura was a phenomenon which traditionally denotes the jurisdictions of God and it was God alone who can cause rain. This suggestion concurred with the present belief that peoples evil doings interferes with God's blessings of rain. This claim was supported by Kibicho (1980) who noted that the term Ngai signifies that God was the ultimate giver of all things and talents to all human beings, who were his children as he was the creator and ruler of the universe. Other names used alongside Ngai or Murungu to signify the attribute of the most-high, great, incomparable and all-powerful omnipotent God include Kinikiiru, Mwathani, Mumbi, Baaba, Mutethia, Mweneinya, among others. The Igembe people strongly held high belief on the only one God who the community would turn to when they needed his blessings or when they felt threatened with danger.

Chege (1985) also found out that the Igembe believed that, besides God, there were other spiritual beings which were regarded as supernatural in the sense that, they could do what natural human beings could not do. For example, these spirits could see what living human beings could not see and they could bring misfortune or ill health to a living human being. As Chege (1985) postulates, the believe of Igembe was that in their spiritual state, the spirits of the ancestors could see and hear what the living human beings could not see or hear. The spirits were believed to be more powerful than the living hence acted as the custodians of the Igembe customs and guardians of morality. They believed that those members of their respective families

who failed to keep the accepted customs and traditions of the Igembe received punishment from the spirits of the ancestors which was manifested only with their particular families.

Therefore, a parent or grandparent on their deathbed cautioned family members to conform to accepted customs normally after death, their eyes would never slumber nor sleep. This called for spirits of the ancestors to be treated with the same respect and care as they were being treated when they were living. The presence of ancestral spirits was believed to be in all family rituals and ceremonies. On the contrary, the Igembe believed that there was another category of bad spirits comprised of the dead evil men such as sorcerers, murderers, or notorious criminals who were put to death by the community. These spirits did not deserve any decent burial, were not associated with the worthy ancestors and they were therefore not supposed to be treated with respect like the spirits of the ancestors. Chege (1985) said that in case of an act that resulted in hurting the dead, then the spirits of the ancestors had to be appeased by slaughtering sheep or goats, brewing honey beer or giving cereals as offering to them.

Njuri was the custodian of the Ameru religious secrets. They performed rites, rituals, and offered sacrifices to God. Njuri Ncheke was truly the mediator between God and Ameru people. Before the coming of either Christianity or Islam the Ameru people worshipped their traditional God in shrines, mountains, rivers, lakes, grooves, and forests. In these sacred areas religious specialists such mugaa (medicine man), kiroria (prophet), murombaniri (the one who prayed for people), mwiciaro (one who shared

an oath with you), murathi (the one who foresaw future calamities), and mukiamama (priest) performed curative mediations and peaceful offerings.

2.3.3 Miraa as a crop

Miraa or *Catha Edulis* was first reported to Western culture by Peter Forskal in 1778 and edited by Niebur in 1792 who gave the generic name *Catha edulis* Forsk in memory of Forskal (Haji, 1985). Miraa was known by other names such as mairungi, makata, matangoma, nyeusi, shurba, giza, kangeta, alele, lombolio, mbogua, veve, kisa, ngoba, kathelwa, kathanga even matako. The most commonly used word in Kenya was miraa. In other parts of the World miraa has been referred to as Abyssinian tea, Arabian tea, *Celastrus edulis*, chaat, gat, kat, kathine, kus es Salahin, qat, qut, tchaad, tohai, tohat, and tschut. According to Andere (1996), miraa chewing predated the recorded history. The 1st reference to miraa chewing was in 1237 CE. Before then there were many indirect references to miraa such as "flower of paradise" by Muslim community. Miraa had been closely identified with Islam for many centuries.

Until the beginning of 20th century, miraa was prohibited in the region where it was cultivated in other countries such as Ethiopia, the Horn of Africa, Yemen and the Arabian Peninsula. Miraa grew in the wild and was slowly domesticated though unlike cereals it could not be harvested, stored or transported to far areas as it had to be used while fresh. As it far and local demand increased by day, this show reenergized cultivation which lead to the improvement of road infrastructure which enabled it easy transportation possible. It was only recently that technical information on growth and planting of miraa had been made widely available. This

information was availed by the farmers themselves on miraa farming, transportation and its market dynamics.

It has been established that miraa growing conditions are similar to those of Arabica coffee. This explained why early accounts of miraa were recounted alongside stories of coffee in Harar region of Ethiopia in the 13th century. Today it is grown along with coffee in Ethiopia and mainly in Igembe Kenya. Miraa takes seven to eight years for the miraa plant to reach its full height (Appendix 2 (C) Figure 11). Other than access to sun and water, miraa requires little maintenance. Ground water was often pumped from deep wells by diesel engines to irrigate the crops, or brought in by water trucks. The plants were watered heavily starting around a month before they were harvested to make the leaves and stems soft and moist. A good miraa plant can be harvested four times a year, providing a yearlong source of income for the farmer.

The distinction between miraa and the psychostimulant substances extracted from it was comparable to that of tobacco and nicotine. Since these psychoactive and potent compounds were said to be present in miraa, its usage elicits a feeling of euphoria and wakefulness. Miraa is both a crop and medicinal plant and both aspects of its use and classification were worth exploring. The chemical properties of miraa have been a subject of discussion both by scientists and citizens wanting to know if miraa was harmful to humans or not. Therefore, scientists have isolated chemical compounds of miraa plant yielding a number of results. Miraa may contain molecules that fall in the class of alkaloids specifically of the amphetamine family. In fact, miraa was thought to be a natural amphetamine. These molecules were isomers of cathinone, cathine flavonoids, and cathedulins. Structure elaboration shows a similar molecular structure with an almost similar potency and effects

profile. Cathinone content was extracted from the miraa leaves when chewed fresh and its extract was swallowed with the saliva then absorbed through the oral mucosa to the stomach (Toennes et al., 2003).

According to NCST (1996), several studies have been done in humans and experimental animals which showed Cathinone, Cathine and d-amphetamine have comparable pharmacological profiles differing only in potency. The adverse effects recorded were hyperthermia, increased heart rate, increased metabolic rate & oxygen consumption, mild analgesia, mydriasis, increased blood pressure, and increased force of heart contraction. Through the release of norepinephrine, Cathinone was metabolised to Cathine in humans causing short-lived effects of miraa and was rapidly eliminated in urine. These chemicals (Cathinone, Cathine, and d-amphetamine) alter behavioural changes in humans causing increased psychomotor activities with rapid onset of elevated mood, alertness, agitation, elated mood, and apprehension.

Islamic scholars have never agreed on the miraa use and chewing by Muslims from the Qur'an. Opinion of Muslims about the legality of miraa chewing was not clear. Hersi (2013) claimed that some assumed miraa was halal which made it acceptable for chewing. Others regarded miraa as makruh that was discouraged by religious leaders from being used, and yet others thought miraa was outright haram that was forbidden. In Qur'an Sura 4: ayat 43 (4:43) it was stipulated that khamr (an Arabic term for alcoholic beverages) that was intoxicants were a form of defilement from Iblis and were to be avoided by people who wish to be successful. Thus, some Muslims classify miraa as khamr. Miraa chewing was mostly associated with the Muslim populations both in Kenya and abroad. This association suggested that most

Muslims do not regard miraa as khamr. In Igembe miraa was highly regarded both by Muslims and native Igembe people.

2.3.5 Cultural importance of miraa

In Kenya, miraa is cultivated in the formerly Meru North District. Currently these are 5 distinctive Sub Counties administrative entities equivalent to districts. In Kenya miraa is highly esteemed for its economic value especially where it is grown in Igembe region. It is considered a cultural heritage for Igembe people as it is used in a number of cultural events (Ng'ethe, 2018). There have been many discourses on the cultural role of miraa in Igembe especially in marriage, boy child initiation, reconciliation process and in Njuri Ncheke activities (Carrier, 2007). Studies reveal that chewing miraa was a preserve of the older men and as a precursor to circumcision ceremonies initiate took miraa to an elder to ask for permission to undergo the rite of passage. Miraa particularly plays a crucial role in marriage proposal by young suitors.

The bride groom took miraa to the girl's parent for a marriage proposal (Mwaniki, 1986). It worthy noting that miraa to be offered in all these instances will call for a special type and quality to perform these cultural rites. This quality is only gotten from the oldest miraa trees known as 'mbaine' which is named after the oldest Igembe age set. It was tied in a special bundle known as 'ncoolo' that was prepared differently by tying it up with banana leaves and yam runners by an expert. These had many symbolic meanings depending on how the yam runners were knitted. In these usages, ncoolo bundles were offered by junior men to their seniors, suggesting

a gerontocracy hierarchy maintaining elders as welders of power in theory, if not in practice (Carrier, 2007).

Miraa is held in high esteem in Igembe region for it is credited for every development and prosperity that is seen there. Apart from its economic value miraa is used in many ceremonies that include initiations in social-political groups, marriage negotiations etc (Mwaniki, 1986).

Carrier (2007) on miraa production, consumption, marketing, cultural importance and inheritance outlines the responsibility of female gender in miraa commodity trade in Kenya where they are said to have invaded a male packed entity. Although Carrier explained the role of women in miraa business today, he left a gap on why women really decided to get into this complex business that initially was seen as a man-only venture.

Miraa was a very pervasive commodity, because when examined socio-culturally, the chemistry of miraa took centre stage and it gets strongly demonized, but when miraa was examined from economic perspective, the economic value of miraa over rules all the negativities associated with it as observed by (Mwangi, 2009; Njiru et al., 2013; Mugendi, 2017). Kathata (2017) studied miraa in Igembe clan from 1940-2014, observed that miraa was politically and socially guarded commodity where the policy maker faces stiff opposition when they propose diversification in farming. Kathata further observed that regardless of millions of moneys in circulation in Igembe, the money was owned by men who traditionally own miraa plants and they spent the fortune in town by eating in towns and really not found in the households. Men did not support their families making women the breadwinners of the families.

Nowadays miraa has been chewed by non-Igembe older men as required. It was also sold to markets within the country and exported outside the country. Consequently, most of those who chewed miraa were Muslims who did not take alcohol. Traditionally and culturally chewing of miraa was only a reserve for the elders of Ameru and Somalis in Kenya as it enhanced the two communities' healthy interactions. However, there was a changing trend in contemporary times where youngsters now chew miraa freely and with a feeling that they are not offending anybody. In addition, urbanization and break down of extended family system has made miraa chewing a free for all pastimes. Due to dynamics of the social life and the challenges faced by the ever increasing number of the young people in the Igembe society has seen a emerging of a don't care attitude that has lead them to miraa chewing, drugs abuse among other social ills facing the society today (Carrier Neil & Gernot, 2012). All this has resulted into anti social behavior exhibited by this youngster. Their bad habits make miraa chewing to be mistaken as a drug or for idlers using it to pass time before engaging into crimes. Contrarily to that miraa was respectively used as predated in history for its cultural value. It was treated with reverence as no function would end with out presentation of a twig of 'kalaa' as a sign of good will and intention but it all together depended on the nature of the function.

Miraa has often been linked to negative effects. Mwenda et al. (2003) asserts that miraa long time users may experience low libido and are at risk of becoming impotent. For pregnant women it is equally dangerous to chew miraa as it may affect flow of blood supply to the foetus. This has been alluded to by pregnancy study and miraa (Erickson et al., 1991).

In a nutshell, Erickson asserts that the two study groups were statistically insignificant. The 2006 review of miraa by the World Health Organization, it was not subjected to international control. Nevertheless, in 1988, the alkaloids contained in miraa became scheduled constituents under the United Nations Convention on Psycho Tropic substances.

Though this scheduling was not meant to give advisory against miraa some countries went on and legislated against it which lead to prosecutions and loose of market. Thereafter there was a retrival after a report on miraa by United Kingdom's National Drug Intelligence Unit which gave out a report that delinked miraa from psychosis. This allowed miraa to be consumed, sold, transported and to be imported as it was not harmful to human health and advised the lifting of the previous restrictions (Mwenda, 2003). Demographic data on Somali migrants in United Kingdom showed that miraa had a positive role it played in uplifting each other in the communities they lived in. Another report on Somalis in Holand showed that when they chewed miraa it gave an opportunity to congregate together hence they were able to build their esteems in a foreign land. In these sessions they were able to share indepth issues and information affecting them where they were able to help each other. In other places eg in Australia miraa chewing gave the Africans identity.

NCST (1996) report showed that Igembe and Somali people have been in miraa business for over four decades. In 1972 the East African Miraa Growers Company was started by prominent Somali and Kenyan business tycoons. These traders were the sole exporters of miraa to Somalia following their licensing, approval, and protection by the Horticultural Crop Development Authority (HCDA) amidst resentment from Nyambene region by miraa growers and traders. In 1974,

Nyambene Miraa Trade Association (NYAMITA) was formed to counter the East African Miraa Growers since few tycoons dominated the Mogadishu Miraa Market. This led to a delegation of the Nyambene Miraa Trade Association who lobbied for miraa to be removed from the schedule of crops under HCDA and the request was approved hence Nyambene Miraa Association was registered in 1975 with a Certificate of Registration No. 7098.

Through the government gazette in 1976 miraa was removed from export control and regulations by HCDA. Since then, people from Somali and Igembe have been interdependent of each other over the miraa business. This relationship has grown to the extent of the Somali settlers in the region agitating for political space, increased intermarriages between the two communities leading to change of lifestyles and the erosion of the indigenous Igembe culture (NCST, 1996).

Regardless of the social effects of miraa cultivation, miraa production had boomed at a rate impervious to National trends and International disapproval (Mwenda, 2003). The world poverty index (2016) advanced the notion that 80% of the total land in Kenya was arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs) with low productivity. As a way to mitigate this, there had been an outstanding trend of most smallholder farmers in the study area to expand from little value crops to high value and as such miraa (Demurger et al., 2009). These adjustments in agriculture had an important effect on income among most rural households. Such diversifications were common in Igembe. This community had highly embraced the cash crop which was even exported to Amsterdam, London, and Somali and also marketable in local market. It had provided employment to many people (Mwenda, 2003).

2.3.6 Miraa trade

According to Mailutha and Kikechi (2014), miraa, a homegrown crop commercialised when Kenyan farmers grew cash crops like coffee and tea. Baariu (2013) concurred that miraa farming had remained a lucrative business with big profit turnover compared to tea and coffee. Traditionally, miraa was consumed ceremoniously by men where it was totally controlled by cultural norms with youthful consumption rationed. The traditional use had evolved to include females and youth handling and chewing miraa. Initially, miraa was distributed to National and International markets by a network of players mostly of Somali origin who had links in Europe, Somalia and other countries. The biggest consumers of miraa were in Northern Kenya, Somalia, Djibouti, Ethiopia, and the Middle East. Nevertheless, the trade routes changed with Somalis settling in different parts of the world such as Europe, Australia, and North America with the collapse of Somalia Government in the 1980s. This made many Somalis to migrate and settle in different parts of Kenya for instance, in coastal towns, Eastleigh in Nairobi and Maua in Igembe among others. They set up businesses while those at Maua town bought properties, built Mosques, ventured, and became affluent miraa traders. This enabled them to integrate with the farmers and linked the local miraa traders with international markets where they had contacts (Wrong, 2005).

Igembe people turned the cultivation and trade of miraa into a national economic activity and then made it an international foreign currency earner industry. Miraa rose in importance as a commodity internationally in the 1990s and 2000s as Somalis moved throughout the world following the Somalia state collapse due to internal conflict. During the colonial period, Meru was the sole District where miraa was

highly produced, allowing inter-cropping that avoided soil erosion thus protecting other crops. Igembe farmers had constantly demonstrated how miraa was valuable to them than other crops such as coffee or tea. Miraa was distributed nationally and internationally from Igembe via an efficient network although transportation both locally and internationally has remained a challenge to the Ameru people (Laughton, 1944).

According to the Government Report (NCST, 1996), miraa business was profitable, but agents who leased farms and wholesalers were the beneficiaries. Miraa was harvested, packaged, and then transported to urban centres by agents for both export and local consumption. Moreover, wholesalers purchase miraa that was packed. There were specified miraa selling centres, such as Muringene in Igembe central that handle bigger collections of the produce. The transportation of miraa was highly specialized because of its logistical challenges and the risk of withering before sale thus there was urgency for quick transportation. This may explain why miraa vehicles over speed when transporting the commodity.

Baariu (2013) asserted that the Igembe people acknowledged that miraa had greatly contributed to their economic growth and development edging out any other form of farming in the region. The chairman of NYAMITA confirmed that miraa brought about Ksh.3.9 billion annually into the Country making it a substantial foreign exchange earner. Before it was banned by some Countries, the produce was exported to South Africa, United Kingdom, Holland, Sweden, Germany, and Saudi Arabia among other countries. According to Mailutha and Kikechi (2014), miraa production had effects on the rural economy where it had kept vibrant the agricultural sub-sector by employing large numbers of people. Hence the income generated from it had led

to decrease in poverty levels in the region as farmers were able to meet most of their basic needs.

According to Gebissa (2010), until 20th century in Eastern Ethiopia, only religious and political elite chewed miraa. Currently, people of all religious affiliations, gender categories, and age brackets had been hooked to the habit. Miraa has been transformed from a tree grown for domestic consumption to a cash crop.

Miraa was a plant that held a special socio-economical value to the Igembe people and whether owning small or large scale of its farming was vital to the social, cultural, and economic life of the community. According to Kikechi (2014), nowadays however with the commercialisation of miraa, multiple players joined the market and became part owners by virtue of leasing of miraa plantations and those who come into ownership through birthright. Another class of owners were the miraa seedlings growers who specialized in preparing seedlings for sale to farmers.

Alongside Arabs and Somalis who had been involved in the trade in Kenyan miraa, the Igembe people equally had invested a lot in the total production, transportation and marketing of the produce. Nevertheless, the Somali traders had an upper hand in the international markets due their trading networks and a business prowess. Their dominance had created tension, as some Igembe people consider themselves exploited by the Somali network. Transportation of miraa both locally and internationally had remained a challenge to the Ameru people. Fatalities had occurred whilst khat had been transported by air. For example, in May 2004 a plane flying from Nairobi, Kenya, to Mogadishu, Somalia, carrying 55 bags of khat weighing 1.5 tons collided in mid-air with another plane. It crashed in an open field

in Kenya killing the two occupants. In August 2008, another aircraft en route with 5.4 tons of khat from Kenya to an airport 50km South-West of Mogadishu struck a telecommunications antenna during bad weather on its approach. It crashed killing all the three crewmembers.

Miraa chewing and cigarette smoking habits were prohibited in by certain institutions such as the hospitals. In fact, a signpost at Maua Methodist Hospital in Igembe South sub-County warns visitors coming to the health facility to desist from miraa chewing within the precepts of the facility. These kinds of regulations were also found in some hotels and restaurants within Maua town such as Ikweta hotel, Shekinah hotel, and Nyambene lodge with notices or warnings that “don’t chew miraa here or chewing of miraa is not allowed”. These were some of the homegrown miraa regulations for the lack of substantive national miraa policy until 2019 when an Act of Parliament classified miraa as a cash crop. In 1980, WHO classified miraa as a drug of abuse though it considered it to be less addictive. Miraa was legal in some Countries and illegal in others (WHO, 2006).

There had been a long-time worldwide endeavour to regulate miraa trade and its consumption. The world statutory bodies like the United Nations, World Trade, and World Intellectual Property Organizations etc have not given a distinctive direction on the production, sale, purchase, transport, possession, import/export, exchange, delivery, and consumption of miraa. This had left each country struggling on how to treat the presence of miraa in their economies. While some have enacted laws to control or ban the crop altogether, others have remained ambivalent. For instance, in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia and Yemen, miraa appeared to be legal but was banned in Jordan. However, in Yemen, miraa was banned in 1972 although this was

lifted due to political agitation. Ethiopia exports eight metric tons of miraa to Djibouti daily, as it was not banned there. According to NCST report (1996), miraa import in Saudi Arabia was banned since 1956. Other countries where import of miraa was banned included Denmark, Italy, Norway, China, New Zealand, Malaysia, United Arabs Emirates, Finland, Germany, Netherlands, Poland, Switzerland, United Kingdom, Ireland, France, South Africa and Sweden. Nevertheless, some countries like Canada have not passed a law to ban miraa though importation, selling and consumption were forbidden. The importer was not supposed to be prosecuted but miraa was supposed to be confiscated and destroyed.

The National Council of Churches of Kenya on a paper presentation by Rev Canon Peter Karanja, the General Secretary to the parliamentary select committee on miraa on 17/10/2013 at Continental House, parliament buildings observed that many people chew miraa and it was hurting to see still there were no adequate studies that make informed decisions and regulations. He concluded by pointing out that considerable studies have been done previously but to date no report has ever come out or published.

In the last decade, the Government of Kenya had done a lot in laying intervention measures on miraa crop. On a Friday, June 17th 2016 through the Kenya Gazette Notice No. 4420 of 13th June 2016, the government created a Taskforce, which was to oversee the implementation of the miraa Taskforce recommendation. The miraa Taskforce in consultation with the relevant stakeholders was to come up with ways of recovering the lost market, and search for new ones. The Taskforce was to identify opportunities for the development of capacity of farmers, establishment of demonstration farms and suggest institutional and administrative structures for value

addition in miraa production and marketing and with further recommendations that miraa farmers should register a farmer's cooperative society to eliminate middlemen who exploit them and eventually establish miraa research institutes (Task Force Report, 2017). The laws regulating miraa trade provide for licensing, safety in packaging, hygienic handling of the product, remove of cartels as middlemen and taxation of miraa products.

Following the promulgation of the Kenya constitution, 2010, County Governments were mandated to facilitate and coordinate the miraa industry by developing, domesticating and enacting county specific policies and laws in line with National policies and legal framework. The County Governments were also supposed to offer extension services, enforce regulations and standards, avail farm inputs, facilitate access to markets, provision of infrastructure for agricultural production, marketing, and agro processing, and value addition. Various Counties have continued to generate bills in a bid to regulate trade and use of miraa by introducing levies that has largely affected the miraa trade and use. These levies stretch from the source of the produce for instance, in Igembe when a pick-up load of miraa was charged Kshs. 1,000.00 and then charged by transit counties and at the destination markets. At Mombasa it was charged Kshs. 7,000.00 while in Machakos County the annual charge was Kshs. 40,000.00 per vehicle. Makueni County came up with a bill meant to regulate trade and use of miraa within Makueni County. The bill dubbed 'the Makueni County Khat Control and Utilisation Bill 2016' which sought to impose a fine of Kshs. 10,000 or a jail term of one year on any person found selling or consuming the stimulant outside the stipulated hours or at undersigned areas. The bill seeks to protect consumers from misleading or deceptive inducement about miraa

and also protect persons under the age of 18 from accessing the stimulant. The Emali Mulala MCA Cosmas Kaleli, who was sponsoring the bill said that the aim was to protect the health of consumers. As outlined in the Makueni County Gazette Supplement No. 9 Bills No. 8, (2016) suppliers and sellers of miraa were required to hold on operating licence to enable them sell their commodity between the stipulated time, weekends and public holidays. All these regulations were done by various Counties in a haphazard manner without proper implementation mechanism until the Act streamlined them in 2019.

The County Government of Meru had taken stand to promote, form and develop miraa Co-operative societies in all the miraa growing Sub Counties. The Meru Co-operatives Directorate was mandated to invoke the Meru County Co-operative Societies Act, 2014 and the Meru County Co-operative Societies Rules 2016 to promote miraa farmers and traders. Co-operative societies in all miraa growing regions within Meru County were sensitized especially the farmers and traders on the benefits of belonging to Co-operative societies. The Directorate's mandate was to ensure growth and sustainability of the miraa Co-operative societies.

In 2019, a team of officers were tasked to carry out a situation analysis in Nyambene region to find out the situation of miraa trade within the region as there was no policy in place hence the industry was run as a freelance entity attracting a lot of conflict and malpractice. The industry was traded under an absolute Muslim-buyer-controlled-market. Farmers had no say on the trade and the industry which was in the hands of brokers. Studies had shown that low levels of financial literacy were closely linked with financial and social exclusion resulting in reduced household financial

returns. Therefore, they tended not to plan or save, invested less, borrowed expensively, and participated less in the formal financial system.

It was ascertained that some people leased out their miraa farms for long periods; sometimes on informal and/or on unfavourable terms which often led to family conflicts and inability to redeem the leased farms upon expiry of the leased period. Despite the high returns from miraa farming over the decades, the primary producers still live under extreme poverty conditions occasioned by a vicious cycle of non-business-oriented farming and markets dominated by brokers. Price fluctuations due to erratic weather conditions and/or market dynamics have continued to impoverish the farmers. Further, the situation was aggravated by shrinking markets, low financial literacy leading to low saving culture, hence lack of access to credit to finance investments. Co-operatives remain the best solution to the perennial financial woes in the miraa subsector (Taskforce report on the Development of the Miraa Industry, 2017).

2.4 Islamization

2.4.1 Concept of Islamization

Islamization was the process of bringing converts under the authority and influence of Islam. In Igembe Islamization was targeted to the community with a view to shift from its traditional or Christian practices and to embrace Islamic practices. In Africa the Islamic da'wah targeted the leaders of the communities for conversion hoping that they will influence their subjects. This strategy proved very critical in firmly planting Islam in areas where traditional religion or Christianity had taken root.

