

LEARNING FROM INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA:

THE INDEGINEOUS KNOWLEDGE OF THE TUGEN KALENJIN SPEAKERS OF KENYA

The Indigenous Knowledge of The Tugen Kalenjin speakers in Kenya is a comprehensive and a well defined culture, tradition, norms and ways of the Tugen people and has a very close similarity to the other Kalenjin ethnic groups in Kenya. . It has been written in both Kalenjin and English with their well defined meanings and in-depth features of Kalenjin tribe and culture. Kalenjin is one of the most well known tribe the world over and famous in its major activities including world athletics and African tradition. Get acquainted with the indigenous knowledge with the tugen kalenjins as a way of learning from communities in Sub-Saharan Africa

Author's Profile

MARTIN KURGAT is a Assistant Lecturer at the Department of Publishing, Journalism and Communication Studies, School of Information of Sciences, Moi University, Eldoret-Kenya. He is an holder of Masters of Arts (MA) Degree in Journalism-Print Media from the Belarussian State University, Belarus and a Diploma in Education from the Minsk Institute of Foreign Languages (Russian and French).

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to my loving father, the late William Kurgat. Your inspiration lingers on and to all lovers of African culture. To my primary school teacher when I was a pupil.

Mr. Mark Kapsir Arap Kangor.

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FOREWORD

The indigenous knowledge of the Tugen sub-tribe of the Kalenjin community of Kenya is a book that is in actual sense a talk point on why we must as human beings and more so as Africans all preserve our culture and identities as well as. According to some research on oral tradition of various African native language has several “traditional dances and their genres” may slightly differ in what they are called in certain geographical zones will mainly depend on the dialect and locality.

However, age is also a factor. Mr. Kurgat in his book could be writing to confirm this phenomenon. For instance, an adult Tugen or Kalenjin o ages between 25 and 50 can hardly understand traditional dances, the genre or even, cite or simply sing and understand the circumstances or environment in which it is sang or performed. Weddings, circumcision or harvesting seasons are occasions that may be seasonal. When the Marakwet sub-tribe of the same Kalenjin nation are celebrating harvesting season in Tot, the Kipsigis in Londiani will celebrate or do the same in February or March the following year. Yet, it is, however, the same dance performed across the entire Kalenjin nation.

Kurgat, however, has explained why it is important to retain our traditional knowledge: native languages, writing as well as recording information on our cultures that will be passed down to the younger generations. But more interestingly, this book has a lot to do with African identity especially in this fast-changing world. As Africans, our orals traditional knowledge must be documented the information whether written, recorded or archived so as to store the literature of identity in our communities starting from when, how and why a baby is named. That child will continue with family, clan, and tribal lineage, to the songs we sing, to pray for rain, to food harvests, to clothes we wear: all in the name cultural identities that make us real Africans, Kenyan Kalenjins of the Tugen dialect.

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significance because identity bestows in us self-esteem, a sense of belonging and the ability to understand the diversities among human races.

Another reason for writing this book is to counter exotic cultural influences over the indigenous African ones. The fact that Africa has been fertile ground for diverse influences from outside world, especially after European cultures their colonization for cultures impacted on African people. The Kalenjin were not spared either!

However, Indigenous Knowledge (IK) can be significantly unproven, but culturally reformed, the welcoming “wholy” and open-to-new knowledge nature of humanity especially amongst many African communities is our own undoing. Africans as a race are naturally social and communal in nature – accommodating behavior and culture regardless of our own diversity. This factor, created a habitable environment for visitors, acceptance that allowed intrusion of foreign languages while in communication.

Kurgat concludes that as Africans who are educated and have the opportunity to research on, record and preserve our IK, we have the responsibility to write and assemble it in an effort to save it from extinction. It is not the duty of foreign archivists, anthropologists and historians to do that on our behave. We, in the School of Information Sciences, Moi University have taken the initiative to carry the African cultural tag – the duty to preserve our indigenous cultural values and pass it on to future African people.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

A.I.M	-African Inland Mission
CCM	-Catholic Church Mission
CORD	-Coalition for Reform and Development
CS	-Cabinet Secretary
DP	-Democratic Party of Kenya
EK	-Explicit Knowledge
ESD	-Education for Sustainable Development
FGM	-Female Genital Mutilation
FORD	-Forum for Restoration of Democracy
GMO	-Genetically Modified Organism
H.D.S.S	-Honorary Doctor of Science
IAAF	-International Athletics Federation
IGAD	-Inter-Government Authority on Development
IK	-Indigenous knowledge
KADU	-Kenya National Union of Teachers
KANU	-Kenya African National Union
KDF	-Kenya Defence Forces
KETU	-Keiyo and Tugen of Kenya
KNUT	-Kenya National Union of Teachers
LEGCO	-Legislative Council
MBS	-Member of Burning Spear
MCA	-Member of County Assembly
NGOs	-Non-Government Organization
NHIF	-National Hospital Insurance Fund
ODM	-Orange Democratic Movement
STD	-Sexually Transmitted Disease
TAM	-Traditional African Medicine
TK	-Tacit Knowledge
UN MDG	-Millennium Development Goals
UNESCO	-United Nations Educational Social Comm. Organization
UNFWP	-United Nations World Food Programme
WFP	-World Food Programme

