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Institutions of the Nandi Orkoiyot and Age Set Systems and their Role in Colonial Resistance in Kenya

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Abstract: ***From the time immemorial, the Nandi community affairs were run through the council of elders in consultation with the seers or prophets. The Nandi community had features of territorial independence and sovereignty as well. However, there is little literature explaining the Nandi traditional security systems before independence. The study attempted to fill the existing gap by investigating the structure and importance of the institution of the Orkoiyot and the age-set system. The study adopted two types of sampling methods, namely the purposive and snowballing. The theoretical framework employed in the study included the structural functionalist theory and social conflict theory. Data collection instruments used in the study included document analysis guide, question guide and focus group discussion guide. The study employed both primary and secondary sources of information. The former was acquired from the archives as well as from oral interviews while the latter was sourced from books and journal articles in several libraries. Since the study was historical, data analysis and presentation was done qualitatively. The study established that Nandi community affairs were run through the council of elders in consultation with the seers or prophets. The coming of the British interfered with their political freedom and traditional security systems. Fifty years of British colonial rule overshadowed the Nandi traditional security systems and political freedom yet the traditional security institutions were crucial for the sustainability of the society. The study recommends further research on the role of traditional security systems as a mechanism of resolving modern conflict and in maintaining social cohesion.***

Keywords: Nandi Orkoiyot, Age-Set, Colonial Resistance, Kenya

1. Introduction

The Nandi sub-ethnic community is one of the Nilotic groups that form the Kalenjin speaking ethnic community [1]. The word 'Kalenjin' literary means 'I say to you'. The other principal groups that make up the Kalenjin community are the Tugen, Kipsigis, Keiyo, Marakwet, Pokot and Sabaot. The Kalenjin are believed to have migrated from Ethiopia and Sudan [2] and travelled through the Nile valley to Mt Elgon region of Kenya. It is from here that they dispersed to their present areas of occupation in western parts of Kenya. The Nandi are referred to by other Kalenjin groups as 'Chemngal', which means people who talk a lot [3]. The Nandi are organized according to a territory (emet), clans (pororiosiek), and age-sets (ipinda). The twelve clans of the Nandi are *Kamelilo, Kapchepkendi, Kakittalam, Koileke, Kakipoch, Kapianga, Kapsile, Tipingot, Cheptol, Kipngoror, Kakimno Murk ApTuk* and *Kaptumois*.

Generational age-sets and age grades were traditional socio-economic and political systems practiced mainly by the Kalenjin peoples of Kenya. These systems have not been comprehensively studied despite their significant role in stabilizing the Nandi, a sub-tribe of the Kalenjin. Apart from kinship, the Nandi society was held together by the generational age-set systems [4]. An age-set is a social system that defined groups and individuals who were initiated at a specific period. It refers to a named group or groups of social units comprising boys or girls who were initiated within a given period and, therefore, went through different stages in life as a socially knit group [5].

Kituyi[6] defines an age-set as a group of men who are initiated into youth during a definite period and, as a result, share constraints and expectations of life as a group. The Maasai community's age-sets, for instance, comprises initiates who fall within approximately a ten-year time in terms of both birth and time of initiation. Age-sets are formally organized groups of men or women of comparable age. Age-sets are determined by initiation. It comprises people who not only have a similar age but also share a collective identity, maintain close ties, and pass through the same series of age-related status [7].

The Nandi community affairs were run through the council of elders in consultation with the seers or prophets. The Nandi community was not only a territorial entity but also a sovereign one. They had all the attributes of any state, and the coming of the British interfered with this simple political infrastructure to their advantage. Fifty years of the British-Nandi coexistence overshadowed the political ambitions of the Nandi for armed political freedom from the British. Despite the colonial dominance, the Nandi continued with their economic subsistence through herding in the native reserves. The Nandi community later joined other Kenyans in clamouring for self-rule. However, there is little literature

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explaining the Nandi traditional security systems before independence.