Islamization was also an ideology that has been used against non-Islamic regimes. In seeking Islamization, the proponents look for ways of regime change so as to either create a caliphate or to bring Muslim leadership to legitimacy. This meant that Islamization as an ideology was a tool under the political whims of legitimate Muslim leaders or even terror groups. There were states like Pakistan which have made Islamization a nascent state policy. In so doing religious platitudes and other extremist religious rhetoric were introduced by the state in order to introduce certain political changes. However, even those not in governments may use Islamization as shield to hide their motives of seeking to overthrow state systems and introduce radical policies in the name of religion.

In the case of spreading Islam, the concept of Islamization was often accompanied by other concepts of infiltration, settlement, and converting target communities. In Igembe Islamization was the process of using miraa trade to take religious, cultural, educational, and economic control from the native people by Muslim traders and settlers.

2.4.2 Effects of Islamization

Lewis (1996) observed that when a society had been into contact with the Islam religion the dispersal of Islam would be independent of other factors. Lewis further argued that it would be necessary to look for changes that have effects on conversion to Islam. Burger (1972) subscribed to the same idea in his study on Pokomo community who live in the Coast of Kenya. He outlined 3 variables of Islamizing of an individual person or a community and their culture. Therefore, in the case of Pokomo, there were clear cultural effects of Islamization.

Bat Ye'or (1996) in her publication has pointed out that the Indian Muslims while out to steal from the Christians and enslave the villagers they needed to justify this by guising to fight the Christians which would be more acceptable in the eyes of Islamic followers. Provinces were ravaged and burned down, towns pillaged and destroyed and inhabitants massacred or deported. From the beginning of the conquests in Syria and Spain and other conquered provinces, the Christians had ceded to the Muslims half of their Churches which became Mosques as a result of the Muslim influx. In the Maghreb where endemic anarchy prevailed, sources (Roff, 2014) mentioned the massacre in 1033 C.E of five to six thousand Jews in Fez. The Almohad persecutions in the Maghreb and Muslim Spain (1130-1212) eliminated Christianity there.

Bat Ye'or (1996) provided an account of the persecution of Jewish populations in Egypt which had existed there for a long time being exterminated due to their resistance to Islamization. Such atrocities led to the disintegration and flight of families who were dispossessed and humiliated after the destruction of their synagogues. Further, the terror meted on the Jewish innocent and peaceful inhabitants was heartbreaking. The misery arising from such mayhems especially rendering people stateless were serious results of Islamization during the initial days of the religion.

Indian culture was influenced by Islamic traditions in a big way. These effects were both negative and positive. As pointed out by Panikkar (1997) Indian society was divided due to the introduction of the Muslim rule. India was split into two divisions the Hindus and the Muslims forming two communities on the same country. There was a concerted effort to Islamize the entire Sub Continent hence there were many strategies employed including proselytization activities. To fortify their position

against the propagation and spread of Islam, the Hindus introduced many social taboos and caste rules were made rigid. Under the effects of Islam continuous progress disappeared from the life of Hindus.

Still in India, Islam made Hindu societies exclusive and caste-ridden. Sati was made harsher and the Hindu women were veiled. Also, women were introduced to seclusion from men which was a new culture to them. The evil of infanticide by Indians was an overreaction against the invading Muslim practices. The Hindu adopted the practice of infanticide (killing girls at the time of their birth) to escape the risk of their virgins losing chastity at the hands of the Muslims. Some Hindu chiefs and well-to-do persons were compelled by the Muslim rulers and nobles to give their daughters in marriage. To escape all these ignominies, they started practising infanticide (Mason, 2014).

Child marriage also became more popular probably as a result of the Muslim rule in India. The Muslim rulers and other high officials quite often kidnapped beautiful Hindu girls. Under the circumstances, the Hindu parents thought it desirable to take to child marriage. It was emphasised that the proper age for the marriage of girls was seven and that marriage after the age of eleven or twelve was sinful. The cruel practice of Sat was started during Muslim rule. One of the negative consequences of Islam religion was creation of slavery into Hindu societies, which was common in Muslim traditions.

However, Islam effected positively on the lives of Hindus as well, especially in respect of legal system, pride in one's religious beliefs, human dignity, and equality. Foods eaten by Muslims were adopted by the Hindus. Indian music was equally

influenced by Islam. A fusion of Hindu system of music led into interactions with Muslim singers and this led to evolution of new modes of architecture. New art and crafts emerged in the country such as enamellings, metals, jewels and papermaking. Workshops were set up for silver and gold articles and embroidery. Linguistic synthesis rose as a result of Hindu-Muslim contact and Urdu became the people's language. Hindu customs were tinted with the Islam religious culture as a result of their closeness and long association.

Hussain (2009) claims that Afghanistan had experienced great event occurred when Soviet forces were invaded by Islam. The US-led jihad was the starting point of extremist religious wars propelled by the US interests, which also spread and fueled rivalry between Saudi and Iran. This was left devastating effects on the citizens of the countries involved where also the entire world security was threatened. Islamic revolutionaries were born with a mighty Pakistan parading an Islam army. Islamic radicalization was initiated in Afghanistan and Pakistan who have been targeting soft grounds al over the world. Pakistan has since become unrulable and a fragile state with many infighting Islamic factions (Abbas & Hassan, 2005).

According to Yusuf (2009), before the colonial rule, Islam was mostly at the coastal strip of Kenya and some in the interior, such as the North-Eastern and Western regions. Commercial activities intensified as trade picked up. European and Asian businesses succeeded in attracting secondary industries and as commerce expanded, new job opportunities were created. Good wages attracted migrant labourers from as far as Kamba, Kikuyu, and Luhya communities. Scores of Kamba, Kikuyu, Luo, and Luhya found their way to the coast where they settled into the numerous plantations while some crossed the sea to Pemba and Zanzibar where many got converted to

Islam. When they returned home, they helped spread the new religion in their locality.

According to Sperling (2013), the rapid process of Islamization of the upcountry people at the coast became so alarming to the colonial administrators. This made the Provincial Commissioner, C.W. Hopley to issue a circular to all his District Commissioners cautioning them that, it was not in the interest of anybody that Islam should spread to the people of Aboroginal and a policy to curtail any Muhammadan proselytization would be issued out. It was in these villages that Muslims established contacts with migrant labourers some of whom eventually converted to Islam. Muslim traders were also important in the spread of Islam into Western Kenya. Sharif Abdallah bin Mansab was very active in spreading Islam throughout the Rift Valley and was appointed Kadhi of the province. Corcoran (2015) cited Kenya as one of the countries grappling with violent radicalisation. He further pointed out the need to change strategies to contain religious violence in Muslim dominated areas. This violence had been fed by recurring disputes and unsettled conflict on how Somalis and Kenyan Muslims are treated.

According to a report by Amnesty International (2005), Al-Shabaab was a radical group in Somalia with territorial and ethnic differences with Kenya. The Al-Shabaab argue that Kenya for decades had mistreated the Muslim communities in North-Eastern region and invaded (colonized) Somalia and other incidences like the Wagalla Massacre were cited as incidences of injustice. Somali traders' controled much of the international trade. Their supremacy in business had created rivalry with their Kenyan counter part for example, Meru people are suspicious of the Somali networks. This tension reached at the peak in 1999 when a Tigania man by the name

Ntai Wa Nkuraru who traded in miraa died mysteriously in London with suspicion that he had been killed by jealous Somali businessmen for their monopoly. This led to clashes between Meru and Somali back in Igembe, Tigania, and Nairobi. Still much later there have been media reports on gang deaths related to the miraa trade. For example, in the United Kingdom, some members of the Chohan family were murdered and this was thought to be an attempt to take over an airfreight company that its main business was to import miraa. Similarly, in the USA, a female miraa vendor/dealer was killed during a robbery. Similar deaths have been reported in the Somali region of Ethiopia and Kenya where different clans attack and steal cargo from other clans. (Radio Somaliland, 2011).

2.5 Theoretical framework

2.5.1 Islamization theory by Bungler (1972)

Bunger (1972) developed Islamization theory that says Islam is a function of the contact situation between non-Muslims and Muslims and a non-Islamic culture and an Islamic culture introducing Islam. In the following paragraph, the proposition of the theory will be explained and stages of Islamization elaborated. Bungler's theory was therefore built upon three unique propositions setting the stage for Islamization. These propositions were listed below:

- a) The first proposition was that the culture and religion of people converting to Islam was particularly significant. The beliefs and practices of the native people come into contact with Islam. The native religious tenets accommodate the coming Islamic beliefs.

- b) Bunge's second proposition in his theory of Islamization states that the religion that was coming into contact with the native people influenced them through religious activities and trade.
- c) The third proposition was that Islam as the religion coming into contact with the native people adopts either a violent or non-violent strategy in the Islamization process.

According to Muir (1963), military forces were part and parcel in Islamization in the world. Islamization theory also proposed militant Islamization was significant for years up to and including the Middle Ages where subdued populations gave themselves into the religion out of fear of persecution. The subsequent recruitment of proselytes into soldiers who would further carry the message in military crusades proved an effective technique in Islamization process. This theory helps one to understand that the early Islamization in North Africa even though there was a strong *da'wah* presence of the Sufis was accredited to the military strategy.

This study comes to a conclusion that the Islamization in East Africa and particularly in Kenya was as a result of Islamization through trade and in peaceful terms. The nature of spread was aided by traders either accompanied by Muslim clerics or being at the same time both clerics and traders. Further, the study finds Islamization theory as the main reason that led to the penetration of Islam among the Meru community.

Bunge (1972) points out that Islamization occurs in three stages. First, Islamic beliefs and practices were adopted. For instance, Muslim dress code and method of slaughtering animals were adopted. Allah was introduced in all incantations and invocations making the presence of Islam felt by the host community. The old ritual

practices continue side by side with Muslim rituals. Circumcision was adopted if not already present in the culture. Second, the indigenous religion was viewed negatively as people become more conscious of the gap between present practices and the Muslim normative culture. Most pre-Islamic rituals were deprecated and the remaining few continue side by side with Islamic rituals being given prominence.

Third, the old religion was given up by the majority of the host community and former ritual sites and paraphernalia were slowly abandoned or destroyed. Allah alone was worshipped in public. Then the pre-Islamic practices of the host community were subject to outright condemnation and persecution. Village Mosques and Qur'anic schools were built and Friday prayer was institutionalized. Ramadhan was observed and beer drinking was given up. An attempt was made to follow the Sharia rules of inheritance. These three stages were also advocated for by Fisher (1985) who calls them Quarantine, Mixing and Reform respectively. Therefore, Islamization theory was the most suitable to explain the effects of Islamization of Igembe people through miraa trade.

The Islamization theory was important in this study because it provided insights into the Islamic religious culture of the Igembe residents who later became Muslims, the Islamization process, agents of Islamization, Islam introduced, and contact situation between non-Muslims and Muslims. Indeed, Islamization of Igembe people was a process within the various stages of assimilation into Islamic beliefs and practices. Nevertheless, Burger's theory does not fully explain the Islamization of Igembe people through trade.

2.5.2 Risk, uncertainty, and profit theory by Knight (1921)

It requires to be supplemented by Knight's (1921) Risk, Uncertainty, and Profit theory. This was because Muslims who first came to the Igembe region came under the guise of the miraa trade but consequently with another big responsibility of facilitating the penetration of Islam in the region. Trade introduces the first factors of risk, uncertainty, and profit within Islamization process. This study proposes that the Islamization theory was complimented by Knight's theory.

Knight (1921) proposed that Risk, Uncertainty, and Profit Theory explains how a Muslim entrepreneur makes profit in the face of uncertainty and risk which were inherent in every business venture that a person wishes to undertake. Knight's theory evolved due to the adoption of new procedures and changes in business operating environments. Knight's theory (1921) on Risk, Uncertainty, and Profit was a good backup for the Islamization theory because it helps to explain the entry of Islam in Kenya as early as the middle of the 17th century, some Muslims in the Lamu archipelago area, particularly the Swahili of Pate had trading contacts with the Oromo and Pokomo of the mainland. The Oromo supplied ivory to the Swahili, and the Pokomo were also trading with the Swahili of Pate and Lamu, from whom they obtained cloth and iron in exchange for ivory. This was evident that Muslims engaged in trade with mainland indigenous tribes and from this contact they spread Islam. Wherever, Muslim merchants penetrated in search of trade, they could not be contented with receiving goods from rural people, but they aggressively tried to increase their supply seeking commercial advantage at its source.

Similarly, this phenomenon was observable in the case of miraa trading in Igembe where Muslims had settled and penetrated the interior in search of miraa. This theory helped to explain why Muslims trade all over the world. In this study, Knight's

theory was applicable in explaining why Muslims have become astute miraa traders in Igembe and they have flourished in business while at the same time sharing their faith with their hosts the Igembe people. Reading together Burger's Islamization theory and Knight's Risk, Uncertainty, and Profit theories the study accounts for the effects of Islamization of Igembe people through miraa trade.

2.5.3 Immigration theory by Lee (1966)

Everett Lee's (1966) immigration theory of Immigration was where people move from their place of origin and settle in new areas where they benefit and at the same time influence others. The immigrants want to leave their homeland either in search for greener pastures, fleeing from some local conflict, relocation due to marriage or a government fiat for relocation or a combination of either of the above factors. Initially, personnel benefits were the main reasons for immigration but as settlement happens, religious interests were introduced.

Lee's (1966) immigration theory further assists the Burger's (1972) Islamization theory to explain the reasons and factors for settlement of Muslims in new unwelcome environments such as Igembe of Meru. As the host community considers the rights of immigrants at the background Islamization of the host community also takes place. For instance, the host community accepts immigrants' lifestyle, tolerance of their people's opinions and protection of basic human rights. The immigrant theory assists the understanding of why host communities like Igembe people do not resist the immigrants who were predominantly Muslim. Immigration policy helps the coming Muslim population to be accepted in predominantly non-Muslim

communities. Such immigration factors help to explain the effects of Islamization of Igembe people.

Lee's (1966) migration theory allowed Muslims to move, live and work anywhere in the world. Muslims migrated from Mecca to Medina and then back to Mecca. It also encouraged Muslims to move, live, and work in other non-Muslim places. When Lee's theory was read in the context of Burger's theory, then this study fully explains the effects of Islamization of Igembe people through miraa trade.

2.5.4 Critique of the three theories

There was a gap in the theoretical formulations of Burger, Knight, and Lee in understanding what happened when Muslims spread Islam among the Igembe people. Burger defined Islamization as the function of the contact situation. Once a group introducing Islam comes into contact with a group that was being Islamized then the native people were responsible for accepting the incoming religion. The theory laid a big responsibility on the contact situation of the native people. The local native people were considered to have surrendered to the beliefs and practices of Islam thus abandoning traditional African beliefs and practices. The theory suggested that the native religious situation accommodated Islam as syncretism took place. Burger's theory laid the burden of accepting infiltrating Islamic religious beliefs and practices to the traditional religious situation. In so doing the theory had partly explained why Igembe people have embraced Islam but it had not placed responsibility on the Muslims in the Islamization of Igembe people. Therefore, the native Igembe traditional beliefs and practices did not just surrender to Islam as the Islamization theory of Burger assumed.

Something more profound happened as proposed by (Knight, 1921). The traditional religious situation in Igembe was not familiar with the risk, uncertainty, and profit (Knight, 1921) brought about by miraa trade as introduced by the Muslim traders. The traditional religious situation was thus confronted with a commercial enterprise it had no familiarity. Miraa was traditionally considered a cultural plant whose use was only for social not economic purposes. Since the Igembe people had not traded with miraa before they had to learn from their tutors who happened to be Muslim miraa traders. Apart from bringing trade skills the Muslims also brought to Igembe people their religion.

Further, the Igembe religious situation was also not familiar with the immigration (Lee, 1966) dynamics that affected the traditional way of life and worship. Immigration introduced into the local situation the concept of buying and selling of land and miraa for commercial gain whereas in the traditional setting land and miraa were sacrosanct items. Immigration likewise introduced the idea that people can move from their native ancestral homes and move to live in the urban centres without being taboo. This idea facilitated local people to sell their rural farms to incoming Muslim traders interested in the miraa plant and moved to urban centres to live in rented houses. The local Igembe people realised that selling miraa farms and miraa itself was not forbidden as they had been taught traditionally. The immigration theory destroyed the traditional fear that was inherent in Igembe residents on selling their heritage land and miraa.

2.5.5 Islamization through miraa trade theory

The basic information about this theory had been hinted to at Section 1.1 in the background to the study. Simply stated, the theory of 'Islamization through miraa trade' synthesized the three propositions presented by Burger, Knight, and Lee to fully explain the phenomenon of the Islamization of Igembe people through miraa trade. The theory proposes that Islamization was the main motivation for the Muslims to seek trade and settlement in Igembe. Muslims only used miraa trade as an excuse to approach Igembe people so as to seek ways and means of converting them. Islamization of Igembe people was intentional, planned, and financed by enthusiastic Islamic adherents or organized systems from other parts of the world.

The theory further states that once Muslims established a foothold in Igembe they quickly identified miraa as a commodity that was marketable and commercialized it. They took over the farming, harvesting, packaging, transportation, and exportation of miraa to markets inside Kenya and in foreign lands where they had connections. In commercializing miraa trade Igembe people felt as if they have been helped by the Muslim traders because before miraa was only useful for social, cultural and traditional religious uses not economic purposes. Taking advantage of the trade the Muslim traders made a lot of profit at the expense of the Igembe people who became poorer and poorer in miraa trade.

Finally, the theory proposes that when the Muslim traders also bought or leased land and settled in the rural areas of Igembe they built Mosques for worship, married Igembe women, converted their workers to Islam so that they can get employment, and displaced some native people who now moved to urban centres as squatters. The three actions by Muslims which constitutes trade while dependent variable was the

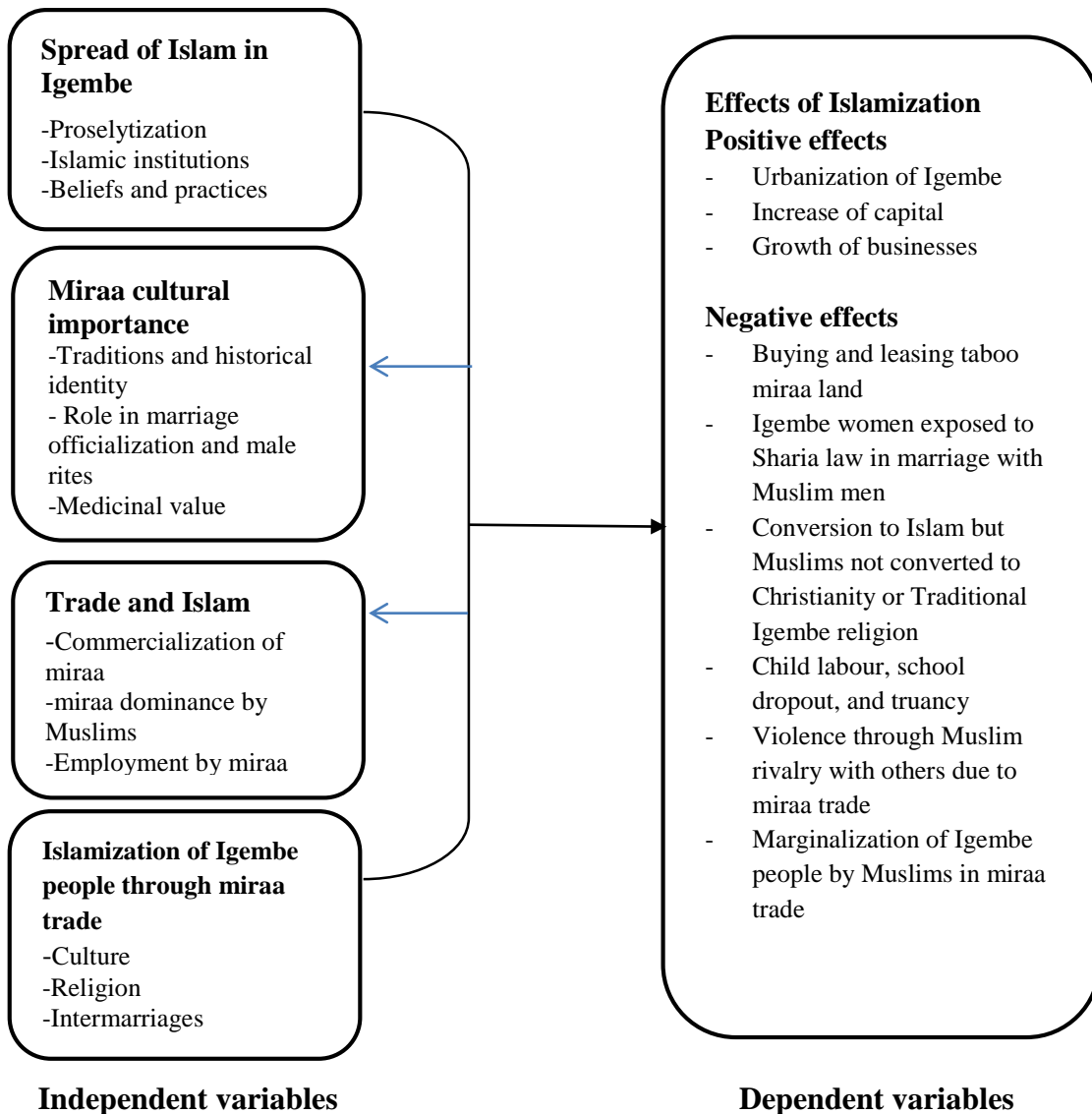
Islamization of Igembe people with the end results being the effects of the Islamization.

2.6 Conceptual framework

This represents the researcher's synthesis of the literature on how to explain a phenomenon. The conceptual framework as a visual presentation that explains either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied, the key factors, concepts or variables and the presumed relationship among them (Miles and Huberman 1994). In this study, the independent variable was the extent of the spread of Islam and miraa trade while dependent variable was the Islamization of Igembe people with the end results being the effects of the Islamization.

Figure 2.1

Conceptual framework



2.7 Conclusion

The chapter has cohesively brought out the critical topics such as overview of Islam as a religion, the role of Islam in trade, highlighted the nature of Igembe people, and miraa trade. Further the chapter has woven together the topic of Islamization to the theoretical and conceptual frameworks.

The chapter brought key authors such as Nawwab, Speers, and Hoye (2014); Miller (1995) who in summary manner provided the gist of Islam as a religion. Roff (2014); Laguerta (2012); Robinson (2014); Azumah (2014); Mailutha and Kikechi (2014) have provided a synopsis of the relation between Islam and trade. Nassim (2014); Karimi (2013) & Nkirote (1995) have provided an essential perspective on the people of Igembe, miraa trade, and the concept of Islamization of Igembe people. Finally, Burger (1972); Knight (1921); and Lee (1966) laid the foundation for the theoretical framework of the study. Synthesizing of these theories has brought about the ‘Islamization through miraa trade theory’ which better accounts for the Islamization of Igembe people and the effects of that enterprise to the native people.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The methodology provided in this chapter was a master plan (Patton, 1990) on how this study was planned and executed. The plan started with the choice of topic, research problem, literature reviewed, design, and methods used to collect and analyse data, and assessment of that data in the context of the objectives and questions.

In the following sections the study explained in detail the overarching qualitative design employed and supported by interview method that was used in collecting data among the Igembe people (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2019). A qualitative descriptive design was particularly suitable (Crabtree and Miller, 1992) for this study because it was used to study human behaviour, opinion, and motivations. The interviews conducted in researching the narrative of how Islam was introduced in Igembe, how Muslims acquired land, businesses, and status of being residents through settlement was what was referred to in this study as narrative research. Narratives from various sources were compared for consistency and theme concurrence. In particular, the descriptive design was chosen because it helped in the description of phenomenon of Islamization of Igembe people through miraa trade. The qualitative design was supplemented by a quantitative design that enabled the use of survey method of inquiry. The study hence used qualitative and quantitative triangulation methods which included interview schedules, and semi-structured open-ended questionnaires. According to Creswell (2011), triangulation was appropriate for mixed methods and

was efficient since both qualitative and quantitative data was collected at the same time during one phase of the research.

Further, the study was situated within Igembe area of Meru County where all data was collected. Sampling and particularly techniques such as purposive technique was used to identify individuals who were deemed to possess critical information about Islam, miraa trade, Igembe traditions, and government regulations for interviews. Random sampling technique was also used to pick subjects to answer the closed-ended questions that had a generic outlook. Research instruments were tested via a pre-testing before they were approved for collecting data assured of their reliability. After considering the methods of data analysis the chapter concluded with the ethical considerations that needed to be addressed before the study was concluded.

3.1 Research design and methods

3.1.1 Design

Religious discourses and practices were usually presented as subjective realities (Bryman, 2012) encapsulated by beliefs, dogmas, narratives, and texts that required requisite designs and methods of study. The study applied a descriptive design that was properly located within the broader qualitative framework (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). The design facilitated the use of different methods of data collection as well as facilitating the researcher to get different but complimentary data (Borg, 2003) on the same topic to best understand the research problem. The design was deemed suitable for this study as the study sought to unearth the effects of Islamization of Igembe people through miraa trade.

