

WESTERN EDUCATION ON THE CHANGING ROLES OF  
WOMEN: THE CASE OF IDAKHO COMMUNITY, KENYA

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# Introduction

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- Education introduces an individual to a new world and a different sense of self. It means a paying job, better social status and authority over those who do not have education.
- Improving girls' educational levels has been demonstrated to have clear impacts on the health and economic future, which in turn improves the prospects of their entire community.
- Higher rates of high schools and university education among women, particularly in developing countries, have helped women make inroads to professional careers and better-paying salaries and wages. Yet, many barriers to education for girls remain.
- This paper attempts to assess the impact of education on women with special reference to Idakho and to consider the challenges that hinder women to progress in the area.

# Study Area

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- The Idakho are a Luyia sub-ethnic group that presently resides in Kakamega South district within the jurisdiction of Kakamega County Council.
- In Kenya Idakho are associated with bull fighting and “isukuti” dance.

# Objective

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- The objective of this study was to identify the impact of education on women among the Idakho.

# Research Methodology

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- The study utilized both primary and secondary sources of data.
- The study was conducted within qualitative paradigm to get in depth information on what happened on the ground.
- The study utilized semi- structured interviews.
- Purposive and snowball technique was used during field work.
- In terms of study population and sampling procedure, the sample size for the study consisted of a population of twenty two informants.

# Results and Discussion

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- The missionaries is among the agents that made a major contribution to Idakho education by insisting that boys and girls should have equal access to education. According to the Idakho culture, women and children were considered as “objects and not subjects.

# Results and Discussion Cont.

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- Changing the community's perception towards girl education was not that easy. This was largely due to the fear that educated women might "question the privilege of elders to select husbands for them".
- Missionaries worked in collaboration with colonial administration to get parents enrol their children to school.
- After the 1930s, fathers who had converted to Christianity and received missionaries training began to push for the education of their daughters and sent them to school.

# Results and Discussion Cont.

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- Women of Idakho who went to school were taught rudimentary methods of maternal and child care, nutrition and home-making.
- In addition, women who went to school initiated the beginning of a wage earning class of women among the Idakho.
- In the period between 1950s to 1963 the most notable development in Idakho was the changing status of women as reflected in the interest in girl child education. The Idakho emphasized that education for their daughters was not only an investment, but also an investment in the family's social security.



## Results and Discussion Cont.

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- Educated women attracted a higher bride price. This was because like men, educated women were employed in various sectors where they earned salaries and attained the status of the elite in their own right.
- They were relieved to most of field work and hence devoted more time to bringing up her children and to a more elaborate house-keeping, with the demand for a higher material standard of living.

# Results and Discussion Cont.

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## Social-Economic challenges facing women in Idakho

- Although roughly equal numbers of girls and boys in Idakho enrolled in the first year of primary education, fewer girls than boys proceed to secondary and higher education levels. Girls are pushed out of school mainly due to social, economic and cultural factors. For instance, poverty is a worrisome problem facing most Idakho families. Whenever parents are unable to raise school fees for their children, girls are always forced to drop out of school.
- The condition for commercial credit from banks and financial institutions (for example Agricultural Finance Corporation) are particularly difficult for women in Idakho. The requirements of operating an account in a bank which goes together with wage employment and/ or having other source of income, providing security in the form of land or a house, having to pay high interest rates, can only be met by a select group of borrowers and a few indeed women in Idakho.

# Results and Discussion Cont.

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- The infrastructure and the business environment are also biased against the poor, with frequent electricity cuts, due to over dependency on the hydro-electric power as the main source of energy, that also relies on rainfall, which at times is sporadic, back up services like the use of generators are needed, although they are costly beyond the reach of the poor.
- Moreover, all whether roads do not reach various parts of the Idakho area, where the majority of the poor and the population in general reside, thus costs of transport become barriers to entry into business or expansion for these groups of people.
- Thus low level of education coupled with retrogressive socio-cultural practices have resulted in women low participation and representation in decision making position.

## Results and Discussion Cont.

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- Nonetheless, a considerable number of women operate in informal businesses. They are mainly engaged in a range of activities which include: market trade, hairdressing, sewing, knitting, home craft and hawking of foodstuff among others.
- The majority of these enterprises remain small and do not bring major financial success to their founders, however they have enabled them to be self-employed and to make substantial contribution to their families.

# Conclussion.

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- Education set forth as a means of not only gaining adherents, but also of changing the society it can make a lot of difference in the development in any society.
- Through education, students both from poor and rich families can develop the necessary skills to become productive citizens and participate more efficiently in national development.

THANK YOU  
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