2. Literature Review

According to Kipngetich, Hillary and Swamy[8], the purpose of learning strategic political participation history of the Nandi is to understand the community through the pre-colonial, colonial and finally independent Kenya period. Many historians who have written about the subject have tended to be experts with limited understanding of the posture of Nandi in politics. Concerning the class structure, Munene [9] captures the evolution of Kenyan political leaders from the struggle for independence period to 21st-century politics. However, unlike the general Kenyan situation, the Nandi nation-state did not have political class structure. They settled their political issues at the *ibinda* level [10].

The Nandi protest of 1923, due encroachment of the district by the Kikuyu and Nyangori tribes, is viewed as a national issue in its Kenya-wide political context as a result of the increased pressures brought to bear on Kenya Nandis by colonialists. Around this time, demand for Nandi land, labour and taxes, which greatly affected the Nandi as well as other people, was on the rise. The Nandi political protest to colonial policies was in contrast to that of the Kikuyu who wanted recognition and land rights. The Nandi focused on the traditional leadership of the *Orkoiyot* or ritual expert mirroring relative lack of politico-socio-cultural change in Nandi before 1923 and the continuing viability of the traditional Nandi economy and political structure [11]. The Nandi focused on leadership as per this statement. As such, this paper looks at the structure of the traditional security approaches, specifically the office of the *Orkoiyot*, and its importance to the Nandi community.

The story of KoitalelSamoei, the renowned Nandi Orkoiyot, holds a great significance in the history of the Nandi. After killing Samoei at the beginning of the twentieth century, the arrogant British colonialists chopped off his head and fingers and took them alongside his leadership regalia, which included a headgear, a spear, a sword and a pair of leather sandals. All these valuables were kept in British museums until 2010 when they were returned to Kenya and currently stored in a museum in Nandi Hills [12]. It was during the cleansing ceremony of these items that Mr William Ruto was blessed to lead the Nandi nation-state in its political ventures, thus marking the generational change from Sawe to Kaplelach age-sets and subsequently overstepping the Kipkoimet age-set.

By the late 19th century, the Nandi dominated a vast region stretching from Naivasha to the slopes of Mt. Elgon and from Nakuru'sMenengai crater through Molo and Tinderet to the boundaries of the Kakamega forest, as documented in reports found in books and maps of early travellers. For example, in 1893 one of the railway surveys parties of the Uganda Railway, led by Major MacDonald, reported meeting a Platoon of well-equipped Nandi in Mau forest on their way to Tugen. The Nandi resisted or defended their territory against the British invasion for eleven years. When the Uganda railway reached their land, they frequently attacked it. The final order for the immediate elimination of the Nandi menace came directly from the British cabinet in 1905. Nothing at all was allowed to stand in the way of the railway project. During pre-colonial times land was communally owned, and traditional rights and obligations ensured direct access to all [13]. Colonialism disrupted these relationships and assumed that all land to which private ownership could not be established by documentary evidence was ownerless. In light of these changes to the Nandi socio-political structures, it is important to analyse the institution of the Orkoiyot and the age-set system among the Nandi Community.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The study interrogated the structures and importance of the traditional security systems in the context of sustainability of the Nandi traditional society. Based on the study, this paper presents and discusses the research findings on the institution of the Orkoiyot and the age-set system among the Nandi Community.This is important because the institutions of the Orkoiyot and the age-set systems among the Nandi Community played a political, economic and social function that have not been adequately dealt with as security institutions. More so, the role of women in the traditional security systems among the Nandi Community and their conflict mediating and security role needs to be given adequate attention.

3. Materials and Methods

This study adopted both descriptive and historical research design. The researcher employed qualitative approach for data collection, analysis and presentation. Historical design assisted in exploring, explaining and understanding the past about the subject from data already available. The study was carried out in Nandi and UasinGishu Counties of the North Rift of Kenya. The target population was drawn from Nandi and UasinGishu Counties. Therefore, the target population included the indigenous Nandi community, residents, provincial administration officers, civic leaders, senior security personnel and representatives of civil society organization. Non-probability sampling techniques, namely purposive and snowballing, were employed targeting the most knowledgeable persons on the issues under investigation. The techniques, therefore, targeted members of the Nandi community, both men and women, administrative leaders and opinion leaders. The respondents were accessed from various sub-counties of the study area. A total of 72 respondents were interviewed.