Triangulation of methods was necessary to cover a broad range of narratives and statistical data on people's opinions and perceptions. Vogt (2012) asserted that the function of a research design was to ensure that the evidence obtained enables the researcher to effectively address the research problem logically and as unambiguously as possible. The research design referred to the overall strategy to integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way, thereby ensuring it effectively addresses the research problem and constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement and analysis of data (De Vaus, 2001).

3.1.2 Methods

In order to collect and analyse relevant data this study employed both qualitative (Berg, 2012) and quantitative methods. The first method used was interview qualitative method. It was used for interviewing miraa farmers, vendors, users, traders, sales people, those who harvest miraa, and association officials. The method of interview utilized the tool of interview schedules and open-ended questions which were semi-structured to aid responses and answers that were relevant to the four objectives and questions. The researcher was assisted by trained and supervised research assistants to listen, guide, and record all responses by the subjects selected through purposive sampling technique. The subjects explained their responses in English. A few respondents answered in Kimiiru language. The responses in Kimiiru were back translated into English to aid understanding.

The second method used was a quantitative survey method of data collection. This method was used to get information from those subjects who were selected through the random technique of sampling. The method used questionnaires that had

standardized questions where the subjects were expected to tick their selected options that were presented in a five-point Likert scale. The Likert scale was used to scale responses showing the level of agreement or disagreement (Roulston and Shelton, 2015) of selected miraa farmers, vendors, users, traders, sales people, those who harvest miraa, and association officials. The survey method was chosen because it used a standardized tool that enabled the study to seek opinion, understand behaviour, and assess knowledge of people in diverse situations.

3.2 Location of the study

Igembe people live in Igembe North, Central, and South within Meru County (Appendix 2 (c) Fig 2). The County was situated on the Eastern side of Mount Kenya. It bordered Laikipia County to the West, Nyeri to the South West, Tana River to the East, Tharaka-Nithi to the Southeast and Isiolo County to the North. It straddled the Equator, lying within 00 6' North and about 00 1' South and East and within 370⁰ and 380⁰ Latitude East. The County had a total surface area of 6,936.2 Km² with about 26% (1,776.1 Km²) gazetted forest cover. The County had nine administrative sub-counties, which were equivalent to the electoral constituencies with 45 electoral Wards. It had an estimated population of 1,356,301 people in 2009 census and a growth rate of 2.1 percent.

The population of Meru County split by gender was 713,801 males and 729,754 females. The County's population was projected to be 1,601,629 in 2017 Census. The literacy level in Meru County stands at 53% in 2012 but varies by age, gender, and sub-county. The literacy level by gender was at 40% males and 60% females respectively (CIDP, 2013-2017).

In the recent past, there had been a shift from traditional cash crop and food crop to horticultural production by most farmers due to the high market prices fetched by horticulture crops. The County's major economic activity was agriculture with the main cash crops being tea, coffee, miraa, horticulture, and bananas. Miraa farming was the key agricultural cash crop in Nyambene region comprising of the two Tigania and three Igembe administrative units with the most farmers specializing in it as their chief source of income.

This study narrowed down to the miraa growing areas of Igembe which was constituted by three administrative units, namely: Igembe South, Igembe Central, and Igembe North (Appendix 2 (c) Fig 2). The Igembe regions lay North of Meru town and approximately 339km from Nairobi. It bordered Isiolo County to the North, Tharaka Nithi County to the North East, Tigania East Sub County to the Northwest and Tana River & Kitui Counties to the East. Igembe South and Igembe Central were in the windward side of the Nyambene hills with a natural forest. Here the economic activities range from farming of miraa, tea, coffee, pyrethrum, dairy keeping and a couple of subsistence crops as the soils were volcanic that were rich in almost all the plants nutrients. Of all the cash crops grown, miraa stands as the most important crop grown in the region. Growing miraa was the main economic activity carried out by most farmers over the years has the returns that enable them to meet all their financial obligations.

Nyambene hills adversely affect rainfall and temperature patterns of the area. There was water scarcity as there were no permanent or seasonal rivers in Igembe Central and Igembe North as all rivers flow to the south (Igembe South) due to the region's topography. Through the initiative of the Catholic Church, Meru diocese, Igembe

Central and Igembe North were served with water for domestic use through the giant Tuuru water project which was sourced from Nyambene forest. In the lowland, the major agricultural activity was livestock rearing which provide the people with the animal products.

Fig 2 showed the map of Meru County indicating administrative wards. The wards where Igembe people live included: Nathu, Amwathi, Antuambui, Ntunene, Njia, Akirang'ondy, Antubetwe Kiongo, Kangeta, Igembe East, Athiru Gaiti, Akachiu, Maua, Kiegoi Antumbochui, and Kanuni

3.3 Sampling

3.3.1 Target population

The study focused on the data from the entire target population of 126,000 registered members of Nyambene Miraa Traders Association (NYAMITA). NYAMITA was the association of miraa traders. Members of NYAMITA were found in Igembe North, Central, and South Constituencies. When it came to choosing the number of respondents to be chosen from each of these three constituencies the choice was based on purposive technique of sampling because Igembe South was where Maua town was located and it was a major big town where Islamization through miraa trade took place. Maua town was the epi centre for Islamization through miraa where Muslims first arrived, started miraa trade, launched their Islamization campaign, and eventually grew to be the main trading centre.

Further, in choosing members of NYAMITA who included miraa farmers, vendors, and association officials from all the three constituencies where Igembe people live (section 3.2.1) stratified simple random sampling technique was applied so that all the three categories of NYAMITA members (miraa farmers, vendors, and association officials) stood an equal chance of being chosen to be respondents. Zucker et al. (1999) defined target population as the members of a group that a researcher was interested in studying. The results of the study were generalized to this population because they all have similar characteristics.

3.3.2 Sample size

Sampling was the process of determining the subjects, respondents, size of the population, and population sample (Ogula, 2005) that may be representative for the generalization of results. The reason for sampling was the impracticability of undertaking a study of the entire population. In this study a sample size of 126 respondents each representing 1000 Igembe people whose entire population of Miraa farmers, vendors, and association officials' number about 126,000 registered members of NYAMITA. Accordingly, the sample size of 126 respondents was arrived at after applying sampling techniques, and procedures discussed in this section.

A profile of the respondents included all people sampled and provided with questionnaires or asked questions in an interview schedule to provide the responses. The sample was fairly representative of all people in Igembe whether Muslims, Christians, or adherents of the Igembe traditional religion. This sample size was deemed large enough to adequately describe the phenomenon of Islamization of

Igembe people through miraa trade and the effects arising thereof. The sample size was assessed as sufficient to get the opinions, suggestions, and descriptions by the subjects about the topic of study. The target population and sample size were carefully considered to ensure the right size and diversity. These techniques reflect mixed methods of collecting data as discussed in section 3.3.3.

Sampling was also a process or technique of choosing a sub-group from a population (Cooper & Schindler, 2011) to participate in the study. In that connection individual respondents were picked through simple random sampling to participate in answering questions in the closed and open-ended questionnaires. The 100 respondents were distributed in the three constituencies where Igembe people lived through purposive technique of picking participants as follows: Igembe North (30) Central (30), and South (40) all belonging to NYAMITA. Igembe South was given more respondent slots (40) because Maua the largest miraa town was located there (section 3.3.1).

The respondents for interview schedule were 26 participants chosen using purposive sampling technique. The slots for interview schedule respondents were distributed as follows: Igembe North (8) Central (8), and South (10). Again, Igembe South was given more slots (10) because Maua the largest town in Igembe was located there. The respondents were all chosen using purposive sampling technique for in-depth interview using the interview schedule questions. The respondents for in-depth interview were chosen by the researcher based on their prominent stature in society as Muslims, Christians, or traditional Igembe religious people and at the same time being miraa traders. These were people perceived to hold sway in miraa trade and/or Islamic activities in Igembe. Other respondents were chosen based on the community

perception that they had undergone through the Islamization process through miraa trade. Thus, sampling was the process of selecting a number of individuals for this study in such a way that the individuals selected represented the larger group (Seale, 2000) of Igembe region residents.

3.3.3 Random and purposive sampling techniques

The study used simple random sampling for getting 100 respondents who partly represented the sample size. The respondents that were chosen using simple random sampling were common villagers, school going children, Imams, parents, administrators, and general traders who did not belong to any group of miraa farmers or miraa vendors, or miraa association officials who although were included in this sample size were chosen using a stratified random sampling.

The study applied stratified random sampling to get data from three main groups namely the miraa farmers, miraa vendors, and miraa association officials. The reason for using the random technique was to allow all residents of Igembe an equal chance of being chosen to be a respondent in the study. The stratified random sampling technique was particularly to deal with the three main groups.

The study also used purposive sampling technique to assist collect data from deliberately selected 26 respondents who were deemed to be extremely crucial to have relevant information due to their official role, traditional religious knowledge, people in mixed marriages between a Muslim and an Igembe Christian or traditionalist. The reason for using the purposive sampling technique was that the respondents who were interviewed may not have been identified by either simple

random sampling or stratified random techniques that rely on chance in selection. In purposive sampling the researcher made judgment to seek certain miraa chewers, traditional religious specialists, Njuri Ncheke elders, Imams, and community opinion leaders deemed to be vested with rare relevant knowledge of Islamization and the effects of Islamization through miraa trade in the community.

3.3.4 Sampling procedures

Procedures normally were considered after choosing each sampling technique. The reason for having different sampling procedures was to increase the chances of representativeness of the target population. In the simple random technique each respondent was chosen by blind chance and not predetermined. A list of all NYAMITA 126,000 members was availed to the researcher. Through stratified random sampling respondents were chosen for each category of miraa farmers, vendors, and association officials to make a total of 126 respondents for the study. The procedures gave every prospective respondent an equal chance of being chosen.

100 of the 126 were again chosen through purposive sampling to represent the three Igembe constituencies while the remaining 26 were all chosen by the researcher through purposive sampling for in-depth interview. In choosing 100 respondents for the distribution of questionnaires the procedure was for the researcher and the research assistants to visit miraa farmers, vendors, and association officials and to randomly distribute the questionnaires to Muslims, Christians, traditional Njuri Ncheke adherents who represented the traditional religion. Further, people in the miraa chain were picked randomly for answering both the closed and open-ended questions provided by the researcher and the research assistants thus giving everyone

in the groups an equal chance of being chosen. Again members of the three groups would be given a form to fill without prior notice or knowledge. As long as the procedure was simple random the probability of any member being chosen was equal.

Further, 26 respondents were identified using purposive technique. These were identified because they were known miraa association officials, prominent miraa traders, Islamic imams, Christian pastors, Njuri Ncheke officials, and known Igembe people who had converted to Islam due to miraa trade. First, they were approached and requested to answer some in-depth-guided questions. Second, they verbalized their responses. Third, their responses were recorded by either the researcher or the trained research assistants in a book. Fourth, the recorded responses were verbatim Quote (VQ) and where some respondents used Kimiiru language there was appropriate back translation (BT).

The responses from the questionnaires were collected, numbered, and respondents coded for anonymity for further data analysis. If a respondent was late to hand over the filled questionnaire, they were allowed to call the research to seek guidance on how to deliver the questionnaires. The trained research assistants collected all the questionnaires and delivered them to the researcher who numbered, coded, and stored the raw data ready for analysis.

3.4 Research instruments

Gay et al. (2006) points out that data collection instruments were the tools for collecting information on the research subject. They include questionnaires and

interviews schedules. The choice of instrument depends on the objectives of the study because some studies may require use of only one instrument of collecting data while others require use of different instruments.

The data for the study was collected from the participants using questionnaires and interviews schedules. The choice of an instrument depended on the objectives of the study because some studies might require use of only one instrument of collecting data while others require use of different instruments. Saunders et al. (2007) suggested that before deciding on instruments to use to collect data, the researcher needs to analyse the problem and objectives of the study to determine the type of data required. The researcher must ensure the validity and reliability of the instrument chosen for any research, which depended to a large extent on the suitability of the instruments. This study was based on primary data and in order to efficiently collect the data, a structured questionnaire and interview schedule were developed to assist the researcher in identifying and understanding the Islamization of Igembe people through miraa trade.

3.4.1 Questionnaires

Saris and Gallhofer (2014) explains a questionnaire was a means of showing the feelings or attitudes of sampled individuals. The study used detailed questionnaires with questions which gave the respondents freedom to freely express themselves and their experiences. The questions were designed to probe the respondents to provide in-depth information on the Islamization and its effects to the Igembe people through miraa trade. A list of the requirements needed to collect information from the

respondents was drawn so as to assist the researcher to get all relevant information for the study.

Different parts of the questionnaires were designed using the list of required information. Basically, there were closed-ended questionnaires which were rated in accordance to the Likert scale and the open-ended questionnaires which required the respondents to answer questions freely. Questionnaires were completed, verified the content and style of the questions, and pre-tested in Karama Ward of Tigania East that was not included in the study. The results of this pre-testing indicated that Ameru people preferred to answer questionnaires written in vernacular. It also indicated that Muslims were sensitive to certain terms like Muhammedans that were removed. Based on the results obtained from the pre-testing, the questionnaires were amended and refined. The refined questionnaires were given to the respondents to complete during data collection using the drop and pick procedure.

3.4.2 Interview schedules

Boyce and Neale (2006) argued that, an interview schedule was a qualitative research tool that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, programme, or situation. It was a tool that guides a purposive conversation in which a researcher seeks to find out what was in a respondent's mind regarding the phenomenon under investigation (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008).

Interview schedules were administered to the officials of miraa traders' association and other selected community leaders to gather detailed information on the role

miraa trade had contributed to the spread of Islam and the effects it had brought to the Igembe people. The interview schedules enabled the officials to freely express their experiences hence the study was able to capture the respondents' stories in their own words to the last detail.

3.5 Validity and reliability

3.5.1 Validity of instruments

Orodho (2005) stated that a research instrument was valid depending on how the data collected was related in terms of how effective the items have sampled significant aspects of the purpose of the study. According to Trochim and Donnelly (2008), validity referred to the best estimate of the truth of any proposition or conclusion or inference described in the research.

Validity of the research instruments determined the accuracy of the research findings (Denzin & Lincoln 2000). Instruments validity was ascertained through subjecting the questionnaires to a pre-testing. Questions that were not well understood during the pre-testing were revised and amended accordingly to give the research credibility.

3.5.2 Reliability of instrument

According to Behling and Law (2006), reliability referred to the measurement of the quality of the data collected in any research. The reliability of the instruments was established during the pre-testing of the instruments. According to Bordens and Abbot (2011), reliability showed the consistency of the instruments in producing

similar results in different but comparable situations while the pre-testing assessed for clarity and accuracy of the instruments.

Consequently, a pre-testing was conducted at Karama Ward in Tigania East a place that reflected the miraa trade situation as in Igembe. The pre-testing drew a sample of 29 miraa respondents comprised of 20 subjects who were given the questionnaires and 9 subjects who were given the interview schedules in Karama Ward of Tigania East Sub-County which was also known for Islamization through miraa trade. Karama had one of the largest numbers of miraa farmers and vendors in Tigania East. It also had some Islamic presence that made it ideal for a pre-testing. Saunders et al (2007) stated that reliability was the key criteria that can be applied to determine data quality.

The results of the pre-testing were useful in revising the instruments before the actual research took place. Any item in the tool that was found to be unclear or irrelevant was refined or eliminated. For instance, pre-testing raised the issue of the illiteracy levels and this helped to develop some questionnaires in native language. The pre-testing was conducted to increase and test reliability of these instruments. During the pre-testing, the level of education of participants was assessed to understand whether they could understand the questions asked in English. This helped to know the respondents who had no education at all and therefore could not understand English. The questionnaires were therefore revised and translated into native Kiiembe language. However, during the actual study the questionnaires were only translated into Kiiembe because all others could understand English.

3.6 Methods for data analysis

Methods of data analysis were applied to the study of collected data. The methods used were descriptive, narrative, and content data analysis. Data in this study consisted of statements, narratives, and views provided by targeted respondents. The collected data included talk, responses to questions posed by the questionnaires, and answers provided in the open-ended interviews and those given during the interview schedules. Data collected through survey of opinions and presented in statistical tables provided tools for simple quantitative analysis (James, 1997) that complemented the main qualitative methods of analysis.

In addition, after organizing data both data analysis and interpretation go hand in hand to ensure meanings were gleaned from the data. Interpretation was explaining meanings in the context of the study. Interpretation allowed the study to make some conclusions arising from reasoned argumentation. Interpretation provided significance of ideas, situations, and narratives.

3.6.1 Content analysis

Content analysis was the process of labelling and creating data index. Before data analysis was commenced data coding and labelling was undertaken. The purpose of data coding was to describe and identify data according to its classification, themes, topics, and sub-themes in accordance to the research objectives and questions. During analysis such themes and topics helped to establish patterns that assisted in determining how Islamization had taken place among the Igembe people. It also

aided in creating outlines for structuring analysis on the effects of Islamization of Igembe people through miraa trade.

Further, data coding provided anonymity that was essential for confidentiality. Names of individuals who were interviewed were coded. Above all coding helped data to be easily assessable for analysis. Readers of this thesis were not expected to directly identify the respondents to the questionnaires and interview schedules. Therefore, coding aided in this exercise. Content analysis allowed the study to analyse data in context because narratives by nature were subjective. Context here meant that similar themes or topics or stories were considered as one unit to aid comparison and right observations.

3.6.2 Narrative analysis

Once respondents provided their side of the story as guided by the questionnaires or the interview schedules, the narratives produced were collected and analysed to separate subjective personal stories from relevant views of remembered history. Remembered history here was a reference to some of the people interviewed tried to recall how events happened when Islam first came because these histories were not in written form but existed as folklore. Analysis would identify excesses such as exaggerations and variation of what actually happened. For example, when both Muslims and Igembe people were recounting how migrations took place people remembered biographies such as names of people and their families. Narratives in this perspective were not whole stories but segments of accounts of happenings regarding spread of Islam, Igembe people, and effects of Islamization of Igembe people through miraa trade.

In the questionnaire narrative questions were posed to the respondents who in the exercise of answering provided information about one or more research questions. For instance, a researcher would ask like this: what was your opinion on the relationship between the people of Somali and Igembe ethnicities in the miraa growing areas?

3.6.3 Descriptive analysis

Descriptive analysis was about explaining content (Simon, 2011). The method of data analysis provided accounts of what happened in the past. It described characteristics of items under discussion. On the process of explaining descriptive analysis easily identified recurring themes and patterns that at the end helped the study to clearly understand how Islamization of Igembe people happened and how it affected their way of life.

Descriptive method of data analysis also provided summaries of the sample. Such synopses were essential because the collected data was vast and not all could find their way into the study. Here content was presented and analysed in bits or smaller portions that allow understanding to take effect easily.

3.7 Ethical considerations

According to Sales and Folkman (2000), ethical considerations in research were critical since they were the norms or standards of conduct that distinguish between right and wrong. They helped to determine the difference between acceptable and unacceptable research behaviour. Since ethical considerations were so important in research, many professional associations and agencies have adopted codes and

policies that outline ethical behaviour that guide researchers (Verbeek, 2004). On this basis, the relevant approvals were given by Kenya Methodist University, National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI) and other National & County governing agencies.

The major ethical concerns in research were permissions and anonymity. The researcher visited the imams, pastors, Njuri Ncheke elders, converted Igembe people to Islam, administrators, school heads, miraa farmers, miraa traders, vendors and the association officials, and established a cordial relationship where it was explained to them the purpose of the study. Each participant indicated their agreement to participate in the study. The oral consent was obtained, and a detailed explanation of the research study was given before participants were allowed to take part in the study. The researcher explained to the participants that the research was for academic purposes and therefore there was no individual benefit to the respondents after volunteering information. However, the participants were informed that based on the research findings, the results might be used to influence policy and the perception of individuals towards Islamization of Igembe people through miraa trade.

Privacy was assured to participants to allay the fear that there might be data leakage that can lead to any risks whatsoever. Confidentiality of all the collected information, the findings and results of the research study were stored in a secure place and shall only be shared with the relevant entities including the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation the Kenya Methodist University Research and Ethics Committee. Anonymity was maintained during the study to protect the participants in the research and coding thereafter ensured no one could figure out the names or location of respondents. Due to the sensitivity of the study, and because the

subject of research was Islam and its effects, key local administration, community leaders, Njuri Ncheke leadership and key Somali and Igembe influential miraa dealers and their religious leaders were involved during the study.

3.8 Chapter three conclusion

Qualitative research design and a triangulation of methods were established as the bedrock of data collection and data analysis. The qualitative design enabled the study to explore the religious and social relations between the Muslims and the Igembe people. Triangulation of methods was necessary to bring different perspectives of Igembe people to bear on the questions of effects of Islamization through miraa trade. Further, triangulation of qualitative methods and simple quantitative methods in a supplementary manner helped to bring out numbers and figures that indicate the extent to which Islam has pervaded the Igembe region.

The study location was described comprising of Igembe North, Central, and South with enumeration of all Wards. This specification assisted the readers to locate the study area. Most of the Islamization of Igembe people took place in emerging urban centres but infiltration into the rural areas by Muslim traders seeking land to lease or buy to plant miraa was discovered to be rampant.

Sampling techniques included simple random, stratified random and purposive sampling. The techniques were able to assist in data collection since most data was of a historical perspective recounting the coming of Muslims to the area, the assimilation, and settlement of the same people among Igembe people. Hence

sampling procedures used were practical in nature in order to select the most resourceful respondents.

The methods of data analysis that were preferred included content, narrative, and descriptive analyses. These methods were preferred because they teased out narratives, statements, and opinions to help understand the extent of the spread of Islam in Igembe, the cultural importance of miraa among Igembe people, the contribution of miraa trade to Islamization, and the effects of Islamization through miraa trade.

Ethical considerations comprised issues of confidentiality Muslims gave about their religion, lifestyle, and beliefs. Anonymity of respondents was also respected by the study coding information during data analysis. Issues of permissions to conduct the study were dealt with by obtaining relevant approvals and permission from relevant bodies. There was informed consent obtained orally from the subjects of the study whereby there was voluntary participation.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

The discussions of the results of the study were done in line with the study objectives, questions, literature reviewed, design, and methods for dealing with data. Data collected and analysed indicated acceptable response rates from respondents that were integrated into the analysis via statistical tables and figures. Islamization of Igembe people had indeed taken place particularly through miraa trade. The effects of that Islamization were largely negative (Section 4.4 and 4.5).

The chapter provided an analysis of the extent of the penetration of Islam (Section 4.1), cultural importance of miraa (Section 4.2), contribution of miraa trade to the Islamization (Section 4.3), and effects of Islamization through miraa trade among the Igembe people (Section 4.4). The negative effects were critically analysed to find viable mitigation.

4.1 Extent of the spread of Islam in Igembe

The study sought in objective one (Section 1.3) to find out the extent of the spread of Islam in Igembe. This study discovered that there were patterns of Islamization of Igembe people (Section 4.1.1) which included steady increase of the Muslim population, Islam which naturally was an urban religion in Meru had spread to the rural areas through settlement strategy, and that four main ethnic groups were responsible for the spread of Islam in Igembe. These were the Swahili, Nubians,

Mahaji, and Somali. It was the Somali Muslims who embraced the miraa trade that was largely responsible for the spread of Islam in Igembe. The study found out that majority of Igembe residents were Christians as indicated in table 4.1 who account for 61% of the population. Islam only accounted for about 29% of the population. The traditional religious adherents had significantly reduced since the inception of Christianity and Islam to about 10% mainly due to the spread of Christianity and Islam.

Table 4.1

Distribution of religions in Igembe

Religion	Frequency	Percentage
Christian	153	61
Muslim	73	29
Traditional	26	10
Total	252	100

Igembe region comprised of three Constituencies which were largely rural settlements. The Constituencies also had an emerging urban population with small towns created for mainly miraa business. It was in these smaller towns and kiosks that miraa was often packaged and picked for transportation outside the Igembe region. The phenomenon of having large rural dwellings and small urban centres emerging everywhere was one key finding that contributed to the spread of both Christianity and Islam. Unlike Christianity, Islam was found to be mainly an urban religion in Igembe. Thus, it was not surprising to find that Christians were a majority

because they lived both in the rural and urban areas. This finding was in agreement with the studies conducted by Nkirote (1995) who discovered that the spread of Islam in Meru was propagated by three ethnic groups but the main spread occurred through the Muslims who either lived in slums or urban centres. The study also established that the Muslim population in Meru were mainly made of the Ameru of Asian origin, the native Ameru, and the immigrant people of Somali descent.

In Igembe the Islamic presence was underscored by the number of years Muslims arrived and settled in Maua and its environs (table 4.2). The table showed that the largest number of residents comprising of 59% in Igembe had resided in their present homes since birth. These were either native Igembe people or Muslims who were born in Igembe. Those who had lived for between five to ten years were about 31% while those who had lived there only for one to five years were 11%. The figures further suggested that majority of those dealing with miraa trade were permanent residents whether of the native Igembe descent or Somali lineage.