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Cover Page	I
Table of Contents.....	ii
List of Tables.....	iii
Chapter One	1
Introduction.....	2
Did you know	7
Chapter two	15
The Christian religion and Entry of Missionaries.....	15
The Tugen Religious Organization and Beliefs.....	18
Chapter Three	33
The Socio-Economic Organaization of the Tugen.....	33
Chapter 4	49
Health, Hygiene and Environment.....	49
Forms of Medication.....	36
Chapter Five	43
Socio-Cultural Organaization of the Tugen.....	43
The Rites of Passage.....	43
Tugen Divistion of Labour.....	47
Initiations.....	49
1. Teeth Removal.....	49
2. Ear Piercing, Lobbing and Tatooing.....	50
3. Circumcision.....	50
4. Wedding.....	51
5. Death and Burial.....	52
Socio-Education of Tugen People.....	57
Age Set(Ipinda).....	62
Seasons.....	63
Chapter Six	68
SPORTS “The Running Community”.....	74
1. Genetic Factors.....	78
2. Geographic Factors.....	78
3. Diet Facto.....	78
4. Biological Factor.....	79

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Cover Page	I
Table of Contents.....	ii
List of Tables.....	iii
Chapter One	1
Introduction.....	2
Did you know	7
Chapter two	15
The Christian religion and Entry of Missionaries.....	15
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The Rites of Passage.....	43
Tugen Divistion of Labour.....	47
Initiations.....	49
1. Teeth Removal.....	49
2. Ear Piercing, Lobbing and Tatooing.....	50
3. Circumcision.....	50
4. Wedding.....	51
5. Death and Burial.....	52
Socio-Education of Tugen People.....	57
Age Set(Ipinda).....	62
Seasons.....	63
Chapter Six	68
SPORTS “The Running Community”.....	74
1. Genetic Factors.....	78
2. Geographic Factors.....	78
3. Diet Facto.....	78
4. Biological Factor.....	79

5. Cultural Factor.....	79
6. Motivation Factor.....	80
7. Historical Factor.....	81
Chapter Seven.....	87
Political Organaization.....	87
Chapter Eight.....	104
Indigenous Peace Pact.....	104
Chapter Nine.....	112
Food and security	112
Chapter Ten.....	146
Knowledge Acquisition and its transfer.....	127
Chapter Eleven.....	146
Lessons Learnt from Indigenous Knowledge.....	147
References.....	151

5. Cultural Factor.....	79
6. Motivation Factor.....	80
7. Historical Factor.....	81
Chapter Seven.....	87
Political Organaization.....	87
Chapter Eight.....	104
Indigenous Peace Pact.....	104
Chapter Nine.....	112
Food and security	112
Chapter Ten.....	146
Knowledge Acquisition and its transfer.....	127
Chapter Eleven.....	146
Lessons Learnt from Indigenous Knowledge.....	147
References.....	151

List of Tables

Table 1: The Import and Export the Kalenjin Trade.....	33
Table 2: The Tugen Cow Names and Translations in Eng...	43
Table 3: The Tree indigenous Plant and their Respective fruit.....	52
Table 4: Some of the Diseases among the Tugens.....	35
Table 5: Herbal medicine preparation and Application.....	36
Table 6: Medicine Commonly used(Dispensing modes)...	37
Table 7: Names of newborns in Tugen Culture(Lugumian Naming Ceremonies).....	46
Table 8: Tugen Division of Labour.....	47
Table 9: Elevation Hierarchy in Tugen Culture.....	52
Table 10: Showing Clan Name in Tugen and English.....	56
Table 11: Months of the year.....	62
Table 12: Age-set Names.....	63
Table 13: Season in English and its Translation in Tugen....	63
Table 14: The original Tugen Age-sets.....	65
Table 15: The proverbs that were used and their English Translations.....	131

List of Tables

Table 1: The Import and Export the Kalenjin Trade.....	33
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Table 14: The original Tugen Age-sets.....	65
Table 15: The proverbs that were used and their English Translations.....	131

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