In each sub-county, six respondents of each gender were interviewed.The study also used document analysis guide for written document available in the archives and other libraries in Nairobi, Nandi and UasinGishu counties. The information obtained from the field and written documents was analysed qualitatively. This followed a process of sorting out relevant information, organizing and pattern matching to the relevant sub-topics. Data presentation followed a descriptive and analytical process. In descriptive process the task was to merge the information to the question of study and in analytical process data collected

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was analysed and presented in a manner that eliminated inconsistency and exaggerations.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Origin of the Orkoiyot

As an institution, the 'Orkoiyot' or the participation in certain public affairs by a man whose influence was based on his magical powers, had an old tradition in Nandi history beginning from the time of settlement. The members of Kamwaike and Chemuri clans were, especially expert in this field. They played the role of diviners, foretellers of the future and averted ill-luck to people. The various Bororiosiek had their own members of these clans who were their Orkoiik (plural of Orkoiyot) (Kemei, O.I., 15/02/2019).

The Maasai origin of the 'Orkoiyot' is, however, a popular theme in Nandi tradition. Magut[14] traces the origin of the 'Orkoiyot' to UasinGishu Maasai and gives as his evidence the oral traditions among the Nandi as well as comparison of names relating to orkoiik (plural of orkoiyot) and ol-oiboni among the Maasai. However, Mwanzi [15] traces the origin of the 'Orkoiyot' to the Bantu speaking people, probably the Gusii giving his evidence as the similar institutions practiced among the Gusii. The first Nandi 'Orkoiyot' was Barsabotwo. Huntingford, G.W.B., suggests the time of his arrival to be around 1860 basing his evidence on the fact that this was the time when there were upheavals among the UasinGishuMaasai. Magut, on the other hand, while agreeing with Huntingford that orkoiik came as refugees, suggests the period between 1815 and 1835 as the date of their arrival [16].

The Nandi' Orkoiik' practised much of the same functions as their Nandi predecessors; divination, omen interpretation, prophecy and the provision of war medicines and charms. They lived in seclusion and gradually acquired a number of mystical attributes, which increased their influence over the Nandi people. Their successors slowly extended and consolidated their influence, as the successful outcome of their ministrations enabled them to increase their demands on the credulity of the people. The 'orkoiik' thus gained a position of considerable authority in a short span of about fifty years, and exercised powers over a wide field of' Bororiet' and tribal activity (Kiptoo, O.I., 03/03/2019).

The 'Orkoiik' were credited with powers that enabled them to control the weather and to secure the general health and prosperity of the people, as well as the fruitfulness of crops and cattle. Most of these rituals performed by the 'orkoiyot' were concerned with social and economic matters but had a bearing on the political organization of the tribe. The' orkoiyot' wielded considerable political power in the right to grant or withhold approval of raiding operations. Visible evidence of the 'orkoiyot' protection of warriors was provided by the protective medicine called 'Ndasimiet' provided by the 'Orkoiyot'. This medicine was carried by warrior leaders during raiding expeditions. This intervention in the military field created strong ties between the warriors and the orkoiyot. There is evidence to suggest, however, that by 1890, the Nandi'orkoiik' were beginning to pretend to a greater degree of political authority than their predecessors had dared to envisage. These pretensions were encouraged by the Bororiosiek, which had benefited much from the orkoiyot's ministrations (Cherono, O.I., 01/02/2019).

The 'maotik' in the various 'Bororiosiek' maintained communications between the' Bororiet council and the 'orkoiyot'. These officials accompanied the warrior leaders, 'kiptainik' (plural for kiptaiyat) when the Orkoiyot's permission for a projected raid was being sought. They also acted as secret agents for the Orkoiyot, so that the 'Orkoiyot' could be kept informed of events and public opinion in their 'Bororiosiek' (Cherono O.I., 01/02/2019).