Table 4.2

Duration of residency within Igembe region

Period in the Current Region	Frequency	Percentage
From birth	146	58
1-5 years	28	11
5-10 years	78	31
Total	252	100

Fadiman (1979) asserted that the first Muslim may have arrived in Meru as early as 1908 and later went to Maua in Igembe. According to Nkirote (1995), a public Mosque in Igembe was built at Laare in 1940, thus confirming the findings of this study that Mosques existed in the area in pre-independence Kenya. This was the second Mosque built after the one at Kabachi, which was built in 1927. Indeed, the presence of Mosques was one of the key indicators of the extent of the spread of Islam and how far it had penetrated in Igembe. Many more Mosques have been erected all over the region even in small centres with a few shops.

The question that was to be answered in this Section was who introduced Islam in Igembe and to what extent had Islam spread (Nzibo, 1986) answered part of the question by suggesting that Mahaji arrived in Nairobi and settled bringing a new aspect to the muslim relations in the region with a new outfit the Muslim triad of Islam spreaders. The Swahili, Nubian, and Mahaji. These groups formed the nucleus of Meru Muslim communities and they settled in urban areas. Nevertheless, it was the arrival of Muslims of Somali descent that drastically changed the spread of Islam in Igembe because they settled both in the urban and rural areas. The Somali Muslims were also the ones who got interested in miraa trade unlike other Islamic ethnic groups. The trading centres offered prospects for miraa business in the region and the role of the Asians played in the spreading Islam to these centres could not be underestimated. The widespread habitation of Muslims among the Igembe people was found to be in concurrence with the increased activities of Muslims in Igembe in the last decade. It was only due to the cultivation of miraa that Muslims were leasing or buying land to cultivate miraa crop but majority resided in their urban dwellings.

On the spread of Islam in Igembe, it was established that the majority of the farmers and traders sampled ascertained two factors. One, that there was a growing number of Somali Muslims residing in Igembe region. In fact, 32% (Appendix 2 (A) Sample 8) of Igembe residents were found to be of Somali origin. Two, that the Muslims of Somali ethnicity had either leased or bought land (Appendix 2 (A) Sample 4ii) and settled in the area for more than ten years (Figure 4.1). The findings confirmed the research by Nzibo (1986) that had concluded that Muslims of the Somali ethnic background, specifically traders started acquiring land and settling there as early as 1970. These findings also established consensus with Kikechi (2014) deduction that the commercialisation of miraa, had introduced multiple players in miraa trade which had an effect on the spread of Islam. Definitely there was a pattern of Islamization being established which was indicated by a mixture of happenings that included but not limited to infrastructure, cultural, social, economic, and religious developments.

4.1.1 Islamization spread patterns

The natural stages of spreading Islam were in consonance with the literature reviewed in Section 2.1.3 and supported by (Ibrahim, 2017) who described the natural entry of Islam in a society as first Muslims establishing favour with the local community before asserting themselves. In affirming themselves Muslims created patterns of spreading Islam. Patterns were designs for undertaking activities. When such activities were performed regularly, they became habits which in turn became the way of life for Muslims to spread Islam. These patterns in Igembe included Islamic infrastructural development, attendance of worship, change of names as a sign of conversion, change of dress code adopting Islamic attire, increased

indoctrination particularly of children through madrassa classes and schools, and business ownership by Muslims in Igembe region.

The development of Islamic infrastructure was a notable pattern of Islamic spread in Igembe. A structural pattern became evident as it was discovered that the numbers of Mosques built in many urban and rural areas had increased in recent years. Usually the presence of mosques was the strongest evidence that Islam had a physical presence. This research established that 59.6% of respondents (Appendix 2 (A) Sample 1) believed that the number of mosques dotting the region was noteworthy because the region had a majority of Christians and a substantial number of traditional religious adherents. The findings conformed to the study by Aden et al. (2006) that showed Mosques had been erected at Maua, Kiengu, Karama, Kangeta, and Muthara. Hence, there was an increased presence of Muslim adherents who included school going children.

A pattern was also found to have emerged where attendance of Islamic worship particularly the regular prayers by local non-Somali people was a sure sign that Islam was spreading. The study revealed that majority of the respondents 65.2% (Appendix 2 (A) Sample 1) showed that the local people in Igembe who were not of Somali origin or born as Muslims attend prayers at the established Mosques regularly. They also took part in Muslim festivals. For an individual to adopt Islamic worship and fully participate in festivals that individual had already attained conviction that the practice was appropriate. This was a key pointer that Islam had permeated society.

Another physical infrastructure to be noted was Islamic banking based on Sharia law. Muslims had further entrenched their beliefs in the banking sector where in Maua and Meru towns they had established sharia compliant banking systems. About

60.7% of respondents (Appendix 2 (A) Sample 1) asserted that the presence of Islamic banking system was a strong indicator that Islamic teachings and lifestyle had taken root in the region. This infrastructure was also an indication that Muslims had entrenched their trade making substantial income to warrant establishment of independent Islamic banking infrastructure. This finding further corroborated claims by IR1 who said, "Muslims entice and explains to Igembe people how good it is to be a Muslim. It appeared to Igembe people that they could live better lifestyles and probably become rich when they convert to Islam" (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 1a, IR1) and IR16, who clearly concluded that,

VQ "Abiacara ba miraa ba kuma Somali ibo batongagua muno i biacara ya miraa, i kwithira barina mbeba inyingi nkuruki ya abiacara ba Iembe baria baguicumia kucua mbeba cia gukiiria biacara cio na kucindana na Asomali kibiacara."

BT "Somalis miraa business people benefit because they have more money than the indigenous Igembe people who were struggling to have enough money to enable them compete with Somali traders" Appendix 2 (B) Sample 3, IR16).

The establishment of an Islamic banking sector, the access of Islamic traders to trading capital was enough incentive to Igembe people to join Islam so that they too can access the cash.

Naming of converted local Igembe people was confirmed in this study. The process of acquiring new names varied with each religion. The traditional religion process was that an individual needed to undergo initiation or change in ritual status. Naming in traditional religion happened after rituals were performed at birth or when

initiation into adulthood was conducted. The new names had meaning according to the traditional and religious beliefs and practices. In like manner Christianity gave new names to those who were baptized. Baptism in Christianity was a sign of new life in Christ. In Islam the baby was named on the seventh day by parents where a ceremony was involved. Further, it was common practice for those who converted to Islam to change their names adopting new Islamic names. They normally took Arab names either in addition to their native names or they abandoned all native names. Those who become Muslims changed names to mark their entry to a new faith. For instance, those who become jihadists had a common practice of adopting pseudonyms. In the Qur'an there was nothing to suggest that after conversion a person should change names. Nevertheless, it was observed in this study that in Igembe change of names was a major indication that non-Muslims had been converted and that Islam had pervaded Igembe society. This study found out that there were patterns of Islamic naming of converted Muslims. 66.7% of respondents (Appendix 2 (A) Sample 1) strongly agreed that the local people in Igembe who were not of Somali origin or born as Muslims were changing their names and adopting the Islamic names. Therefore, when people had converted to Islam change of names took place to reflect the new belonging and status.

Another arrangement for the spread of Islam was adopting Muslim dressing. The study found out that majority of the respondents 65.6% (Appendix 2 (A) Sample 1) indicated that the dressing code by local people had changed as indicated by their wearing of the Muslim clothing. Some of the local residents of Igembe were often seen wearing kufi caps, Arafat scarfs, and Muslim kanzus. Dress change was noticed

especially among the male Igembe residents who either had accepted to become Muslims or just admired wearing Islamic dress particularly the head cap.

Another pattern of the spread of Islam that was found among the Igembe people was the increased indoctrination processes. There was an increase of indoctrination of native Igembe people to adopt Islamic beliefs and practices as a scheme. In adults the Muslims portrayed Islam as a religion of chants which the local people easily recited. For instance, respondent IR4 said,

VQ “Itumi ikwithirwa kia kubenda, Aicilamu baugaa dini yao itiendete uacunani/wayia (haram) na bagatumira miciiitio imingi kenda baitikika (wallahi) na buu bukendwa ni baria bati Aicilamu na kinya muthiene bakagaluka kua Aicilamu”

BT “The reason liking them, Muslims say that their religion is against unfair business practices (haram) and they use lots of swearing (wallahi) to gain the confidence of the miraa sellers. This has attracted non-Muslims and eventually ends up converting to Islam” (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 2).

The use of the phrase ‘wallahi’ became a common recital among the Igembe people whether those who had accepted Islamic religion or who were sympathetic to Muslims. Further, children of both Muslim and non-Muslim parents had been known to allow their children to attend madrassa school in Igembe. The study found out that 61.5% (Appendix 2 (A) Sample 1) of respondents admitted that there were madrassa classes whereby the local children also attended. It was in these madrassa classes that non-Muslim children were indoctrinated eventually undergoing conversion to Islam. In addition, the regular schools had an increase in Muslim children enrolment. Results (Appendix 2 (A) Sample 1) showed that majority of the respondents who

were about 72.6% concurred that there had been a surge in the Muslim school children enrolment in primary and secondary schools within Igembe region. Once a religion had sufficiently influenced children at a tender age then it became easy to reach their families through them.

Results (Appendix 2 (A) Sample 1) showed that 66.3% of the respondents that were interviewed acknowledged that many business premises in major shopping centres were owned by Muslims. Apart from getting involved in miraa business Muslims were also trading as general merchants, hawkers, kiosk keepers, and matatu transporters. In Igembe Islamic spread was indicated by this tremendous growth of Muslim business people. There was an interesting observation by Aden et al. (2006) that there were substantial business premises set up and owned by Muslim in the region. This by implication showed that Muslims were intending to permanently reside in Igembe because they were not just buying established businesses but were instead buying land or plots and putting up businesses.

In summary all the indicators and patterns discussed in the preceding paragraphs were sufficient evidence of the extent of the spread of Islam in Igembe. In addition, the spread of Islam happened in subtle ways that were not easily perceived including Muslim lifestyle adoption by local youth that happened unconsciously. Unlike in other areas where Islam spread through futuhat (Roff, 2014) in Igembe Islam permeated society through peaceful means.

4.1.2 Muslim population growth in Igembe

The Muslim population in Igembe had increased steadily but not sharply by the time this study was conducted (Appendix 2 (A) Sample 1). The Kenyan Muslim in 1998 was around 20% of the total Kenya population according to the 1989 Census. The growth of Muslim population in Igembe was not spectacular as the Pew research (2015) projected but rather moderately pervaded society. Respondents (table 4.3) indicated that people in Igembe think that Islam had grown at a great extent in their area.

Table 4.3

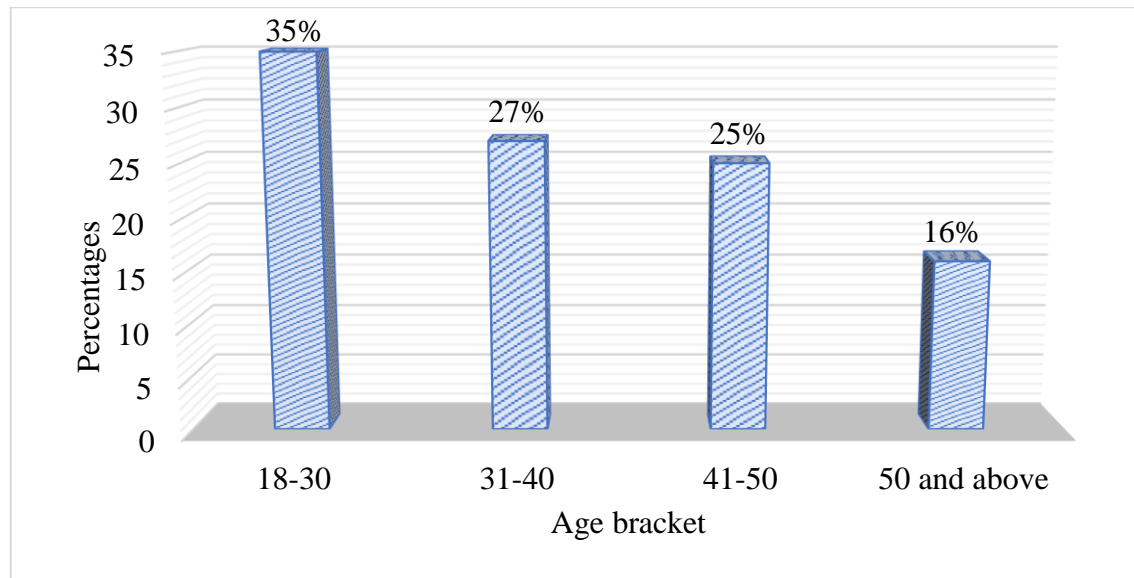
Respondents opinion on trend of religious growth in Igembe

Religion		Frequency	Percentage
Christianity	Some extent	4	30.8
	Little extent	9	69.2
	Total	13	100
Islam	Great Extent	10	76.9
	Some Extent	3	23.1
	Total	13	100
Indigenous	Little extent	1	7.7
	No extent at all	12	92.3
	Total	13	100

The growth took a generational dimension where the very old showed little response to Islamic influence. One most remarkable factor found in this study was that majority of the respondents for this research were also the most responsive to Islamic influence were youths as indicated in figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1

Graph showing age of respondents responding to Islamic influence



This factor of age shown in figure 4.1 was also representative of the age of those involved in miraa trade in Igembe. Consequently, it was arguably representative of those people being converted to Islam as well. Thus, the youth were the main group which had contributed to Islamic growth in Igembe.

The Miraa Traders Association (MTA) members interviewed as shown in table 6 underscored this fact by indicating that 69.2% of their members were Muslims. Only 30.8% were Christians. This was a pointer to the increase in the Muslim population in Igembe.

Table 4.4

Respondents opinion on Religious affiliation of MTA members

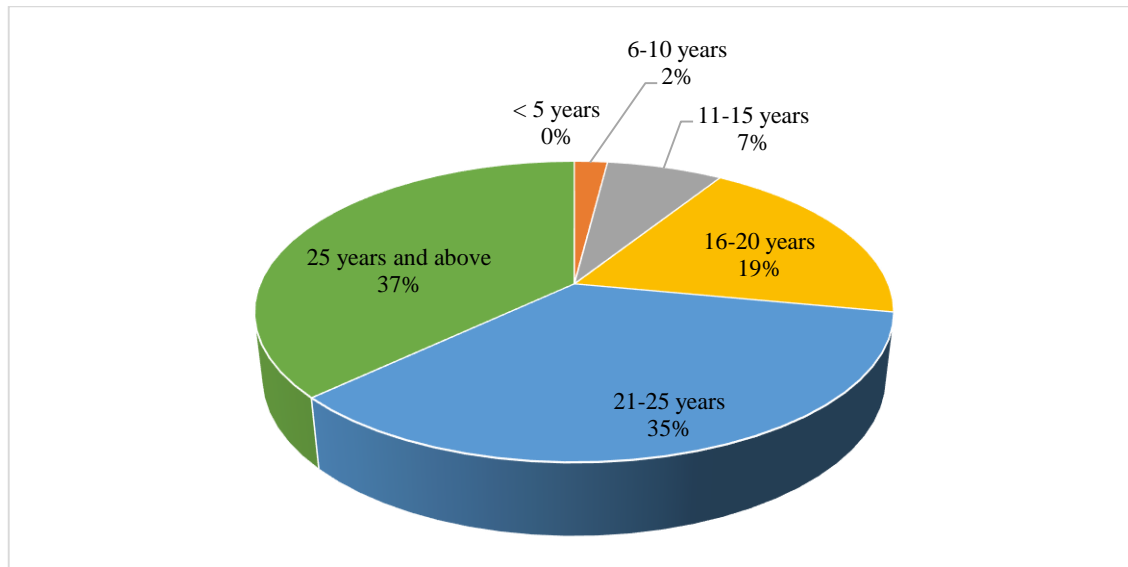
Religion	Frequency	Percentage	
How many association members are	Christians	4	30.8
	Muslims	9	69.2
	Total	13	100

Indeed, majority of the respondents also suggested that Christian membership to Miraa trade Association was smaller (30.8 %) than the Islamic membership (69.2%). This finding was in tandem with the literature reviewed in Section 2.1.3 where Becker (2014) attributed growth of the Muslim population to demographic factors of reproduction. Once Muslims arrived and settled in Igembe their population increased not just by marrying their own women but also by marrying more women as second, third, or fourth wives according to Islamic law. The biological factor in the increment of Muslims in Igembe was important to note. Growth by reproduction helped to domesticate Islam in Igembe.

Due to social and family factors the Muslim population growth in Igembe happened without perturbing the local community. In fact, those respondents interviewed (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 4 ii) indicated that the years varied when they started noticing the presence of Islam in Igembe region. Miraa farmers, vendors, and Association officials concurred that they started seeing the presence of Muslims more than twenty-five years ago as shown in figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2

Chart showing years of Islamic presence in Igembe



The years of Islamic presence in Igembe varied but majority of respondents as shown in Fig. 4.2 concurred that Muslims started appearing in Igembe more than twenty years ago.

Results (Appendix 2 (A) Sample 3) revealed that 74.1% of those interviewed sanctioned the view that Muslim merchants working together with their Muslim converts had helped traders to gain customers. The converts were the ones who helped to expand the Islam businesses. Therefore, the Muslim population in Igembe region had undoubtedly grown.

4.1.3 Islamic approaches to da'wah

Results (Appendix 2 (A) Sample 3) showed that 58.1% of the respondents stated that Muslims were using miraa trade to make new converts to Islam. Da'wah as defined

in Chapter 2 included making invitation to both Muslims and non-Muslims to Islam. It can also refer to summons made in the proselytization to Islam. One approach that Islam had adopted in Igembe was proselytization. Proselytization was the process of religious conversion. It was a process because it started with indoctrination and was followed by a passionate call to join Islam. Hence, in Igembe proselytization had taken place where people change religion from either the traditional Igembe religious beliefs or to Christianity that had earlier arrived in the region. The increase in the number of mosques corresponded with the surge in the increase on the proselytization of Igembe population to Islam.

The second approach to da'wah was acts of mercy through alms giving known as zakat in Islam. Zakat consists of spending a portion of one's wealth for the benefit of the poor or needy. A Muslim may also donate more as an act of voluntary charity. There were four principles that were to be followed when giving the Zakat, namely: the giver must have declared to God intention to give; Zakat must have been paid on the day that it was due; after the offering the giver must not have exaggerated on spending money more than the usual amounts; giving must have been in kind. Zakat was meant to be a Muslim duty to share with the society from where all wealth was gained from. Due to such giving the local native non-Muslim took such to mean the Muslims were generous but in subtle ways these gifts were not only a means of worship but also like inducement to join the Islamic religion. The change of religion by recipients of Zakat was in agreement with the study by Ibrahim in (2017) that during the arrival stage of the Islamization, the Muslims tended to gain respect by becoming lavish in order to win the hearts and minds of the native local community. It was such generosity that became one of the strong points facilitating change from

either traditional religion or Christian religion to Islam. Zakat was the practice of charitable giving based on accumulated wealth. It was the purification and growth that allows an individual to achieve balance and encouraged new growth. Zakat was obligatory for all Muslims who could do so. It was the personal responsibility of each Muslim to ease the economic hardship of others and to strive towards eliminating inequality.

The third approach to da'wah was to conduct open-air Islamic preaching akin to the Christian crusade preaching. The study findings were in agreement with observations made by Panikkar (1977) that Islamic prayers and evangelizing meetings were held regularly in the region at shopping Centres where Muslims preached using strong overhead public address systems. This public appeal to residents to join the Islamic faith was unprecedented in that usually Muslims appeal to those who attend mosque prayers and rarely go to solicit members in the open-air meetings like Christians. Indeed, there was an intentional encroachment of Christian dominated territories by the Muslim clerics who were trying to Islamize the region.

Hassan Ole Naado, head of the Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims (SUPKEM) agreed that some enthusiastic Muslims had ventured deep into areas not traditionally known to be keen to Islamic beliefs. He expressed concern that “there is this fear that Muslims were stepping on other people’s toes by demanding to practice their faith in places that don’t belong to them” (Corcoran, 2015). This apprehension was shared worldwide especially in Europe which had been grappling with how to accommodate Muslim immigrants.

In Christianity the process of changing from another religious experience to Christianity was known as conversion to Christ. It was the equivalent of da'wah. In order to understand if da'wah was rampant in Igembe, respondents were asked to clarify whether they had ever changed religious affiliations in their lifetime. From the study findings (table 4.5) some of the respondents (25%) indicated that they renounced their earlier religion and converted to the current religion while 75% specified otherwise. This implied that there were some people who had converted from one religious experience to another in Igembe.

Table 4.5

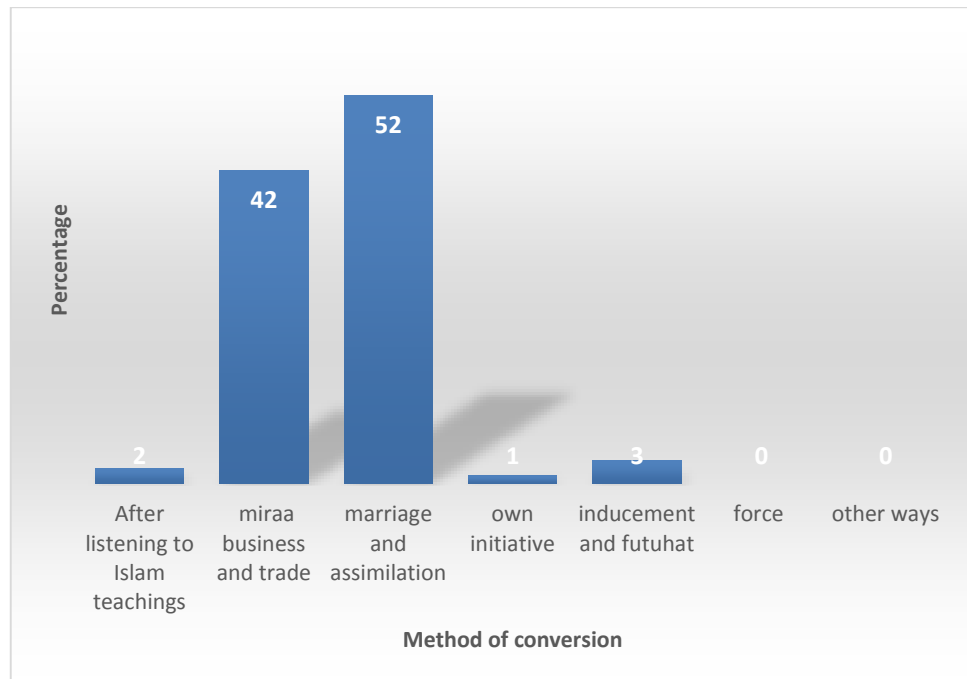
Change of religious experience

Change of religion	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	64	25
No	188	75
Total	252	100

In addition, the methods of conversion to Islam were important because social approaches seemed to have more effects than others as indicated by figure 4.3. The most common methods include listening to Islamic teachings, miraa businesses, marriages, free own initiatives, inducements, and futuhat among others. Nevertheless, not all these methods worked well for Igembe region

Figure 4.3

Graph indicating methods of conversion to Islam



Most of the respondents interviewed 52% (Figure 4.3) cited that Igembe people were mostly converted to Islam through marriage and assimilation. This was followed by conversion through miraa trade at 42% of the respondents. The social and cultural methods of marriage, reproduction, and socializing through miraa chewing were more important styles to take Islam to the Igembe people.

4.2 Cultural importance of miraa

Miraa as indicated in Section 2.3 was a crop of worth in Igembe both culturally and economically. The social setting in Igembe was that miraa planting, harvesting, using, or chewing was a preserve of older men in society but nowadays miraa is the concern of everyone in Igembe men, women, and children.

Owing to its relaxation sensation Neil (2003) in his doctoral studies branded miraa as ‘cool’ meaning it was culturally good. Indeed, the popularity of miraa in Igembe area was unrivalled. Neil implied that through the social importance of miraa relations were well maintained. Due to its stimulant effect Neil noted that as people chew and sell miraa there was a lot of swearing by men, women, and children. The obnoxious social behaviour partly justifies the labelling of miraa by World Health Organization (WHO) as a stimulant drug but not a serious addictive drug. The people of Igembe object to the negative effects attributed to miraa but accept it had curative properties as indicated in Section 4.2.3.

At social level miraa had multiple uses and benefits making it a significant crop as indicated in (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 2a) where it was rated as a medicinal plant in addition to adding to young boys a badge of manhood because it was used before circumcision initiation.

4.2.1 Miraa as social-cultural emblem of Igembe people

Miraa has become a social emblem in Igembe and an identity badge by miraa traders throughout the Country. 74.1% (Appendix 2 (A) Sample 1a) of Igembe respondents in this study acknowledged that miraa was a symbolic marker of Igembe identity, intimately linked to their traditions and history. Whenever a miraa business was setup anywhere in Kenya there was always a banana leaf hoisted as a symbol of miraa business (Appendix 2 (C) Fig.6.7). The banana leaf was used as a wrap of miraa bundles. Many people in the Country do not distinguish Igembe people who mostly deal with miraa trade with Meru people.

