

# **UNIVERSITY OF KABIANGA**

## **SCHOOL OF EDUCATION ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**

### **DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY AND FOUNDATION**

COURSE TITLE : SOCIOLOGY OF EDUCATION

COURSE CODE : EDF 110

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## HOW KALENJIN SOCIALIZE THEIR YOUNG ONES FROM INFANCY TO ADULTHOOD

The Kalenjins are a Nilotic ethnic group primarily found in Kenya, particularly in the Rift Valley region. They are known for rich cultural heritage, distinct languages and significant achievements in athletics, especially long-distance running. The sub-tribes of Kalenjin are Nandi, Keiyo, Tugen, Kipsigis, Pokot, Marakwet and Sabaot.

Socialization among the Kalenjins is a holistic process that emphasizes community, tradition and mutual support ensuring the continuity of their rich cultural heritage. At infancy, the Kalenjin child is primarily raised by the mother with the help of the other women. This however does not mean that the father is completely absent, his role is minimized to provision as compared to the mother who is with the child at all times. At this stage the main socializer is the family which takes care of the child. The child has not yet developed the mental, physical and emotional capacity to live by itself, so the role of the guardian is to look after them.

At the middle childhood stage, the child has developed a bit and is beginning to be introduced to the oral, motor and anal skills. The main socializer is the family especially the parents who instill the basic ways on how to behave in the society and how to carry themselves when they are with specific people. After this stage the child is believed to have developed the capacity to discern between right and wrong. The Kalenjin community believes that the child belongs to the community and can be corrected by anyone who finds them doing wrong, this implies that the socializer at this point is the wider community since the child would have been exposed to it.

At adolescence stage the child's main socializers are the peers since at this stage, the roles are divided according to gender. The boys hang around older men so as to be directed on how to perform their tasks whereas girl children hang around older women. The community prohibits inappropriate and unnecessary interactions between teens of different gender. This was mainly to prevent premature sexual interaction, anyone found to be violating the set standards was severely punished by the elders. It is at this stage that the adolescent boy undergoes circumcision by the removal of the foreskin. During the initiation process, the initiates are secluded from the community. The elders teach them on how to conduct themselves as grown men and their roles as husbands. The girl child will undergo Female Genital Mutilation however after widespread condemnation and enlightenment the practice ceased. The older women used to teach girls on how to perform as women and wives in the society. The boy's decision was not considered and could not be allowed to marry.