By 1890, the Nandi' Orkoiik' had undoubtedly increased their powers and influence in some political activities, and had prepared the ground for further encroachment on personal, 'Bororiet' and tribal liberties. Nevertheless, this gradual progress towards a centralized form of government in Nandi under the Orkoiyot' received occasional checks by the murder or expulsion of 'Orkoiik' who failed to give satisfaction to certain 'Bororiosiek' or all of them. This was the case with the OrkoiyotKimnyole, who was murdered by some Nandi' Bororiosiek' in 1890. He was murdered because the 'Bororiosiek' concerned were enraged by his failure to protect them during a combined raid for cattle (Misoi, O.I., 04/03/2019).

4.2 Role of the Orkoiyot

The institution of the 'Orkoiyot' played an important role during the Nandi resistance against the British in 1893-1906. The Nandi' Bororiosiek' rallied to the then 'Orkoiyot', KoitalelArapSamoei, hoping for a strong and successful combination of forces of the tribe to drive out the invaders. With the killing of the Orkoiyot in 1905, the Nandi were eventually defeated. At the establishment of colonial rule, the institution of orkoiyot continued to be respected by the government. In place of the dead Orkoiyot, Koitalelarap Samoei, Kipeles was installed as the Orkoiyot in 1905, he being the eldest member of Talai clan then alive. He died in 1911 and was succeeded by LelimoArapSamoei. He died in 1919, and ParserionarapManyei succeeded him. He staged a protest against the government in 1923, and since then, the office has had no official government recognition. ArapManyei was arrested and exiled for seven years in Meru. He returned in 1930. His younger brother, KoinearapKoitalel, deputized for him, as the' Orkoiyot', while he was away. However, in the practical sense, the institution of Orkoiyot ceased to be recognized officially by the government in 1923. However, Nandi people respected that institution, though nowadays no Nandi is having that title (Kogo, O.I., 22/02/2019).

One of the salient features that was predominant in the Nandi pre-colonial economy was their land tenure system. The land of the Nandi was regarded as the common possession of the tribe, but with particular emphasis on Bororiet membership. For within his own 'Bororiet', a man could choose land for cultivation without restriction, and his cattle were free to graze anywhere within the area of the 'Bororiet'. The land was divided into specific spheres with specific functions. The divisions were those for cultivation and grazing (Kimutai, O.I., 26/02/2019).

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Grazing land was further divided into three spheres, determined by its proximity to the cattle-holders homestead. These were the 'Kaptich' or cattle grazing ground, which was beyond the 'Bororiet' frontiers and unsettled pockets within the 'Bororiet', the 'Akwot' land comprising all-weather grazing ground of the 'Kokwotinwek', and the Kurget', or homestead land. The 'Kaptich' and 'Akwot' grazing lands were owned communally while the rights over the ownership of kurget land were vested in the households. No cultivation or settlement was to be done on the 'Kaptich' lands (Kimutai, O.I., 26/02/2019).

The land for cultivation or 'Mbaret' was of two types. The first type was that immediately adjacent to a homestead, and the second was 'kokwet' allotment. A man could cultivate as much land, around the homestead, as his wives and children could manage. The staple crop grown was 'Paiyuat', or Eleusinegrain and small quantities of 'Mosongik' or finger millet, maize, potatoes, pumpkins, bananas, sugar-cane, beans and tobacco were also grown in favourable areas. Planting took place in February or 'Kiptamo' (meaning 'hot in the fields') or March, locally referred to as 'Iwat-Kut' (meaning 'rain in showers'). Harvesting was from September or 'Kipsunde' (meaning offering to God in the cornfields), to Octoberor 'Kipsunde-oeing' (meaning second offering to God in the cornfields) (Kipchirchir, O.I., 28/02/2019).