Often miraa traders were referred to as Baite denoting Meru people who vend miraa. By implication the Igembe people who deal with miraa business bring a lot of honour to the Meru community just because of miraa. Apart from the miraa being a socio-cultural emblem in Igembe the finding that miraa was accepted in the whole of Meru was in tandem with literature reviewed in Section 2.3.5. Literature showed that the County Government of Meru had recognized the importance of miraa in the entire Meru community and had started miraa co-operative societies to promote the planting and use of miraa.

Miraa was a heritage crop that was normally passed from father to son in Igembe. In fact, 56.3% (Appendix 2 (A) Sample 3) of those interviewed in this research concurred that miraa was a crop associated with Igembe heritage. Culturally, miraa was treated like green gold that was bequeathed to progeny. This phenomenon explains why it was repugnant for those who leased or sold miraa land to immigrants. Respondent IR4 said, “Miraa business has led to unlawful leasing of land. A family member can just wake up and lease land without seeking consent of all the family members. The situation has resulted in conflicts” (Appendix 2 (B) sample 4a).

4.2.2 Role of miraa in marriage solemnization and boy initiation ceremonies

Key among the best uses of miraa was to start marriage negotiations as a token of appreciation for the lady. Evidence from the interviews indicate that,

VQ “Miraa niatumiragwa kuromba uthoni” BT “miraa was used to ask for in-law relation” VQ “Miraa niatumairwa kutuma uthoni riria muthaka akuenda kuoya mwarii abwithia mucii” BT “miraa was used to create in-law

relationship when the suitor wanted to marry a girl so as to start a home” (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 2a).

This evidence pointed to an important cultural practice only started with miraa. Miraa was used for marriage proposal not only in Igembe but the whole of Meru County. In many other communities in Kenya marriage was culturally regulated with certain taboos and restrictions.

In Igembe it was taboo not to take ncoolo e miraa (bundle of miraa) to the in-law of the prospective bride. As Carrier (2007) asserted miraa in such context was used for ceremonial ritual of marriage. Once the suitor took ncoolo e miraa to ask for the hand of the prospective bride then the girl would take the whole bundle, remove one twig out of ncoolo and give to her father. Once the father had taken the twig and chewed it then marriage proposal was officially accepted. Hence, miraa was used as a symbol of love and acceptance.

In fact, one may get the wrong impression when the respondent said “kuoya mwarii” literally to “pick a girl” (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 2a) as if the girl had been thrown away by parents. This literal reading would negate the cultural importance of marriage but in any case, the idea was that miraa makes marriage proposal legal in Kimiiru traditions. In Igembe marriage does not imply kugurana ‘buying each other’ as was the case in Tigania or Imenti. The concept of kuoyana ‘picking each other’ was more appropriate. Miraa played a central role in kuoyana. Due to inter-marriage between Muslim men and Igembe women there had occurred high risk of women entering polygamous marriage beyond their control or eventually get divorced. This was one of the negative effects of Islamization through miraa trade noted in this study (Appendix 2 (A) Sample 1).

The practice of using miraa for marriage proposal had survived up to date due to its cultural acceptance by all Ameru. Miraa usage had evolved from a social and ceremonial to commercial. Hence, miraa had become a regular item of exchange between the Muslims and the Igembe people. Some people driven by financial gain have tried to replace miraa during marriage proposal with money but it had not been successful because marriage was not a commercial activity. It was a cultural ceremony as corroborated by (Mwaniki, 1986) in the literature reviewed.

In preparation for circumcision, miraa was valued because the candidate of initiation would give the bundle to the man of his choice who would serve as his guardian father during the seclusion period. IR5 stated clearly that “During initiation time for Igembe region the mentor to guide the boy being going the process it was the process to identify and accept for the mentor to agree and take care of the boy” (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 2a iii). This statement of IR5 suggested that first miraa would be used as a courtesy too used by young people to beseech their seniors to accept adopting them as fathers during male initiation ceremonies. Second, the statement advocates for mentorship programme among Igembe people. Miraa was thus a means of initiating informal education in the community through guided mentorship. Male initiation was not having just the physical aspect of circumcision but also the educative aspect of mentorship.

4.2.3 Perceived medicinal value of miraa

During the interviews several respondents alluded to the medicinal value of miraa. IR6 claimed that, “VQ miraa has medicinal value as it has been used to treat diarrhoea, fatigue, and acidic stomachs”. This respondent father said “VQ miraa has

been used as a remedy of dry cough” (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 2b). The curative value of miraa had not been scientifically proven but as literature reviewed in Section 2.3.3 indicated it was a subject of discussion. What was not in doubt was that khat had chemical properties such as cathinone, cathine, flavonoids, and cathedulins which have some potency (Toennes, et al., 2003).

However, other scholars (Mwangi, 2009; Njiru, et al., 2013; Mugendi, 2017 and Kathata, 2017) claim that miraa was a psychostimulant comparable to nicotine. This notion finds acceptance with the NCST (1996) which asserted that miraa has cathinone, cathine, and d-amphetamine which showed pharmacological potency in animal research (Section 2.3.3) resulting in increased heart rate, mydriasis and hyperthermia. These findings though diminishing the value of miraa did not altogether negate it.

The Igembe people interviewed strongly believed miraa was harmless. Since there was a common claim by other communities and some scholars (Mwenda et al., 2003, Erickson et al., 1991) that miraa affected the libido and fertility of chewers, Igembe people showed that they have many children which counteracted this negative perception. In particular, by IR5 claiming that miraa had anti-fatigue properties he was suggesting that it almost acted as Viagra completely denying any association of miraa with erectile dysfunction.

4.2.4 Njuri Ncheke endorsement of miraa

Njuri Ncheke was both an administrative council and at the same time the custodian of the traditional religion of the Meru community. Miraa was traditionally and

culturally regarded as a crop of heritage because it was passed on from father to son as inheritance. Miraa farms were not to be sold traditionally due to the cultural importance of the crop. As Bediako (2011) asserted cultures were the crucible factors in determining cultural importance in a society. In this case Njuri Ncheke had made it taboo for anyone to sell ancestral land that miraa was cultivated. In fact, IR 9 said, “miraa has been used as a remedy of dry cough. miraa has been used as anti-fatigue and it was ruled by Njuri Ncheke that officially no one should sell ancestral land or sell miraa trees inherited from their fathers” (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 9).

However, this prohibition of not selling land and miraa trees had been largely disregarded in Igembe by the time of this study. That was the reason why this study found out that Muslims of Somali origin bought miraa ancestral land easily. It seemed capitalism had won over traditional prohibitions. Miraa trade had affected the way traditional life was being lived.

In September 2019 (Daily Nation Newspaper) Njuri Ncheke Council of elders performed a ritual to remove misfortune on miraa brought about by a ban on miraa by some of the Counties in Kenya. In May 2019 (The Star Newspaper) the downfall of the British Prime Minister Teresa May was attributed to the curse Njuri Ncheke Council of elders placed on her when she was Home Secretary and she had placed a ban on miraa. Her moratorium on miraa had taken effect in 2014 declaring miraa a class C drug in the United Kingdom. This British ban had serious financial implications because it denied the Igembe people an estimated 3 billion Shillings loss in revenue.

4.2.5 Miraa chewing as a game of pastime

The findings that men enjoyed chewing miraa and that nowadays even women and children chew miraa in Igembe was supported by the literature reviewed as Adrere (1996) suggested the custom of chewing miraa predated the recorded history. Literature (section 2.3.4) showed that miraa chewing went hand in hand with the practice of taking tea at the same time. This brings out the concept of miraa being cool as (Neil, 2003) concluded.

Among the Muslims miraa was chewed by all as a pastime but also to reduce pangs of hunger in places where food was scarce. However, as literature review indicated (section 2.3.4) there was no consensus among Muslim scholars whether miraa was accepted or prohibited by the Qur'an. The increased trend of chewing of miraa by the Muslim population in Igembe as a pastime was sometimes mistaken for laziness or responsible for idling.

Unfortunately, nowadays, young people were found to be engaged in chewing miraa a pastime that was not only reducing their school time but also pushing them to use hard drugs such as mandrax as attested in section 2.3.4 of the literature reviewed. Miraa among young people was also found to promote anti-social behaviour. This could be precisely the reason why miraa chewing in traditional Igembe was restricted to older men.

4.3 Contribution of miraa trade to the Islamization of Igembe people

This study wished to provide a nexus between miraa trade and Islamization of Igembe people. 58.1% of respondents (Appendix 2 (A) Sample 1) established that Muslims were using miraa trade to make new converts to Islam while 84.6% agreed that miraa business contributed to the Islamization of Igembe people as indicated in table 4.6.

Table 4.6

Contribution of miraa business to Islamization of Igembe people

Contribution	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	11	85
No	2	15
Total	13	100

Results (Appendix 2 (A) Sample 17) revealed that 74.1% of respondents admitted that Muslim merchants working together with their Muslim converts have helped traders to gain customers who in turn became Muslims due to the miraa business. In fact, 53.0% of those interviewed acknowledged that mingling with Muslims during the miraa business had resulted to conversion of Non-Muslims to Islam. Results showed that majority of the respondents (64.8%) agreed that Muslims were now dominating the miraa business in Igembe while 70.4% of respondents averred that miraa business interests by the Somali Muslims in Igembe had contributed greatly to their settlement in the region

Evidence from IR2 indicated that the reason why Islam was in Igembe in the first place was due to miraa trade. IR2 said,

“ndini ya aisilamu yeeyire iroojura kwonthe muno muno nontu bwa biacara yaa miraa. Kethira ti miraa aislamu batithirwa baii Igembe”

BT “Islamic religion came and is everywhere mostly mostly because of miraa business. If it is not for miraa Muslims would not be in Igembe” (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 2).

IR2 directly established a strong nexus between the spread of Islam in Igembe to miraa trade. The respondent provided proof that Islam had spread everywhere in Igembe. It was also discovered that the major miraa business people in Igembe were the Muslims although some prominent Igembe people such as Mr. Kamukunji were key miraa traders as well. Such tycoons have created miraa business empires that had employed a lot of local Igembe people. The findings were pertinent to the statement made by Yusuf (2009) that new job opportunities were created. Good wages attracted migrant labourers from as far as Kamba, Kikuyu land and Western Kenya. Scores of Kamba, Kikuyus, Luo and Luhya found their way to the coastal towns such as Mombasa and Malindi, to the numerous plantations and some even crossed the sea to Pemba and Zanzibar. Many of these were eventually converted to Islam, and when they returned home, they propagated the religion among their people. The study findings (Appendix 2 (A) Sample 3) that were corroborated Mwakimako (2007) that the spread of Islam to Igembe and Meru in general could be attributed to several factors that will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

First, the proximity between Meru and other Islamic communities like the Boran, Rendile, and Somali communities living in Isiolo, Marsabit, Garissa, and Mandera. Respondents IR17 said,

“Islam Somali have a strong attachment to miraa and were the most traders controlling the business. This strong domination of the miraa trade has resulted to also the Igembe joining the religion to become part of it. For instance, selling miraa outside Maua in towns like Garissa, Madera, Wajir, Eastleigh, etc where Islams are dominant” (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 17).

Miraa trade became the nexus connecting these communities through trade (Wrong, 2005).

Second, although miraa was grown and marketed from Igembe there was a business network connecting Igembe to the International markets mainly through Muslim traders who had roots in Somalia, and the Arab countries in Middle East. In fact, the study made by Amnesty International (2005) that Somali traders' control much of the international trade in miraa in exporting the commodity to Somali, Europe and beyond was testimony to the link of miraa to international markets.

Third, dominance of miraa trade by Muslims particularly of Somali descent had made Muslims wealthy enough to employ local Igembe people in their own farms creating interest in Islamic religion. The findings of the study (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 17) were relevant to the conclusion made by Aden et al. (2006) that miraa business interests by the Somali Muslims in Igembe contributed greatly to their settlement in the region.

Indeed, Muslims used miraa to Islamize Igembe. It was revealed by IR11 from the study (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 3) that the majority of the Muslims Islamised Igembe people through miraa trade by close contact and good relation. The findings confirmed the statement made by Mwakimako (2007) that there were great social links especially due to intermarriages between these communities, which had led to a diffusion of social customs between Somali Muslims and the Igembe community.

4.3.1 Islamization as process of inculturation

Islamization was both a process of converting people to Islam and an action of conversion to Islam. Islamization had three dimensions where a convert experiences change in terms of faith, character, and culture. Hence Islamization was the process of adoption by converts of Islamic beliefs and Muslim culture (Peacock, 2017).

Trade was sanctioned by the Qur'an in Sura 2 Ayat 275 (2:275) which stipulates, "Allah has permitted trade and forbidden usury". Nevertheless, the Qur'an at the same time prohibited trade in some areas such as maisir or gambling which was a game of chance. For Islamic faith there was nothing wrong when there was a fair-trade transaction. Allah in fact will eventually reward traders who were honest in akhirah or afterlife.

Inculturation was a natural process of assimilating religious beliefs and practices to adapt them to the local native situation (Magesa, 2014). It was the process of unpacking Islam clothed in Arabic and more specifically Somali culture so as to adapt to the cultural values of Igembe people. In this case it was the acceptance of both Islamization and Arabization by Igembe people as they adapt Islamic lifestyle.

Inculturation process hopes to allow Igembe people to accept Islamic beliefs and practices and customize them to African way of life. Islamophobia arises when people cannot distinguish between Islamic practices from Arabic cultural practices.

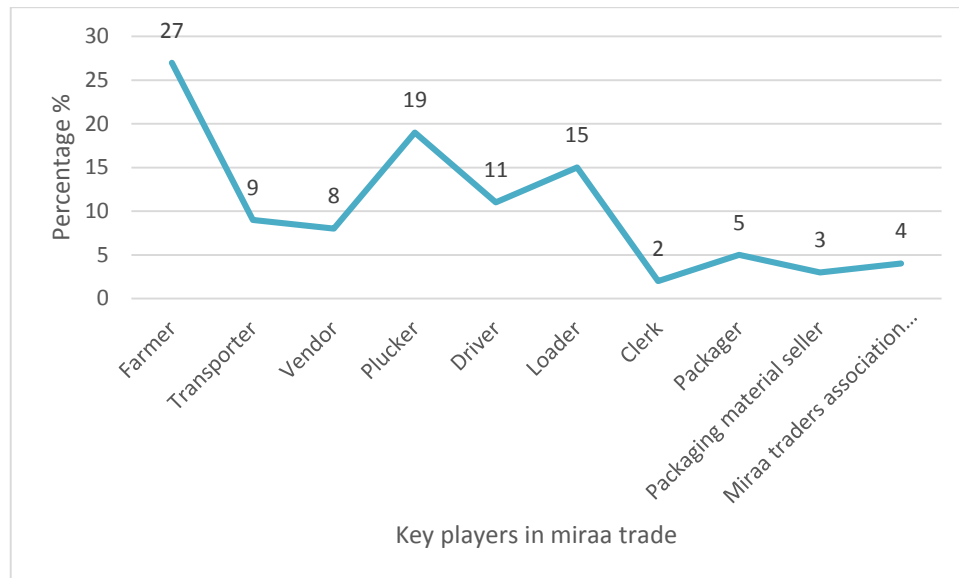
In the process of inculturating Islam sought to incarnate Islamic religious beliefs in the acceptable formats (Chibuko, 2015) in the Igembe context. Sometimes Muslim converts living among Islamic cultural environment experience enculturation too. That means individuals adopt not only Islamic way of life but also, they adopt Arabization as a lifestyle. In Igembe the process was more of inculturating Islamic beliefs and practices among the native people. For instance, Muslims accepted the Igembe reverence to Njuri Ncheke as the final authority on matters of miraa land buying due to traditional taboos.

4.3.2 Somali dominance of miraa trade

Results (Appendix 2 (A) Sample 4 ii) showed that majority of the respondents (64.8%) confessed that Muslims were now dominating the miraa business in Igembe. They listed the key players in the miraa trade as farmers, pluckers, packagers, clerks, vendors, loaders, transporters, and drivers as shown in figure 4.4.

Figure 4.4

Graph showing key players in miraa trade

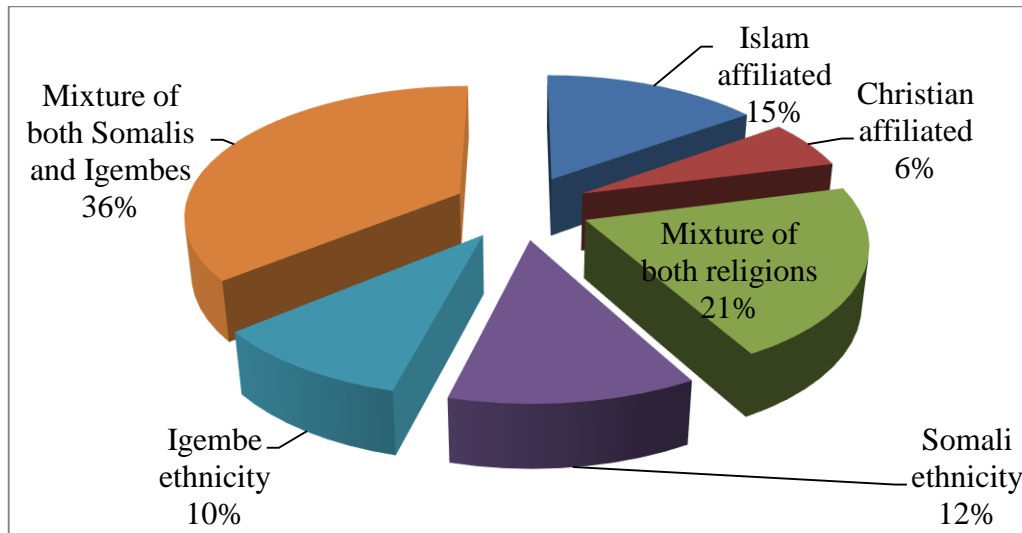


Further majority (70.4%) of the respondents (Appendix 2 (A) Sample 4 ii) revealed that miraa business interests by the Somali Muslims in Igembe had contributed greatly to their settlement in the region.

In terms of employment the miraa business was still dominated by a mixture of Igembe and Somali people (36%) as shown in figure 4.5. However, Muslims of Somali origin and people who profess Islamic faith appeared to have dominated the miraa trade generally because only 6% who were employed without Islamic mixture were Christians.

Figure 4.5

Chart indicating employees in the miraa trade



Results (Appendix 2 (A) Sample 4 ii) further showed that majority of the respondents 60% attested to the fact of the oppressive dominance of people of Somali origin in the miraa business. In other words, majority of the research participants agreed that the dominance of people of Somali origin in the miraa business had created tension, as Igembe people considered themselves exploited by the Somali traders' network had argued that the disproportionate distribution of income between the Somali traders and the Igembe miraa owners was potentially explosive. Nyambene Miraa farmers and dealers felt (Appendix 2 (A) Sample 4 ii) that under the current situation where the market has been invaded by foreigners who offer unfair contractual engagement to local people the lucrative nature of the trade assisted Muslims to dominate.

4.3.3 Lucrative nature of miraa trade has magnetic effect to Islam

The proposition by Baariu (2013) that miraa business earns a lot of money was partly correct in the sense that the middlemen who were mostly Islamic traders were the ones who got most of the money (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 3, IR19). However, the statement was partly false because most Igembe miraa farmers' live scarcity lives (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 3, IR16). The mistaken notion that miraa had improved the lives of Igembe people and that poverty in the miraa growing areas had reduced was misplaced. There was no evidence to show any reduction in poverty index. On the contrary data from the study showed that,

“the primary producers of miraa still lived under extreme poverty conditions by a vicious cycle of non-business-oriented farming and markets dominated by brokers” (Appendix 2 (A) Sample 4 i).

Attraction to Islam and Muslim by the local Igembe people may be due to the economic servitude imposed on them by the middlemen who enjoy the lucrative nature of miraa business. The riches displayed and enjoyed by miraa traders could also be the magnet that brought local Igembe people to Islam. Many traders especially the Muslims have cash all the time which makes them enviable by the local people because of their success in trading. IR1 made it clear during the interview that,

VQ “*Ii ima kuitanira biacara na Aicilamu ikutumite Aembe babaingi bakucua na kuendera mikarire/miturire yoo. Buu ibutumite bamwe bao bagalula dini na kuaa Aicilamu*”.

BT “Yes, it is true that miraa trade has led to spread of Islam as when you interact with Muslim miraa traders, you tend to love their religion and their

way of life and eventually one converts very easily” (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 3, IR1).

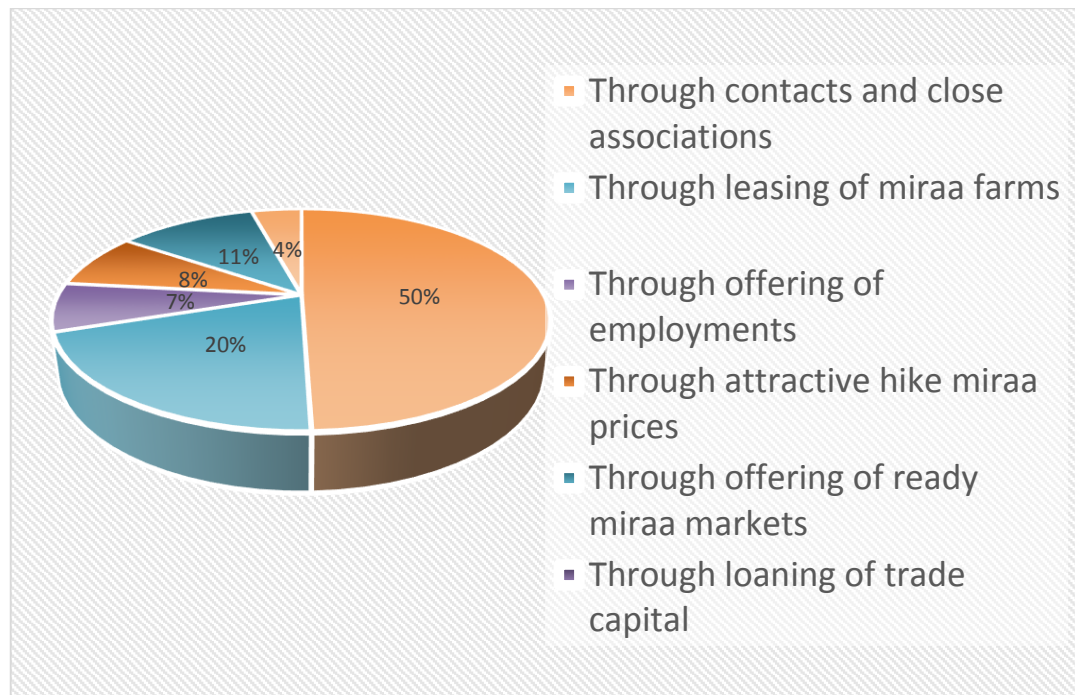
Further, analysis of IR1 (Appendix 2 (A) Sample 1) comment confirmed that miraa trade had a magnetic effect to attract the local Igembe residents to Islam because of the admiration of how Muslims interacted with them. People felt that Muslim miraa traders interacted with them on mutual basis to warrant local Igembe people to like their way of life.

4.3.4 Miraa trade as a means of proselytization

Proselytization was the notion of converting people to a certain religion. In this case it was the invitation of Igembe people who were either Christians or believers in African traditional religion. Muslims used various methods and strategies to win converts including close contact, leasing of land, employing local people, good prices for buying miraa, and providing shylock services to local small-scale traders as indicated by figure 4.6.

Figure 4.6

Chart indicating strategies for proselytization to Islamic religion in Igembe



Another significant strategy for proselytization of local people was inter-marriages between Muslims and local Igembe women where 60.4% of the respondents (Appendix 2 (A) Sample 3) agreed strongly that social links especially due to inter-marriages between the Somalis and the Igembe people had led to a diffusion of social customs and loss of Igembe culture. IR24 provided insight into the proselytization strategies when the respondent said,

“due to the increased number of Islam miraa traders in the region, they normally hold regular open-air discussions about their religion. These platforms have influenced a good number of our natives to convert” (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 3).

The respondent aptly identified regular open-air discussions by Muslim leaders as the main reason for the increase of adherents. The interviewee further provided insight into this strategy by indicating that the target converts were the natives. This idea of proselytization was supported by another respondent IR25 who confirmed that “the Islam Somali who came to this region as traders have with time invited others who do Islamic crusades at the open markets that have converted a good number of the locals” (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 3). The ‘crusades’ IR25 was referring to were not known Muslim violent religious wars but rather those akin to Christian crusades which just preach.

4.4 Effects of Islamization on Igembe people through miraa trade

4.4.1 Economic marginalization and poverty

The study (Appendix 2 (A) Sample 1) revealed that majority of the respondents 71.9% argued that in miraa business and trade the local Igembe farmers have been unfairly denied of revenue by unscrupulous Muslim middlemen who had taken over miraa ownership, harvesting, packaging, transportation, and exportation. What this study found out was that local people were mostly employees working for the Muslim tycoons who own the miraa business. The edging out of local Igembe miraa growers from ownership, transportation, and exportation of miraa was indeed a sign of marginalization of the Igembe people. Moreover 71.1% of respondents (Appendix 2 (A) Sample 1) agreed that the export of miraa to the International markets was normally closely controlled by people of Somali origin who had access to Middle East and Europe due to their Islamic connections. It was observed that if a person

from Igembe tried to access the Muslim or European market in completion with the Somali traders from Igembe dire consequences would follow including death as was the case with Ntai wa Nkuraru a prominent miraa businessman.

The production of miraa took place in farms where it was planted and harvested. Traditionally (section 4.2.3) miraa used to be a preserve of the Igembe men who controlled planting and use of miraa. Miraa farms were not allowed to be sold or even leased until the Muslim traders changed that trajectory. The study (Appendix 2 (A) Sample 1) found out that 55.9% of those who participated in the study lamented that some miraa farmers in Igembe region have leased out their farms for long periods; sometimes on informal or on unfavourable terms which often leads to family conflicts and inability to redeem them back. Once the farms were leased for five years or more the small-scale farmer does not only suffer lack of income, they literally cannot use the farm to plant other crops that might help the family survive. Since the Muslim traders had so much money they can lease or even buy miraa farms without the local people who in most cases were illiterate realising the serious implications of the action. Once the farms were leased for long periods or farms were bought the local people were left destitute and at the mercy of close relatives who give them shelter or food. Leasing of miraa land by Muslim traders without leaving any space for the native people was found to have dire economic consequences and marginalization of Igembe people due to resultant poverty.

The other area where miraa business provided income was transportation of miraa within the Country and outside. Transportation of miraa was mandatory activity otherwise miraa twigs would dry quickly losing its value. Miraa must be sold fresh. Hence, there was found to be a need for quick means of transport to take miraa to the

market. The preferred mode of transporting miraa within the Country was the use of fairly new pick-ups. The ideal brand of these trucks was found to be Toyota Hilux or Toyota Land Cruiser pick-ups (Appendix 2 (C) Fig. 6.8) which have strong cabin for overloading miraa and high enough for ground clearance due to rough roads. These Japanese made vehicles were sported driving at top high speed to airports. They were very expensive vehicles which were out of reach for the local Igembe miraa farmer. They were only owned by rich traders who were mostly Muslims of Somali origin. The dominance of the transport sector has marginalized the miraa producer and left the farmer to accept any price set by the middlemen who in turn transport the commodity to sell at a higher price. Once prices have been determined by the middlemen the local miraa farmer cannot do much but accept the prices given. Due to widespread poverty among miraa farmers any price was acceptable so that they could have sustenance. Since the local miraa farmer cannot access the export market where prices were better which consequently produced a cycle of abject poverty.

4.4.2 Urbanization of Igembe: Growth of towns as miraa picking centres

One major positive effect of miraa trade was found to be the development of towns and centres of miraa collection as IR30 explained that,

“expansion and development of market centres such as Maua, Laare, and Mutuati have grown as result of the booming miraa trade. Likewise, small local miraa collection centres have also developed into shopping centres and small towns like Kiengu, Athiru, KK, Kimongoro, and Muringene” (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 4a, IR 30).

Although these towns and centres have not directly grown due to Islamization of Igembe people through miraa trade they indirectly developed due to the symbiotic relationship between miraa trade and Islamization.

The rapid urbanization of Igembe region was surely accelerated by the behaviour of Muslims who live in urban areas more than rural areas. More developments in the area of housing either in modern housing projects or slum growth had been realised in the last few years. Housing projects either in the formal or informal sectors had contributed to urbanization fuelled by the huge amounts of money Muslim traders gain from miraa trade as attested by IR20 who attributed development to the miraa trade that was “dominated by Somali Muslims who have lots of cash” (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 3, IR20).

Rapid growth of towns and other trade centres was also attributed to the coming of Muslims who according to IR19 “brought a very profitable business in our area for our people! They have offered employment” (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 3, IR19). It was not only the miraa business that was found to be doing well in Igembe. There were other lucrative ventures that had grown in association or in support of miraa trade. One such business was found to be the widespread establishment of agro chemical shops where miraa farmers bought fertilizers and spraying chemicals. IR29 confided that,

“through miraa trade by small scale people it has led to the expansion of agro vet in Igembe whereby the Somali buy some fertilizers and chemicals for their miraa farms” (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 4a, IR 29).

In this case there was found to be a direct link between Islamic farmers to miraa growing or trade. One critical foundation for the development of such businesses was the cheap availability of funding from Muslim traders who usually earn a lot from miraa trade. This study concurred with IR27 who concluded that “through miraa trade Igembe people had been able to access easy cash to start their own business” (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 4a, IR 27). In addition, employment opportunities brought about by the nexus between Islamization and miraa trade had made it possible to establish businesses. Indeed, local “Igembe people have been able to acquire income through employment. Miraa business has led to the expansion of business in Igembe region” (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 4a, IR 26).

4.4.3 Child labour, school dropout, and truancy

Moyi (2013) argued that although the farming work was beneficial in the provision of income and improvement of the economy, it hindered the education of the children a notion that 72.6% of the respondents in this study agreed that miraa business had influenced child labour and school dropout in miraa growing areas. The extent of under-age participation in the cotton harvest based on the survey of six districts in India concluded that most of the school-going children between the ages of 10 and 15 years old in rural areas and small towns were assisting parents in harvesting crops. One of the social effects of miraa farming was the increased school dropout and child labour due to involvement in miraa picking and sorting. This study (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 4c) confirmed that indeed there was child labour, school dropout, and children forced by parents or guardians to work in miraa farms to earn income for the family.

Miraa farming was a high labour-intensive venture and most often than not, that labour was not readily available nor was it cheap. As a result, the society of miraa producers while making the terms of engagement attractive inadvertently attracted child labour that was more efficient (Calitz, 2009) since they were young and cheaper than adult labour. Oxfam (2004) found out that due to the desperation of higher wages, parents took their children out of school to plant and harvest miraa crops. This information was corroborated by this study that,

“miraa trade has increased the rate of school dropout whereby parents force their children to leave school in order to work in the miraa farms to earn their livelihood hence leading to child labour” (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 4c, IR 42).

In addition, 72.2% of those interviewed (Appendix 2 (A) Sample 2) agreed that most people in Igembe associate miraa with child labour. Further, IR41 confirmed,

“there is high rate of school dropout due to the availability of cheap labour with good cash” (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 4c, IR 41).

Miraa which was a preserve of older men now was being processed also by women and children with serious labour and educational consequences for children. This study found out that children were introduced to money economy as early as ten years' old who were used for plucking miraa twigs for the landowners. Children have wasted their childhood in labour intensive miraa farms earning money mostly for their parents. This practice of child labour had substantial negative effects socially (Greig and Taylor 1999) because it was linked to school dropout in children and illiteracy in adults.

Child labour had affected all children in Igembe but more especially the boy child. IR35 was of the strong belief that boy child labour,

“has increased the number of school dropouts whereby the small boys in Igembe leave their studies in order to work in the miraa farms” (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 4c, IR 35).

Although miraa processing was a highly adult business unscrupulous business people engage boys due to labour cost not at all considering their tender age. The child labour was associated with many social ills and had ripple effect. For instance, IR34 commented,

“young boys have been engaged into packing miraa leading to them dropping out of school. With time this has created a ripple effect of reliance on the unstable prices, hence a poverty cycle” (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 4c, IR 34).

IR34 associated child labour with miraa plucking price control by merchants but also indicated that child labour created a poverty cycle. IR 33 was more specific about the evils associated with child labour that,

“boys drop out of schools, early marriages, insecurity, a lot of conflicts, and unlawful land leasing” (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 4c, IR33).

However, apart from these negative effects of Islamization through miraa trade IR36 brought a new dimension to the issue of schooling that,

“through miraa trade Muslims were able to establish their own schools whereby they have involved the Igembe children to access their education” (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 4c, IR36).

The mushrooming of private schools in Kenya had not spared Igembe region where the Muslims too took the chance to establish Muslim schools. Muslim schools at Primary school included the establishment of madrassa classes.

The matter of child labour already had serious consequences to attract the attention of the state department of education which has called for a concerted effort from all stakeholders in order to take back children to class. Associated with the problem of school dropouts was the challenge of juvenile delinquency and truancy arising among these unschooled youths, the resultant rise in violence, general insecurity and crime was an observed outcome. Truancy was the concept of children absenting themselves from school for one reason or another irrespective validity of the reason for absence. In this study truancy may be caused by the child who runs away from school to get employed in miraa business of picking miraa twigs as IR34 observed that,

“young boys have been engaged into packing miraa leading to them dropping out of school” (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 4c, IR34).

Truancy could be a result of a third party like a parent or guardian coercing a child to seek employment for the financial gain of the family as IR40 asserts,

“children have been forced to work in the miraa farms at their tender age” (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 4c, IR40).

There was consensus from IR42 who candidly said,

“parents force their children to leave school in order to work in the miraa farms to earn their livelihood hence leading to child labour” (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 4c, IR42).

4.4.4 Malnutrition in children

Malnutrition was reported that,

“poor feeding habits have been observed with a number of cases of malnutrition reported” (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 4c, IR 43).

Poor feeding habits as observed by IR43 often created a situation of stunted growth in children. Miraa crop was not meant to be edible it was meant for business and trade to be chewed during pastime not to reduce hunger pangs. The problem in Igembe was that miraa dominated all plants in the farms but daily food crops were rarely inter-cropped (Karega, 2013). Residents of Igembe rely heavily with food sold from other regions in Meru especially from Tigania and Imenti. Due to lack of food crops that were easily available children often suffer malnutrition.

There were peculiar but not uncommon habits discovered in Igembe where IR44 said, “most residents in Igembe eat in the hotels”. By implication this assertion meant people earn money but do not save for they must eat in hotels. Since miraa was the dominant crop in Igembe people depended on money earned from it to provide food to their families. Once money was earned there were competing needs in the family including rent, clothing, medical, and food. The food needs were more often than not relegated as miraa money was budgeted in families. Children found it difficult to find food at home due to miraa and miraa trade. Children who were exposed to urban life early had suffered other ills more than malnutrition. In fact, they were easily recruited by miraa gangs who usually were violent.

4.4.5 Miraa cartels and gangs of violence

From the interviews (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 4f, IR47) respondent IR47 was categorical that “gangs have come up aligned to various miraa traders targeting rivals’ competitors”. This was a reference to cutthroat competition for miraa

commodity because sometimes it was scarce. The gangs were responsible for several things including vigilante groups, miraa theft, and outright violence.

First, vigilante groups were organized around miraa farms to protect them from marauding miraa thieves. The gangs keep watched over the farms and sometimes were responsible for the misconception held by other Meru clans that Igembe people cut others. The gangs would institute mob justice by cutting hands or limbs of perceived miraa thieves to teach them a lesson. The instrument used for cutting was locally known as ‘C-line’ a type of long knife (panga) well sharpened for the purpose.

Second, miraa theft was not too common due to the harsh punishments minted by the vigilante groups but it existed. In fact, IR49 was categorical that,

“miraa trade has increased crimes in the Igembe region due to high demand of miraa whereby a number of people have been caught stealing miraa” (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 4g, IR47).

In a lucrative business such as miraa such crimes were not uncommon and were a consequent effect of the Islamization of Igembe through miraa trade.

Third, miraa trade had been shrouded in an environment of violence. This was well captured during the study that,

VQ “Kuumania na itumi bitikumenyeka, biacara ya miraa niithaira ina ituma, matheta na kinya rimwe ndwaa iretaa gutemana na ikuo igita ria kutua, kubua, kwendia, kubanga na ukamati bwayo, mantu yaria yaretaa maamba yamaingi kotine cietu. Nkienderia uritani bwa muingi buthithwa kiri bonthe baria bari biacarene ii ikenda kuithira kuina ukiri/thiiri ki biacara ii iwatilite uturo bwa muiembe.”

BT "For reasons unknown, miraa business is done in a violent environment that at times result is fatal incidents. Many court cases were emanating from miraa businesses, either from the farms, vending, transporting, packing etc. I propose that civic education be carried by concerned bodies to bring sanity in this lucrative business that is the livelihood to the Igembe people and beyond" (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 4f, IR46).

Some miraa Association Officials claimed that there was a bad relationship between Muslims and Christians. The bad relationship had significantly led to conflicts, crime, and even death. The claim was verified by this study that violence was emanating from gangs, thieves, and rivalry between Muslims and Christians. IR48 encapsulated the rivalry between Christians and Muslims by saying,

“Violence between Christians and Muslims, specifically killings is a major blow to the success of miraa business. There have been clashes between Merus and Somalis because Somalis tend to monopolise miraa trade” (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 4f, IR48).

This violence contradicted the Muslims' teaching of peace and a way of life which embraced mercy and forgiveness. The bad relationship portrayed by the findings were akin to what Ibrahim (2017) referred to as Muslims assimilation stage accompanied by imposition and suppression of the host society. The findings were further in agreement with a report by Corcoran (2015) that said violence may have been fed by older disputes about the treatment of ethnic Somalis. The findings also agree with the report made by Amnesty International (2005) that due monopoly of miraa trade by Somali Muslims and the marginalization of the Igembe farmers this scenario had led to clashes and even killings of people.

Key among the challenges observed had been conflicts arising from disagreements in sharing miraa as a scant resource. Business rivalry and disgruntled Miraa dealers largely between the Merus and Somalis have been the source of several incidences. One such incident of conflict was cited (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 4f, IR48) to have happened at Kaciongo market centre in 2012 where an altercation between the Meru and Somali Miraa dealers left one person dead and scores injured. The incident was said to have happened during packaging of the miraa product in the pick-up trucks.

Other sources of violent death were the transportation of miraa by road or air. The need to transport miraa to markets as promptly as possible, so that the produce arrives on time and fresh, leads to those transporting them in vehicles to drive at dangerous speeds. Usually the vehicles were over-loaded, poorly maintained, and driven at terrific speeds on poorly maintained roads often with fatal results. Transportation of miraa both locally and internationally had remained a challenge to the miraa traders. Fatalities had occurred whilst miraa had been transported by air. For example, in May 2004 a plane flying from Nairobi, Kenya, to Mogadishu, Somalia, carrying 55 bags of miraa crashed in an open field in Kenya killing the two occupants. In August 2008, another aircraft with 5.4 tons of miraa from Kenya to Mogadishu struck a telecommunications antenna during bad weather. It crashed killing all three crewmembers. All the violence created by gangs, thieves, and violent calamities create economic and social crises. In fact, the psychosocial effects were evident in the community as a sure proof that Islamization of Igembe people through miraa trade ostensibly took place.

4.4.6 Adoption of Muslim culture in Igembe

From the analysis conducted in section 4.2 and 4.3 it became evident that Igembe people have accepted Muslims and their religion Islam as part of their society. Muslims came not in violence but through infiltration, immigration, and trade. With time they had spread their religious beliefs (section 4.1.3) and increased their population index (section 4.1.2). The Igembe people on the other hand had not influenced the Muslims in any way to adopt their native lifestyle apart from practising miraa farming.

Igembe people have passively reacted to the settlement of Somali Muslims in Igembe region with acceptance. Igembe people who also had accepted Christianity without a problem likewise had accommodated the Muslim practices. Sometimes the Somali culture had been mistaken for Islamic practices but there was no major dichotomy between the two.

Adoption of the Muslim culture by Igembe people had been accepted by some residents. For instance, 66% of the respondents (Appendix 2 (A) Sample 1) had accepted the Muslim dressing particularly the men who wore caps and kanzu. Further, in the same sample 65.6% of residents had accepted Islamic names and some had already named their children Muslim names like Halima or Yusuf. 60.4% of respondents (Appendix 2 (A) Sample 2) did not see anything wrong with intermarriages between Muslim men and local Igembe women. The evidence provided here was sufficient to conclude that Islamization of Igembe people helped the local people to adopt the Muslim culture.

4.4.7 Effects of Islamization on other religions

The native Igembe traditional religion had dwindled considerably by the time of this study. Fewer older men and women followed it and they belonged to Njuri Ncheke (Council of Elders) or Ithungi (top women initiation group). Njuri was the traditional religion custodian because as Orina (2018) asserted in her doctoral research and supported by Bosco (2014) in Africa there was no dichotomy between sacred and secular. Islamization indeed affected the traditional Igembe religious beliefs and practices because it proclaimed only one God who was Allah while Igembe traditional religion had many names for God a factor sometimes mistaken for many gods. A more poignant observation was by IR 52 who said,

“the Igembe culture has been eroded in a large way. This entails people going to shrines to perform rites for sacrifices, initiation rites, and marriage among others” (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 4h, IR52)

Christians have been affected by Islamization of Igembe people through miraa trade as IR50 observed,

“through miraa trade some have changed from being Christians to Muslims in order to acquire jobs” (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 3, IR21).

Conversion of Christians to Islam has also been acknowledged by IR14 that,

“through miraa trade Somalis have converted most of the Igembe people from being Christians to muslims. Through miraa trade Somalis have made the Igembe people to abandon most of their cultural activities which were condemned by the Somalis” (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 3, IR14).

Some of the Christians have also abandoned Sunday worship and regularly attend mosque worship according to IR12. The inter-religious fashion in which Igembe

people moved from one religion to another was supported by Deming (2015) who averred that religious experience was fluid when it comes to religious fidelity.

Some like IR51 celebrate the coming of Islam to Igembe saying,

“by getting into a new religion is as good as a rest. So this religion has come with it may goodies: employment, alleviating poverty, market for miraa, many developments in the area” (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 4h, IR50).

This respondent was not alone in the admiration of Islam. Through inter-religious dialogue Hedges (2010) and IR10 went on to explain that once a person interacted with the Muslims they tend to like Islam more. IR10 further said,

VQ “Ii ima kuitanira biacara na Aicilamu ikutumite Aembe babaingi bakucua na kuendera mikarire/miturire yoo. Buu ibutumite bamwe bao bagalula dini na kuaa Aicilamu”

BT “Yes, it is true that miraa trade has led to spread of Islam as when you interact with Muslim miraa traders, you tend to love their religion and their way of life and eventually one converts very easily” (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 3, IR10).

The celebration of Islamic festivals had a great effect on the Igembe people as IR51 confirms,

“establishment of Islamic festivals in the region which has greatly influenced the residents to envy and adopt the Islamic religion” (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 4h, IR51).

With the data collected, analysed, and interpreted in view of the study objectives, questions, methods, and literature reviewed, the findings generally showed that indeed Islamization through miraa trade had taken place among the Igembe people.

Islam had pervaded the Igembe people to the extent of being spread both in the urban and rural areas where miraa was grown. Miraa was found to be a major important cultural crop among the Igembe people and that miraa had made substantial contribution to the Islamization of Igembe people. The effects of that Islamization were found to be largely negative among Igembe people but also there were positive effects because it became a main catalyst for the growth and development of towns as miraa processing centres.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

The results and discussion (Chapter four) of the collected data were done in line with the four study objectives (section 1.3) and a relationship established on how both the objectives and the questions helped to adequately address the topic of the study which was ‘a critical analysis on the effects of Islamization of Igembe people through miraa trade in Meru County Kenya’.

The discussion of the findings connected the data of the study to the literature reviewed. It was discovered that there were gaps in terms of the previous research done on the nexus between miraa trade and Islamization of Igembe people which this study sought to fill. It was also found out that there was no one comprehensive theory that explained what the twin factors of miraa trade and Islam combined had done to Igembe people. After data collection and analysis, the study (section 4.3) comprehended that miraa trade contributed to the Islamization of Igembe people in a big way and that a theory known as ‘Islamization through miraa trade’ (section 2.5.5) sufficiently explained the phenomenon.

This chapter presented the summary of the study, considered the conclusions reached during the discussion of the findings and finally made five recommendations for action by relevant stakeholders that this study could not address due to its scope.

5.1 Summary

The study background provided a brief account on the early beginnings of Islam and its rudimentary practices on trade and Islamization of the people where the religion was spread. It further indicated how Igembe people had embraced the concept of miraa trade resulting in serious negative effects brought by Islamization. These effects of Islamization through miraa trade were well addressed by the study problem that in a nutshell was seeking to explain how the phenomenon of Islamization through miraa trade worked. A part from the introduction providing justification, scope, limitation, delimitation, and key terms used in the study it also provided the topic of the study.

Literature was reviewed to offer an overview of Islam as a religion and its spread from Mecca and Medina. The key scholars who contributed to the theoretical framework included (Bunger, 1972; Knight, 1921, & Lee, 1966). The literature on Islam and how it permeated society was informed by the desire by initial Muslim leaders to spread the religion. The main scholars who provided insight into this occurrence included (Roff, 2014; Alatas, 1985; Ibrahim, 2017; Ndzovu, 2014); Karimi, 2013; Robinson, 2014 & Becker, 2014). Literature was reviewed on the Igembe people and the cultural importance of miraa crop. On this literature the key scholars included (Nkirote, 1995; Orina, 2018; Carrier, 2007; Mwenda et al., 2003; & Kathata, 2017). Further, literature was reviewed on the state of miraa trade and the Islamization thereof. Scholars who provide insight into these crucial variables of the study included (Baariu, 2013; Mailutha and Kikechi, 2014; Kikechi, 2014; Bat Ye'or 1996 & Mason 2014). The chapter concluded with providing a theoretical and a conceptual framework that guided the study.

On methodology the study considered designs and methods that were mostly qualitative although supplemented by quantitative ones resulting in triangulation of methods and techniques. The study was situated in Igembe of Meru County. Sampling included selection of the Sample population, determining the sampling techniques such as random and purposive techniques. Each technique used a procedure that was explained to ensure clarity on the practice of data collection. Data collection used instruments such as questionnaires and interview schedules. Methods for data collection which included content, narrative, and descriptive analysis were explained in advance. Before data collection potential ethical issues were considered and confidentiality, anonymity, and respect for the human subjects addressed.

Once data was collected the results were discussed in reference to the study objectives, questions, and literature reviewed. The first objective of the study was to determine the extent of the spread of Islam among the Igembe people which the study confirmed indeed Islam had spread in the entire Igembe region. The evidence to prove Islam had spread was shown by some Igembe residents changing their names and adopting the Islamic names, adopting Muslim dressing code, attending prayers in Mosques, and taking part in Muslim festivals among others. Data presentation, analysis, and interpretation was conducted in such a way as to provide research findings that confirmed the importance of miraa among the Igembe people, highlighted the contribution of miraa trade to the Islamization of Igembe people, and indicated the dire effects of Islamization of Igembe people through miraa trade.

Lastly the study provided a summary of the research and highlighted the key findings of the study as a way of concluding the study. The major conclusions were that the study problem was addressed by providing a ground-breaking research that

connected miraa trade to the Islamization of Igembe people and at the same time providing a comprehensive new theory known as ‘Islamization through miraa trade’ to explain fully the phenomenon of what Islam and miraa trade had done to Igembe people.

5.2 Conclusions

The main purpose of this study was to critically analyse the effects of Islamization of Igembe people through miraa trade in Meru County. In order to undertake the study four objectives and the same number of questions were created. In the following paragraphs the study made conclusion on the findings for each one of them.

For the first objective the study reached the conclusion that indeed Islam had spread all over Igembe region with physical infrastructure such as the mosques and madrassa schools established. The study also concluded that Muslims particularly of Somali descent were the ones who had brought and spread Islam. The study determined that Islamic presence in Igembe was evidenced by the adoption of Muslim dressing, attendance of regular prayers and Muslims buying or renting land for settlement. Many business premises in major shopping Centres were owned by Islamic adherents a sure sign that Islam had already taken root. Those businesses had employees who included miraa dealers, pluckers, farmers, vendors, and loaders. The study concluded that employment of Igembe people in Muslim businesses was a clear indicator that Islam had reached many Igembe people who in most cases had converted to Islam to comply with the Muslim requirements for employment.

Multiple players had joined the fray and became part of owners by leasing of miraa plantations and those who came into ownership through birthright did not explain

whether the Muslims of Somali ethnicity were also involved. One would possibly ask how the commercialization of miraa led to the Islamization especially in the Igembe region. Through the findings of this study, it concluded that Muslims of Somali ethnicity had penetrated through the Igembe region due to miraa trade, leased land, owned other businesses, and even settled in the area thereby supporting the theme of Islamization. In addition, examining the spread of Islam religion within Igembe people in Meru County, the study found that the major employees in miraa business were a mixture of Somali people and Igembe people. The statement by Kikechi (2014) that miraa production had a huge influence on the rural economy where it had kept vibrant the agricultural subsector by employing large numbers of people did not examine how Islamization was portrayed from the business. Through this study, the realization of many Muslims with Somali ethnicity involvement in the miraa business had shown how the miraa trade brought Islamization to the Igembe region.

On objective two, the study examined whether there were Muslim students/pupils where the respondents lived. The findings conformed with the study by Aden et al. (2006) that Mosques were erected at Maua, Kiengu, Karama, Kangeta and Muthara hence the presence of Muslim adherents who included school going children. Similarly, there were many business premises set up, and their owners were Islamic devotees, likewise in the local primary and secondary schools, there had been a surge in the numbers of Muslim school children enrolled.

The findings revealed that the majority of the conversion happened through attending the Mosques. The study findings were pertinent with observations made by Panikkar (1977) that prayers and evangelizing meetings were held regularly at shopping centres freely with strong overhead public address system. There was an

encroachment of Christian dominated territories by the Muslim clerics who were trying to Islamize the region. Further pointers were that Muslim dressing attires were slowly sneaking into the residents of Igembe. The author also observed that some of the residents were slowly adapting to this dressing code and with some changing their names to Muslim names.

This study also sought to examine who introduced Islam in Igembe region. The findings showed that most respondents believed that Islam was introduced in Igembe by Somalis but not Asians. Nzibo (1986) suggested that Mahaji arrived in Nairobi and settled bringing a new aspect to the Muslim in the relations in the region with a new outlook Muslim triad of Islam spreaders. These trading centers offered prospects for miraa businesses and the strength of Asians in spreading Islam while doing business in those trading centers could not be underestimated. On the second objective which was to establish the cultural importance of miraa among the Igembe people, study concluded that miraa was synonymous with Igembe people as their emblem, cash crop, trading material, and cultural symbol used for marriage proposal and request for boy initiation mentorship.

The study also established that miraa among the Igembe people was traditionally used for social and cultural purposes but after the coming of the Muslims there was commercialisation of miraa. It was further concluded that miraa was an emblem of Igembe as well as a symbol of identity linked to their traditions and history. Miraa was a crop associated with Igembe heritage. Miraa had been used as a cultural symbol of honour during marriage proposals. It was resolved that in preparation for circumcision, miraa was valued because the candidate of initiation would give the bundle to the man of his choice who would serve as his guardian father during the

seclusion period. The study established the fact that when miraa was used as a pastime, it was older men and not young people who were allowed to chew. It was also concluded that miraa had some chemical properties that some like NACADA (2007) and WHO cast aspersions as for its addictive nature while people in Igembe claimed it had curative properties for common ailments.

The third objective sought to find out the contribution of miraa trade to the Islamization of Igembe people the study established indeed miraa trade had a lot to do with the Islamization of Igembe people. The study determined that there were positive and negative contributions to the entrenchment of Islam in Igembe. Positive contributions were evident in employment creation and enabling Igembe people to do business which helped some to convert to Islam. The study confirmed and concurred with Kithumbu (2013) that Muslims of the Somali ethnicity had bought or leased land and settled in Igembe thus bringing out diversity of communities together and becoming a catalyst for Islamization of the native people. Many of Igembe people were converting to Islam through intermarriages where relationships were created on the processes of miraa trade.

The study concluded that Muslims were converting Christians and people who belonged to traditional religion so that they can be employed in miraa trade but Muslims were not being converted to any other religion despite the fact that majority of miraa handlers were found to be Christians. This factor makes proselytization for the Muslims more poignant.

The fourth objective which was on the effects of Islamization of Igembe people through miraa trade, the study concluded that there were both positive and negative

effects of Islamization through miraa trade. Positive contributions were evidenced in employment creation and creation of new business opportunities. Negative effects were evidenced by the dominance of Muslims in the miraa trade. The negative effects were slowly eroding the native Igembe culture and religious milieu. The study conclusion was that social evils such as child labour in miraa farms, school dropout, and truancy were main effects felt in every homestead and school. It was further concluded that there was a lot of violence and deaths arising from miraa trade rivalry and recklessness for miraa handlers.

5.3 Recommendations

Arising from the findings of this study data collected and analysed provided evidence that Muslims particularly of Somali descent had arrived in Igembe region more than twenty-five years ago. Although they have successfully been able to convert others to Islam there was no evidence that any of them was either converted to Christianity or to Igembe traditional religion represented by the Njuri Ncheke. The study generally recommended that all relevant stakeholders (County Government, Njuri Ncheke, and miraa associations) to take necessary action to delink miraa trade from Islamization and to enforce existing miraa regulations to mitigate undesirable effects.

In addition, several pertinent questions have arisen from the findings whose answers form part of the recommendations of the study. The first query that came to fore was did Somali Muslims convert from Islam to Christianity or to Igembe traditional religion? Further, data suggested that miraa was very important to Igembe people and many of them ascribed healing of different ailments to miraa. The second question was, did miraa possess healing properties as claimed? Finally, the Islamization of

Igembe people through miraa trade had many negative effects. Some of the effects directly affected children. The third question was, did Muslim children also suffer school dropout, truancy, malnutrition, and violence arising from effects of Islamization through miraa trade? Since the answers to these questions lay outside the scope of the study, recommendations for future research or to relevant stakeholders were deemed to be satisfactory.

The first recommendation arising from this study was for researchers to find out whether any Muslim was ever converted from Islam to Christianity or to Igembe traditional religion just like data collected and analysed suggested that Christians and Igembe people who believed in traditional religion converted to Islam through miraa trade. There was evidence that conversion to Islam due to miraa trade had taken place. For instance, IR10 when interviewed declared, “when you interact with Muslim miraa traders, you tend to love their religion and their way of life, and eventually one converts very easily” (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 3, IR10). This respondent conjectured that those who converted to Islam interact with Muslims who were miraa traders. Out of such interaction Igembe people were converted to Islam.

In addition, the Muslim miraa traders made their religion admirable to their customers. Eventually those customers liked the way Muslim live and easily converted to Islam. Another respondent IR12 went further to suggest that “through miraa trade most of the Igembe people have been transformed to Muslims whereby they have abandoned going to Churches on Sundays and starting to attend Mosques services on Fridays” (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 3, IR12). This data was revealing that conversion to Islam from Christianity had taken place and was proved by converts attending Friday Muslim prayers and the abandonment of Christian Sunday services.

As a religious research this study was inquisitive to understand if any Muslim who conducted miraa business or who worked for non-Muslims in the miraa industry ever converted either to Christianity or to Igembe traditional religion. The scope of this study was beyond such investigation. Therefore, it was recommended that future research can investigate if there were Muslims who converted to Christianity or traditional Igembe religion due to miraa trade.

The second recommendation was on whether indeed miraa had healing properties or those who claimed that it had were just holding on to their religious beliefs without scientific proof. The findings revealed that miraa was thought by respondents to have healing properties against common diseases. For example, IR8 said, “miraa has medicinal value as it has been used to treat diarrhoea, fatigue, and acidic stomach aches” (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 3, IR12). Respondent IR8 names diarrhoea, fatigue and stomach acid as some of the illnesses that miraa was believed to cure. Others like IR9 added, “miraa has been used as a remedy of dry cough. miraa has been used as anti-fatigue” (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 3, IR12). Treatment of common ailments such as fatigue, diarrhoea, cough, and stomach aches were medical issues of concern.

However, although healing was expected to be an aspect of medical treatment it also had religious ramifications of faith. Some respondents believed that miraa had healing properties. Not that they had conducted research or there was published research but their confidence that miraa had healing properties was based on belief. Due to the importance of miraa among the Igembe community this study recommended future studies to investigate the claim that Miraa heals diseases.

The third recommendation was that relevant stakeholders or future studies to investigate whether indeed Muslim children also suffered school dropout, malnutrition, and truancy due to Islamization through miraa trade. The study (section 4.4) revealed that Islamization through miraa trade had negative effects on Igembe children. Data (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 3, IR37, IR35) showed that children of Igembe people dropped out of school, had truancy, and often suffered malnutrition mainly because they were used as child labour due to Islamization through miraa trade. IR35 more specifically suggested that miraa trade “has increased the number of school dropouts whereby the small boys in Igembe leave their studies in order to work in the miraa farms” (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 3, IR35). Indeed, children particularly boys were susceptible to child labour and drop out of school. More concerning was the candid confession by IR40 that Islamization through miraa trade had “led to child labour whereby children have been forced to work in the miraa farms at their tender age” Appendix 2 (B) Sample 3, IR40). An insightful comment from IR36 was that “through miraa trade Muslims were able to establish their own schools whereby they have involved the Igembe children to access their education” Appendix 2 (B) Sample 3, IR40).

The Muslims took the action to start Islamic schools to take care of their children. Respondent IR37 was categorical to establish a nexus between Islamization and child labour, school dropout, and violence saying that, “Islamization through miraa trade has led to child labour. It has increased the school dropout rate. When miraa had been used together with alcohol it may have led to violence” (Appendix 2 (B) Sample 3, IR37). The respondent IR37 talked of child labour in miraa business but more importantly linked these negative effects on children to Islamization. It would

be important to know if Muslim children whose parents generally work in the miraa industry suffer similar effects to those experienced by children of Igembe people. Therefore, this study recommended further investigation on whether Muslim children also were involved in child labour in miraa business, if they have school dropout, and truancy problems arising from Islamization through miraa trade.

The fourth recommendation was that relevant government agencies particularly the security agencies and provincial administration to take necessary action to get rid of violent gangs and cartels which mainly arose due to Islamization of miraa trade. There were many negative effects associated to Islamization through miraa trade but this study wish to highlight violence that was said to be widespread due to Islamization of miraa trade. IR46 indicated that violence pervaded all areas of miraa trade including farms, vending, packaging, and transportation which were mostly controlled by Somali Muslims. The respondent said,

VQ “Kuumania na itumi bitikumenyeka, biacara ya miraa niithaira ina ituma, matheta na kinya rimwe ndwaa iretaa gutemana na ikuo igita ria kutua, kubua, kwendia, kubanga na ukamati bwayo, mantu yaria yaretaa maamba yamaingi kotine cietu. Nkienderia uritani bwa muingi buthithwa kiri bonthe baria bari biacarene ii ikenda kuithira kuina ukiruu/thiiri ki biacara ii iwatilite uturo bwa muiembe.”

BT "For reasons unknown, miraa business is done in a violent environment that at times result in fatal incidents. Many court cases were emanating from miraa businesses, either from the farms, vending, transporting, packing etc. I propose that civic education be carried by concerned bodies to bring sanity in

this lucrative business that is the livelihood to the Igembe people and beyond” Appendix 2 (B) Sample 3, IR46).

From the data provided by IR46 violence created an environment that made miraa business dangerous sometimes cases ending up in court. In addition, it was reported that, “gangs have come up aligned to various miraa traders targeting rivals’ competitors” Appendix 2 (B) Sample 3, IR47) witness in this Sample brought out one of the main concerns of Igembe people that miraa trade was now controlled by rival gangs.

Other times violence was between Christians and Muslims that brought religious animosities to the open in Igembe. IR48 confirmed by saying, “Violence between Christians and Muslims, specifically killings is a major blow to the success of miraa business. There have been clashes between Merus and Somalis because Somalis tend to monopolise miraa trade” Appendix 2 (B) Sample 3, IR48). This study recommended the relevant government agencies to investigate and provide viable interventions that will restore peaceful work environment in the miraa trade chain and to avert religious acrimony.

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6.0 Appendices

6.1 Appendix 1: Research Tools

6.1.1 Appendix 1 (A): Questionnaires

SECTION 1: Instructions for both closed-ended and open-ended questionnaires

Dear Respondent,

1. Please provide information on the following topics by ticking the preferred box in all Sections.
2. Your honest answers to the following questions will greatly enhance the quality of this research.
3. Your responses will be kept confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this study. Your co-operation is highly appreciated.

SECTION 2: Personal information of the respondent

1. Tick your age range in years

Below18 []

18-27 []

28-37 []

38-47 []

48-57 []

Above 58 []

2. Tick your gender

Male [] Female []

3. Tick your place of birth

Meru []

North Eastern region []

Other region []

Specify.....

4. Tick your religion

Christian []

Muslim []

Traditional religion []

Others (Please specify)

5. For how long have you been in the religion you have answered to above?

From birth []

Less than year []

1-5 years []

5-10 years []

>10 years []

6. Have you ever changed religious affiliations in your lifetime? Yes [] No []

If 'yes' indicate when.....

Indicate the religion you moved from..... to the one you moved to.....

Explain why?

.....

7. Tick your highest level of education

Primary school []

High school []

College []

None []

Others (specify).....

8. Indicate the activities you engage in, in the miraa business (tick all that apply)

- Farmer
- Transporter
- Vendor
- Plucker
- Driver
- Loader
- Clerk
- Packager
- Packaging material seller
- Miraa traders association official
- Others (Specify)

9. Tick your Nationality

- Kenyan
- Somali
- Others

If Kenyan, indicate your ethnic affiliation.....

SECTION 3: Spread of Islam

To what extent do you agree with the following statements on spread of Islam at Igembe in Meru County of 1- 5? (1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3- moderate 4-agree, 5-strongly agree)

		1	2	3	4	5
1	Dressing mode has changed and many locals are now wearing the Muslim clothing's					
2	Locals in Igembe in Meru County are changing their names					

	and adopting the Islamic names					
3	Locals attend prayers at the established Mosques and also take part in Muslim festivals					
4	Majority of locals in Igembe are employed in Muslim owned businesses and which leads them to denounce their faith					
5	There are madrassa classes whereby the local children also attend					
6	There is the establishment of Islamic banking Igembe in Meru County					
7	The number of Mosques had been increasing in Igembe region which had previously been considered a predominantly Christian area					
8	Many business premises in major shopping centers are owned by Islamic adherents					
9	There had been a surge in the Muslim school children enrolment in primary and secondary schools within Maua town					
10	In Igembe region there are young people who had converted to Islam					

SECTION 4: Islam and trade

To what extent do you agree with the following statements on Trade and Islam in Igembe, Meru County of 1- 5? (1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-moderate 4-agree, 5-strongly agree)

		1	2	3	4	5
11	Muslims of the Somali ethnicity have bought land and settled in Igembe					
12	Muslims are now dominating the miraa business in Igembe					
13	Miraa business interests by the Somali Muslims in Igembe					

	had contributed greatly to their settlement in the region					
14	Government regulations guiding the working conditions had favoured the Muslims than the natives, which made more non-Muslim traders to convert in order to have better trading conditions					
15	Muslim traders usually had oppressing contractual arrangements with the Igembe farmers to secure miraa supplies					
16	Distribution of miraa in the International markets was normally controlled by people of Somali origin					
17	The dominance of people of Somali origin in the miraa business had created tension, as Igembe people consider themselves exploited by the Somali traders' network					
18	The relationship between Christians and Muslims were the miraa business was not good and might led to unending conflict in future					

SECTION 5: Islamization of Igembe people

To what extent do you agree with the following statements on Islamization of native people in Igembe, Meru County of 1- 5? (1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-moderate 4-agree, 5-strongly agree)

		1	2	3	4	5
19	Muslims were using miraa trade to make new converts to Islam					
20	Muslim merchants working together with their Muslim converts had helped traders to gain customers who help them to expand their businesses					
21	Mingling with Muslims during the miraa business had resulted to conversion of non-Muslims to Islam					

22	Social links especially due to inter-marriages between the Somalis and the Igembe people had led to a diffusion of social customs and loss of Igembe culture					
23	There were notable changes of eating habits and some Igembe people were now enjoying Muslim inclined delicacies					

SECTION 6: Cultural importance of miraa

To what extent do you agree with the following statements on cultural significance of miraa at Igembe in Meru county of 1- 5? (1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-moderate 4-agree, 5-strongly agree)

		1	2	3	4	5
25	Miraa is a diacritical marker of Igembe identity, intimately linked to their traditions and history					
26	Miraa is a crop associated with Igembe heritage and now it is respected globally					
27	Some people associate miraa with violence, while others associate it with peace, comparing chewing of miraa with alcoholic drinking sessions and finding the latter had more potential for violence					
28	Some people associate miraa with child labour, while others see it as the source of income with which to educate children					
29	Miraa had been used as a cultural symbol during marriages and dowry payments by people of Igembe					
30	Culturally, miraa was considered to have had medicinal value such as anti-fatigue, anti-diarrhea, remedy for dry cough etc.					

SECTION 7: Effects of Islamization on Igembe people through miraa trade

To what extent do you agree with the following statements on effects of Islamization at Igembe in Meru County of 1- 5? (1strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-moderate 4-agree, 5-strongly agree)

		1	2	3	4	5
32	Some miraa farmers in Igembe region had leased out their farms for long periods; sometimes on informal or on unfavorable terms which often led to family conflicts and inability to redeem them back					
32	The Islamization of people of Igembe was slowly eroding the natives' culture					
33	The miraa business had influenced child labour and school dropout in miraa growing areas					
34	The primary producers of miraa still lived under extreme poverty conditions occasioned by a vicious cycle of non-business-oriented farming and markets dominated by brokers					
35	The Somali miraa traders' dominance had created tension, where some Igembe people consider themselves intimidated by their Somali miraa traders' counterparts' business networks					
36	Gang deaths related to the trade in miraa had occasionally been reported in Igembe					

SECTION 8: Interview of Miraa Traders' Association Officials

1. How long have you been a member of miraa traders' association?

- Less than a year []
- 1-5 years []
- 6-10 years []
- above 10 years []

2. How long have you been an official of Miraa Traders Association?

- Less than a year []
- 1-5 years []
- 6-10 years []
- above 10 years []

3. How many association members are?

- Christians []
- Muslims []
- Traditionalists []
- Others []

4. How many association officials are?

- Christians []
- Muslims []
- Traditionalists []
- Others []

5. Using the Likert scale in which, 1= to no extent, 2= to less extent, 3= to some extent, 4= to great extent, 5= to greater extent, what can you say about the growth of Christianity, Islam and the indigenous religions in Igembe over the last 10 years?

Religion	to no extent (1)	to less extent (2)	to some extent (3)	to great extent (4)	to greater extent (5)
Christianity					
Islam					
Indigenous					

6. Who are the main players in miraa business in terms of:

- (i) Miraa
production.....
- (ii) Transportation.....
.....
- (iii) Exportation.....
.....
- (iv) Marketing both locally and outside Meru County but within the
country.....

7. Briefly explain the role of miraa traders' association in the whole management of miraa business

.....

8. In your view, has miraa business contributed to the increase of Muslim adherents in Igembe region?

Yes []

No []

Briefly

explain.....

9. Has miraa business in any way contributed to the Igembe people converting into Islam?

Yes []

No []

Briefly

explain.....

10. Has Islam presence contributed positively into the lives of the Igembe people?

Yes []

No []

Briefly

explain.....

11. Has Islam presence contributed negatively into the lives of the Igembe people?

Yes []

No []

Briefly

explain.....

Thank you for your participation

6.1.2 Appendix 1 (B): Interview Schedule Questions

- 1.** In your Opinion how much has the spread of Islam penetrated Igembe region?
- 2.** What is the cultural importance of miraa to Igembe people?
- 3.** How has miraa trade contributed to the Islamization of Igembe people?
- 4.** What are the positive effects of Islamization of Igembe people through miraa trade?
- 5.** What are the negative effects of Islamization of Igembe people through miraa trade?
- 6.** What can be done to minimize the negative effects of Islamization through miraa trade?

6.2 Appendix 2: Data samples for analysis

6.2.1 Appendix 2 (A): Quantitative and Qualitative Data Samples from Questionnaires

Sample 1: Data on extent of the spread of Islam in Igembe

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Moderate	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std Dev
Dressing mode had changed and many locals are now wearing the Muslim clothing's	0%	9 3.3%	0%	180 66.7%	81 30.0%	4.23	0.6 2
Locals in Igembe in Meru County are changing their names and adopting the Islamic names	0%	7 2.6%	0%	177 65.6%	86 31.9%	4.27	0.5 9
Locals attend prayers at the established Mosques and also take part in Muslim festivals	0%	6 2.2%	0%	176 65.2%	88 36.6%	4.28	0.5 8
Majority of locals in Igembe are employed in Muslim owned businesses and which leads them to denounce their faith	0%	4 1.5%	47 17.4%	194 71.9%	25 9.3%	3.89	0.5 6
There are madrassa classes whereby the local children also	0%	1 0.4%	46 1%	166 61.5%	57 21.1%	4.03	0.6 3

attend							
There was the establishment of Islamic banking Igembe in Meru County	0%	4 1.5%	53 19.6%	164 60.7%	49 18.1%	3.96	0.6 6
The number of Mosques had been increasing in Igembe region which had previously been considered a predominantly Christian area	0%	0%	56 20.7%	161 59.6%	53 19.6%	3.99	0.6 4
Many business premises in major shopping centres are owned by Islamic adherents	0%	0%	68 25.2%	179 66.3%	23 8.5%	3.83	0.5 6
There had been a surge in the Muslim school children enrolment in primary and secondary schools within Maua town	0%	0%	40 14.8%	196 72.6%	34 12.6%	3.98	0.5 2
In Igembe region there are young people who have converted to Islam	0%	10.4 %	46 17.0%	201 74.4%	22 8.1%	3.90	0.5 1

Sample 2: Data on the cultural Importance of miraa among Igembe people

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Moderate	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std Dev
Miraa is a symbolic marker of Igembe identity, intimately linked to their traditions and history	0%	11 4.1%	59 21.9%	200 74.1%	0%	3.70	0.54
Miraa is a crop associated with Igembe heritage and now it is respected globally	0%	1 0.4%	72 26.7%	152 56.3%	45 16.7%	3.89	0.66
Some people associate miraa with violence, while others associate it with peace, comparing chewing of miraa with alcoholic drinking sessions and finding the latter have more potential for violence	0%	3 1.1%	00%	211 78.1%	56 20.7%	4.19	0.47
Some people associate miraa with child labour, while others see it as the source of	0%	3 1.1%	16 5.9%	195 72.2%	56 20.7%	4.13	0.54

income with which to educate children									
Miraa had been used as a cultural symbol during marriages and dowry payments by people of Igembe	0%	3	72	161	34			3.84	0.64
		1.1%	26.7%	59.6%	12.6%				
Culturally, miraa was considered to have medicinal value such as anti-fatigue, anti-diarrhoea, remedy for dry cough etc.	0%	0%	0%	164	106			4.39	0.49
				60.7%	39.3%				

Sample 3: Data on the Islamization Igembe people through miraa trade

Statements		Strongly	Disagree	Disagree	Moderate	Agree	Strongly	Mean	Std Dev
		Disagree	Disagree	Moderate	Agree	Strongly			
Muslims are using miraa trade to make new converts to Islam	0%	4	24	157	85			4.20	0.65
		1.5%	8.9%	58.1%	31.5%				
Muslim merchants working together with their Muslim converts have helped traders to gain	0%	4	29	200	37			4.00	0.55
		1.5%	10.7%	74.1%	13.7%				

customers who help them to expand their businesses							
Mingling with Muslims during the miraa business had resulted to conversion of Non-Muslims to Islam	0%	0%	29 10.7%	143 53.0%	98 36.3%	4.26	0.64
Social links especially due to inter-marriages between the Somalis and the Igembe people had led to a diffusion of social customs and loss of Igembe culture	0%	5 1.9%	39 14.4%	163 60.4%	63 23.3%	4.05	0.67
There were notable changes of eating habits and some Igembe people were now enjoying Muslim inclined delicacies	(0%)	11 4.1%	0%	208 77.0%	51 18.9%	4.11	0.58

Sample 4 (i): Data on the effects of Islamization of Igembe people through miraa trade

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Moderate	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std Dev
Some miraa farmers in Igembe	0%	0%	0%	151	119	4.44	0.50

region had leased out their farms for long periods; sometimes on informal or on unfavourable terms which often led to family conflicts and inability to redeem them back.			55.9%	44.1%		
The Islamization of people of Igembe was slowly eroding the natives' culture	0%	0%	22 8.1%	173 64.1%	75 27.8%	4.20 0.57
The miraa business had influenced child labour and school dropout in miraa growing areas	0%	3 1.1%	38 14.1%	196 72.6%	33 12.2%	3.96 0.55
The primary producers of miraa still lived under extreme poverty conditions occasioned by a vicious cycle of non-business-oriented farming and markets dominated by brokers	0%	3 1.1%	21 7.8%	187 69.3%	59 21.9%	4.12 0.57
The Somali miraa trader's dominance had created tension, where some Igembe people consider themselves intimidated by their Somali miraa traders' counterparts' business networks	0%	3 1.1%	0 0%	195 72.2%	72 26.7%	4.24 0.50
gang deaths related to the trade in miraa had occasionally been reported in Igembe	0%	18 6.7%	19 7.9%	178 65.9%	55 20.4%	4.00 0.74

Sample 4 (ii): Data on the effects of Islamization of Igembe people through miraa trade

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Moderate	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std Dev	
Muslims of the Somali ethnicity had bought land and settled in Igembe	0%	46 17.0%	171 63.3%	53 19.6%	4.03	0.61	
Muslims were now dominating the miraa business in Igembe	0%	63 23.3%	175 64.8%	35 11.9%	3.89	0.58	
Miraa business interests by the Somali Muslims in Igembe had contributed greatly to their settlement in the region	0%	58 21.5%	192 70.4%	22 8.1%	3.87	0.53	
Government regulations guiding the working conditions had favoured the Muslims than the natives, which made more non-Muslim traders to convert in order to have better trading conditions	0%	3 1.1%	31 11.5%	162 60%	74 27.4%	4.14	0.65
Muslim traders usually had oppressing contractual arrangements with the Igembe farmers to secure miraa supplies	0%	5 1.9%	0 0%	177 65.6%	88 32.6%	4.29	0.56
Distribution of miraa in the International markets was normally controlled by people of	0%	2 0.7%	43 15.9%	192 71.1%	33 12.2%	3.95	0.56

Somali origin							
The dominance of people of Somali origin in the miraa business has created tension, as Igembe people consider themselves exploited by the Somali traders' network	0%	6	78	162	24		
		2.2%	28.9%	60%	8.9%	3.76	0.64
The relationship between Christians and Muslims was the miraa business was not good and may lead to unending conflict in future	0%	0%	45	129	96		
			16.7%	47.8%	35.6%	4.19	0.70

Sample 5: Data on miraa trade activities

Economic Activities	Frequency	Percentage
Farmer	117	46
Transporter	117	46
Vendor	173	69
Plucker	195	77
Driver	71	28
Loader	127	51
Clerk	96	38
Packager	104	41
Packaging material seller	124	49
Miraa traders' association official	118	47

Sample 6: Membership period in MTA

Membership Period	Frequency	Percentage
1-5 years	3	23
6-10 years	4	31
Above 10 years	6	46
Total	13	100

Sample 7: Religious faith with MTA members

Religion	Frequency	Percentage
How many association members are Christians	4	31
Muslims	9	69
Total	252	100

Sample 8: Data on nationality of Igembe residents

Nationality	Frequency	Percentage
Kenyan	171	68
Somali	81	32
Total	252	100

Sample 9: Data on the distribution of Respondents by Age Groups

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Below18 years	45	18
18-27 years	90	36
28-37 years	72	29
38-47 years	29	12
48-57 years	9	4
Above 58 years	7	1
Total	252	100

Sample 10: Data on the distribution of respondents by Gender Category

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Male	167	67
Female	85	33
Total	252	100

Sample 11: Data on the place of birth

Area	Frequency	Percentage
Meru	107	42
North Eastern region	126	50
Other region	19	8
Total	252	100

Sample 12: Data on religious background

Religion	Frequency	Percentage
Christian	153	61
Muslim	73	29
Traditional	26	10
Total	252	100

Sample 13: Data on the period which the respondents have been a current region

Period in the Current Region	Frequency	Percentage
From birth	146	58
1-5 years	28	11
5-10 years	78	31
Total	252	100

6.2.2 Appendix 2 (B): Qualitative Data Samples from Interview Schedules

SAMPLE 1a: Spread of Islam patterns

During the interview one of the respondents **IR1** stated:

VQ “Muslims entice and explains to Igembe people how good it is to be a Muslim. It appears to Igembe people that they can live better lifestyles and probably become rich when they convert to Islam.”

SAMPLE 1b: Spread of Islam patterns

During the interview one of the respondents **IR2** stated:

VQ “ndini ya aisilamu yeeyire iroojura kwonthe muno muno nontu bwa biacara yaa miraa. Kethira ti miraa aislamu batithirwa baii Igembe”

BT “Islamic religion came and is everywhere mostly mostly because of miraa business. If it is not miraa Muslims would not be in Igembe”

SAMPLE 1c: Islamic growth

During the interview one of the key respondents **IR3** stated that,

VQ “The constant contact between the Somali and Igembe people has influenced some to join Islam. Others have intermarried and therefore changing their moral status. Muslims entice and explains to Igembe people how good it is to be a Muslim. It appears to Igembe people that they can live better lifestyles and probably become rich”

SAMPLE 1d: Approaches to da’wah

During the interview a respondent **IR4** stated,

VQ “Itumi ikwithirwa kia kubenda, Aicilamu baugaa dini yao itiendete uacunani/wayia (haram) na bagatumira miciiio imingi kenda baitikika (wallahi) na buu bukendwa ni baria bati Aicilamu na kinya muthiene bakagaluka kua Aicilamu.”

BT “The reason liking them, Muslims say that their religion is against unfair business practices (haram) and they use lots of swearing (wallahi) to gain the confidence of the miraa sellers. This has attracted non-Muslims and eventually ends up converting to Islam.”

SAMPLE 2a: miraa use in marriage and initiation of boys

The respondent **IR5** said,

VQ “Miraa niatumiragwa kuromba uthoni”

BT “Miraa was used to ask for in-law relation”

The respondent **IR6** said,

VQ “Miraa niatumairwa kutuma uthoni riria muthaka akuenda kuoya mwarii abwithia mucii” BT “Miraa was used to create in-law relationship when the suitor wanted to marry a girl so as to start a home”

The respondent **IR7** said,

VQ During initiation time for Igembe region the mentor to guide the boy being going the process it was the process to identify and accept for the mentor to agree and take care of the boy

SAMPLE 2b: miraa medicinal attributes

The respondent **IR8** said,

VQ “miraa has medicinal value as it has been used to treat diarrhoea, fatigue and acidic stomachs”

The respondent **IR9** said,

VQ “miraa has been used as a remedy of dry cough. Miraa has been used as anti-fatigue and it was ruled by Njuri Ncheke that officially no one should sell ancestral land or sell miraa trees inherited from their fathers”

SAMPLE 3: Islamization as a process in life

During the interview one of the respondents **IR10** said,

VQ “Ii ima kuitanira biacara na Aicilamu ikutumite Aembe babaingi bakucua na kuendera mikarire/miturire yoo. Buu ibutumite bamwe bao bagalula dini na kuaa Aicilamu”

BT “Yes, it is true that miraa trade has led to spread of Islam as when you interact with Muslim miraa traders, you tend to love their religion and their way of life and eventually one converts very easily”

During the interview one of the respondents **IR11** said,

VQ “the miraa trade has led to interaction between the Somali and the Igembe people hence some Igembe people have abandoned their culture to exercise that of Somalis”

During the interview one of the respondents **IR12** said,

VQ “through miraa trade most of the Igembe people have been transformed to muslims where by they have abandoned going to churches on Sundays and starting to attend mosques services on Fridays”

During the interview one of the respondents **IR13** said,

VQ “through socialization between the Igembe people and the somali, the Igembe girls have started wearing buibui and covering their heads”

During the interview one of the respondents **IR14** said,

VQ “through miraa trade Somalis have converted most of the Igembe people from being Christians to Muslims. Through miraa trade Somalis have made the Igembe people to abandon most of their cultural activities which are condemned by the Somalis”

During the interview one of the respondents **IR15** said,

VQ “through miraa trade Igembe people have changed their way of life hence copying those of Muslims e.g. mode of feeding and dressing code”

SAMPLE 3: Somali dominance in miraa trade

A respondent who was a miraa vendor **IR16** said,

VQ “Abiacara ba miraa ba kuma Somali ibo batongagua muno i biacara ya miraa, i kwithira barina mbeba inyingi nkuruki ya abiacara ba Iembe baria baguiciumia kucua mbeba cia gukiiria biacara cio na kucindana na Asomali kibiacara.”

BT “Somalis miraa business people benefit because they have more money than the indigenous Igembe people who are struggling to have enough money unable them compete with Somali traders”

During the interview one of the respondents **IR17** said,

VQ “Islam somali have a strong attachment to miraa and are the most traders controlling the business. This strong domination of the miraa trade has resulted to also the Igembe joining the religion to become part of it. For instance, selling miraa outside maua in towns like Garissa, Madera, Wajir, Eastleigh, etc where islams are dominant”

During the interview one of the respondents **IR18** said,

VQ “miraa trade has brought lots of Somalis to the Igembe region. This has led to more mosques being built where in the remote areas meaning the locals have accepted them and even joined them”

SAMPLE 3: lucrative nature of miraa trade

During the interview one respondent **IR19** exclaimed that,

VQ “They have brought a very profitable business in our area for our people! They have offered employment.”

During the interview one of the respondents **IR20** said:

VQ “its dominated by Somali Muslims who have lots of cash that they use as baits to entice local miraa business people. As a result of the lengthy interactions between them, some are attracted to their way of life and eventually convert to Islam”.

During the interview one respondent **IR21** exclaimed that,

VQ “through miraa trade most of Igembe people has changed from being Christians to Muslims in order to acquire jobs”

During the interview one of the respondents **IR22** said,

VQ “there is availability of market to their products locally and in other towns occupied by Islams”

SAMPLE 3: Miraa trade as a proselytization tool

During the interview **IR23** who was a prominent miraa farmer within Igembe area could neither speak or read in English but spoke Kimiiru said,

VQ “Ii ima kuitanira biacara na Aicilamu ikutumite Aembe babaingi bakucua na kuendera mikarire/miturire yoo. Buu ibutumite bamwe bao bagalula dini na kuaa Aicilamu”

BT “Yes, it is true that miraa trade has led to spread of Islam as when you interact with Muslim miraa traders, you tend to love their religion and their way of life and eventually one converts very easily”

During the interview one of the respondents **IR24** said,

VQ “due to the increased number of Islam miraa traders in the region, they normally hold regular open air discussions about their religion. These platforms have influenced a good number of our natives to convert”

During the interview one of the respondents **IR25** said,

VQ “the Islam Somali who came to this region as traders have with time invited others who do Islamic crusades at the open markets that have converted a good number of the locals”

SAMPLE 4a: Growth of towns as a result of miraa trade

During the interview one of the respondents **IR26** said,

VQ “Igembe people have been able to acquire income through employment. Miraa business has led to the expansion of business in Igembe region”

During the interview one of the respondents **IR27** said,

VQ “through miraa trade Igembe people have been able to access easy cash to start their own business”

During the interview one of the respondents **IR28** said,

VQ “it has led to low economic development in Igembe region because they have all invested in miraa without considering other businesses which are more beneficial than miraa hence leading to low living standards”

During the interview one of the respondents **IR29** said,

VQ “through miraa trade by small scale people it has led to the expansion of agro vet in Igembe whereby the Somali by some fertilizers and chemicals for their miraa farms”

During the interview one of the respondents **IR30** said,

VQ “expansion and development of market centres such as Maua, Laare, and Mutuati have grown as result of the booming miraa trade. Likewise, small local miraa collection centres have also developed into shopping centres and small towns like Kengu, Athiru, KK, Kimongoro, and Muringene”

SAMPLE 4b: Leasing or selling of miraa land

During the interview one of the respondents **IR31** castigated leasing of miraa land saying,

VQ “Miraa business has led to unlawful leasing of land. A family member can just wake up and lease land without seeking consent of all the family members. The situation has resulted in conflicts.”

During the interview one of the respondents **IR32** said,

VQ “it has led to high poverty level among the Igembe people due to high demand of money which has costed the Igembe people to sell their land to Somali hence being left with small holdings that cannot be cultivated”

SAMPLE 4c: Truancy and school drop out

A respondent **IR33** who talked in vernacular said,

VQ “Boys drop out of schools, early marriages, insecurity, a lot of conflicts, and unlawful land leasing.”

During the interview one of the respondents **IR34** said,

VQ “young boys have been engaged into packing miraa leading to them dropping out of school. With time this has created a ripple effect of reliance on the unstable prices hence a poverty cycle”

During the interview one of the respondents **IR35** said,

VQ “it has increased the number of school dropouts whereby the small boys in Igembe leave their studies in order to work in the miraa farms”

During the interview one of the respondents **IR36** said,

VQ “through miraa trade Muslims were able to establish their own schools whereby they have involved the Igembe children to access their education”

During the interview one of the respondents **IR37** said,

VQ “Islamization through miraa trade has led to child labour. It has increased the school dropout rate. When miraa has been used together with alcohol it may lead to violence”

During the interview one of the respondents **IR38** said,

VQ “it has led to high poverty among the Igembe people. It has led to unwanted pregnancies and early marriages”

During the interview one of the respondents **IR39** said,

VQ “miraa has led to increased number of illiterate people in Igembe region due to high school dropout rates”

During the interview one of the respondents **IR40** said,

VQ “it has led to child labour whereby children have been forced to work in the miraa farms at their tender age.”

During the interview one of the respondents **IR41** said,

VQ “there is high rate of school dropout due to the availability of cheap labour with good cash”

During the interview one of the respondents **IR42** said,

VQ “miraa trade has increased the rate of school dropout whereby parents force their children to leave school in order to work in the miraa farms to earn their livelihood hence leading to child labour”

SAMPLE 4d: Malnutrition for lack of proper feeding

During the interview one of the respondents **IR43** said,

VQ “poor feeding habits have been observed with a number of cases of malnutrition reported”

During the interview one of the respondents **IR44** said,

VQ “malnutrition since most residents in Igembe eat in the hotels which means they don’t observe balanced diet, there is high cases of malnutrition in children in the region”

SAMPLE 4e: Loss of traditional Igembe beliefs and practices

During the interview one of the respondents **IR45** said,

VQ “loss of traditional and cultural beliefs amongst the Igembe region. The people of Igembe tend to leave their tradition and embrace the Islamic and Somali culture”

SAMPLE 4f: Volatile environment of miraa trade

A respondent **IR46** who spoke in Kimiiru emphatically said,

VQ “Kuumania na itumi bitikumenyeka, biacara ya miraa niithaira ina ituma, matheta na kinya rimwe ndwaa iretaa gutemana na ikuo igita ria kutua, kubua, kwendia, kubanga na ukamati bwayo, mantu yaria yaretaa maamba yamaingi kotine cietu. Nkienderia uritani bwa muingi buthithwa kiri bonthe baria bari biacarene ii ikenda kuithira kuina ukiruu/thiiri ki biacara ii iwatilite uturo bwa muiembe.”

BT "For reasons unknown, miraa business is done in a violent environment that at times result in fatal incidents. Many court cases are emanating from miraa businesses, either from the farms, vending, transporting, packing etc. I propose that civic education be carried by concerned bodies to bring sanity in this lucrative business that is the livelihood to the Igembe people and beyond”.

During the interview one of the respondents **IR47** said,

VQ “gangs have come up aligned to various miraa traders targeting rivals’ competitors”

During the interview, one of the respondents **IR48** stated that,

VQ “Violence between Christians and Muslims, specifically killings are a major blow to the success of miraa business. There have been clashes between Merus and Somalis because Somalis tend to monopolise miraa trade.”

SAMPLE 4g: Theft of miraa

During the interview, one of the respondents **IR49** stated that,

VQ “miraa trade has increased crimes in the Igembe region due to high demand of miraa whereby a number of people have been caught stealing miraa”

SAMPLE 4h: Effect of Islamization on other religions

During the interview, one of the respondents **IR50** stated that,

VQ “by getting into a new religion is as good as a rest. So this religion has come with it may goodies: employment, alleviating poverty, market for miraa, many developments in the area”

During the interview, one of the respondents **IR51** stated that,

VQ “establishment of Islamic festivals in the region which has greatly influenced the residents to envy and adopt the Islamic religion”

During the interview, one of the respondents **IR52** stated that,

VQ “the Igembe culture has been eroded in a large way. This entails people going to shrines to perform rites for sacrifices, initiation rites, and marriage among others”

6.2.3 Appendix 2 (C): Maps and Photos

Source: google 2016

Figure 6.1: Map of Meru County showing administrative Wards

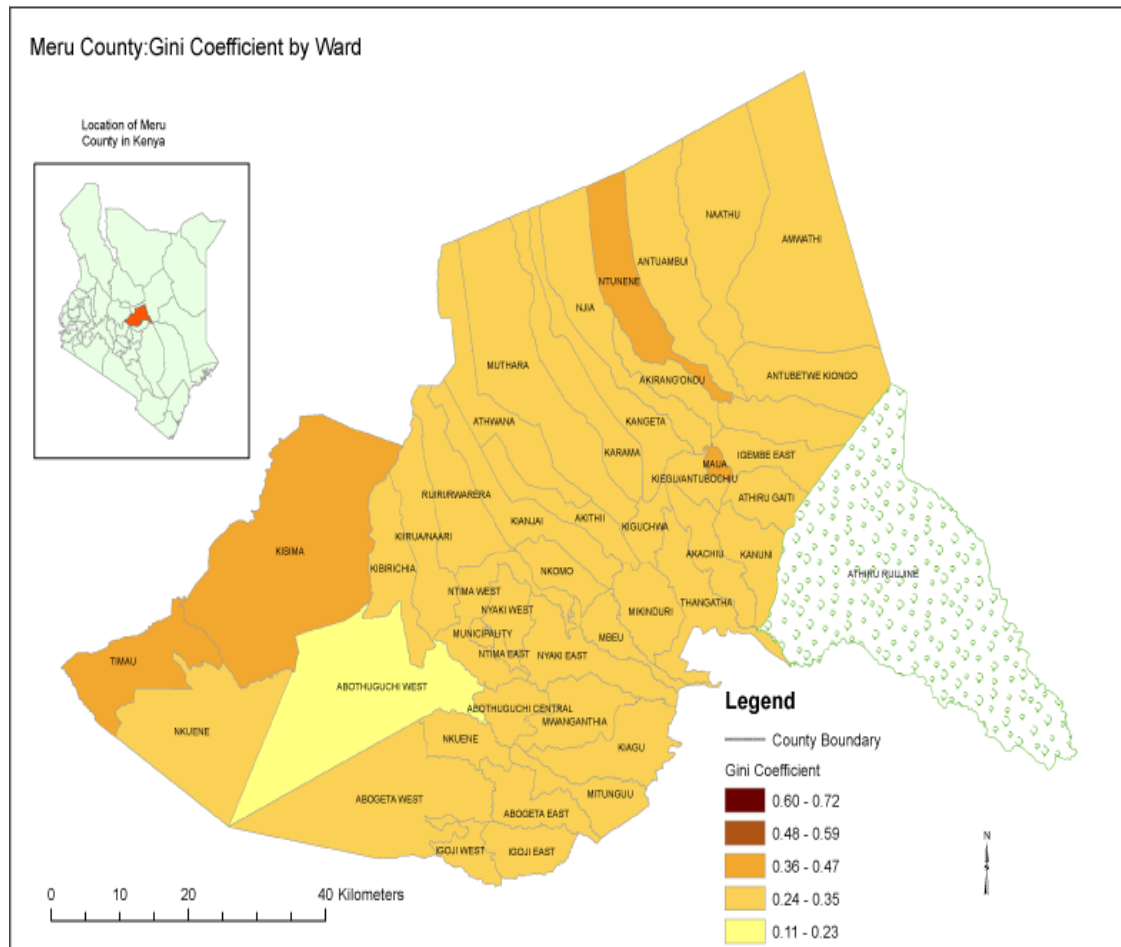


Figure 6.2: Photo showing miraa seedlings



Figure 6.3: Photo showing mature miraa twigs ready for harvesting



Figure 6.4: Photo showing adults and a child harvesting miraa



Figure 6.5: Photo showing man carrying miraa bundles to a buying centre



Figure 6.6: Photo showing miraa grading and wrapping in banana leaves



Figure 6.7: Photo showing banana leaf hoisted on the shop to indicate miraa business



Figure 6.8: Photo showing miraa being transported by a land cruiser pickup



Figure 6.2: Photo showing miraa exported and sold by women in Mogadishu Somalia



Note. It was taken on August 9, 2014 /REUTERS/FEISAL OMAR)

6.3 Appendix 3: Permissions and Approvals

6.3.1 Appendix 3 (A): Kenya Methodist University approval letter



KENYA METHODIST UNIVERSITY

P. O. Box 267 Meru - 60200, Kenya
Tel: 254-064-30301/31229/30367/31171

Fax: 254-64-30162
Email: info@kemu.ac.ke

13th February, 2018

Commission Secretary
National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovations
P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI

Dear Sir/ Madam,

RE: KIRIMI MWENDA JOTHAM (PRS-4-0145-1/2015)

This is to confirm that the above named is a bona fide student of Kenya Methodist University, School of Education and Social Sciences, Department of Theology, Religious Studies & Counselling, undertaking Ph.D. in Religious Studies. He is conducting a research study titled "A Critical Analysis of the Impact of Islamization of Igembe People through Miraa Trade in Meru County."

We confirm that his thesis proposal has been defended and approved by the university.

In this regard, we are requesting your office to issue a permit to enable him collect data for his Ph.D. dissertation.

Any assistance accorded to him will be appreciated.

Yours faithfully


13 FEB 2018
Dr. John Muchiri, Ph.D.
Director, Postgraduate Studies
Encl.

6.3.2 Appendix 3(B): NACOSTI approval letter



**NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,
TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION**

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2241349,3310571,2219420
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Email: dg@nacosti.go.ke
Website : www.nacosti.go.ke
When replying please quote

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

Ref No. **NACOSTI/P/18/55545/24285**

Date: **26th July, 2018**

Jotham Mwenda Kirimi
Kenya Methodist University
P.O. Box 267- 60200
MERU.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on *“A critical analysis of the impact of Islamization of Igembe People through miraa trade in Meru County”* I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Meru County** for the period ending **24th July, 2019**.

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

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


**BONIFACE WANYAMA
FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO**

Copy to:

The County Commissioner
Meru County.

The County Director of Education
Meru County.

National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation is ISO9001:2008 Certified

6.3.3 Appendix 3 (C): NACOSTI PERMIT

**THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:
MR. JOTHAM MWENDA KIRIMI
of KENYA METHODIST UNIVERSITY,
0-60600 Maua, has been permitted to
conduct research in Meru County**

**Permit No : NACOSTI/P/18/55545/24285
Date Of Issue : 26th July,2018
Fee Recieved :Ksh 2000**

**on the topic: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF
THE IMPACT OF ISLAMIZATION OF
IGEMBE PEOPLE THROUGH MIRAA
TRADE IN MERU COUNTY.**

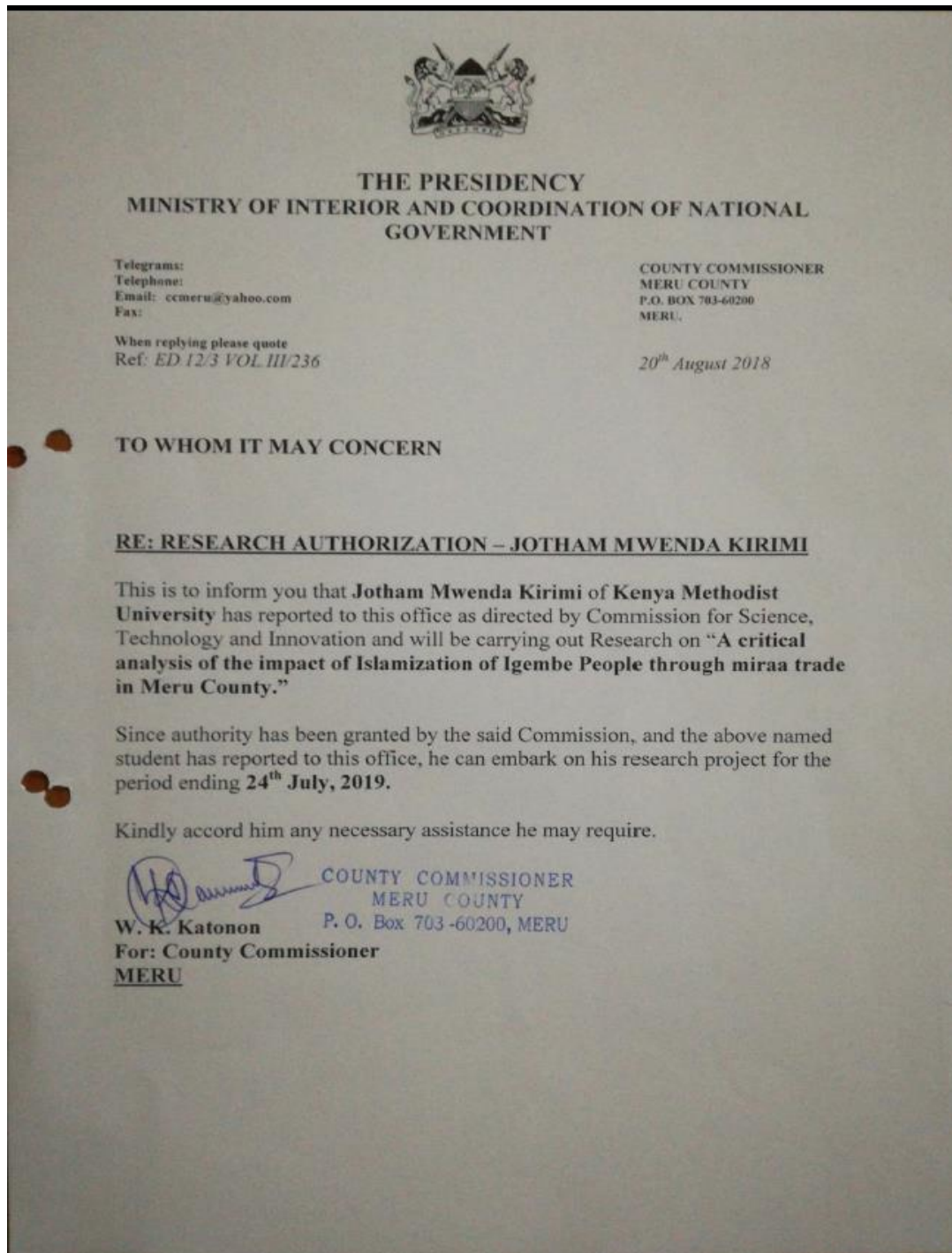
**for the period ending:
24th July,2019**



[Handwritten signature]
.....
**Applicant's
Signature**

[Handwritten signature]
.....
**Director General
National Commission for Science,
Technology & Innovation**

6.3.4 Appendix 3 (D): Approval Letter from the Meru County Commissioner



6.3.5 Appendix 3 (E): Approval letter from the Meru County Director of Education