Cattle were never harnessed for draught purposes among the Nandi, and cultivation was carried on with hand implements made by Nandi smiths, 'Kitonyik', or were imported from their neighbors notably the Luhya and the Luo. Tenure of cultivated land was in the form of occupancy rights only, vested in the head of the family or his widows. The land reverted to the *kokwet* once it had been abandoned by its owner. This could be re-allocated by the 'Kokwet' elders. When crop supplies ran low, especially in the months immediately before the harvest, food was borrowed under the 'Kesumet' system, which simply meant borrowing food to be paid later. Others bartered the crops from the neighbouring Luhya and Luo.

The Nandi economic way of life was centred on the well-being and increase of the family herds or 'tuka'. Not only did the Nandi own large numbers of cattle, as well as goats and sheep, but their whole life was also centred on their cattle. Cattle formed the main occupation of the men. The possession of cattle was, in fact, essential for full participation in the social and political life of the tribe. The man who had none would not dare speak at the Kokwet Council, for he would not have been listened to. He also had no chance of playing a significant role in any public office or ceremony. The first ambition of a Nandi boy was to acquire cattle.

Moreover, the youth who had even one of his own had greater social prestige than one who had none. A small number of livestock were grazed at the Kurget around the homestead. Mature cattle were grazed at the 'akwot' nearby or driven by warriors to the 'Kaptich' grazing grounds which were far from 'Bororiet' settlement. Salt for cattle was obtained from a number of salt-licks[15]. Some barter trade was carried on with other Kalenjin kinsmen, and also among the Dorobo and neighbouring tribes largely by border sections during periods of severe famine. However, as Chelule puts it:

> For the most part, the Nandi were well satisfied with their way of life, and had no desire to improve it by imitating or trading with their neighbours or by the acquisition of trade goods. Some military innovations were introduced as a result of the Maasai wars, borrowed from the neighbouring tribes [17].

The Nandi family was self-sufficient in most of the economic activities of the daily life. From the time he was a young child, every Nandi was taught to know his proper role by means of a comprehensive educational system which operated in the family and also on the broader community. Men did the preliminary work of clearing bushes and trees. Women cultivated the land and performed all domestic duties, while the warriors herded cattle in 'Kaptich' grazing grounds and participated in offensive and defensive warfare (Chiroch, O.I., 06/02/2019).

The development of the Nandi, from a few small colonies of immigrants in Aldai to the status of the dominant power in western Kenya, was made possible by its institutional structures. This explains why the Nandi, among the western Kenya people, gave the British imperialists the stiffest opposition in the last decade of the nineteenth century. This was because they were experiencing a period of power, expansion to new frontiers and prosperity. The maintenance of unity among the Nandi was moreover stressed by the Orkoiyot, whose reputation and influence increased among the Nandi as success attended the warriors in raids. Nandi resistance, which started in 1893 was not broken until 1905, when the then Nandi' Orkoiyot', KoitalelarapSamoei, was murdered in cold blood. The Nandi who were dispirited by the death of their Orkoiyot were eventually defeated;hence the signing of the peace treaty of Kiptureon 15th December 1905. The terms of the peace treaty included the removal, to a reserve, of the Kamelilo and Kapchepkendi' Bororiosiek' in the south-east of Nandi (Kessio, O.I., 07/02/2019).

After the death of Kimnyole, a faction of Nandi people sent for Koitalel who had already taken refuge among the Keiyo. Koitalel's brother, KipchomberarapKoilege, also lay claim to Nandi leadership, leading to a succession dispute. Factions formed around the two aspirants and minor skirmishes took place between their supporters, but this did not extend to full-scale war. The dispute ended with the defeat of KipchomberarapKoilege in 1895, after which he fled to the Kipsigis with his supporters, becoming the first KipsigisOrgoiyot. Koitalel was appointed successor to his father and was made Orkoiyot in 1895. When British colonials began building the Uganda Railway through the Nandi area, Koitalel led an eleven-year resistance movement against the railway (Maru, O.I., 09/02/2019).

When British colonials began building the Uganda Railway through the Nandi area, Koitalel led an eleven-year resistance movement against the railway [18]. Isolated from the outside world, one might only speculate at the wonder of the first Nandi warriors who discovered the Arab caravan in the 1850s. Those warriors might not have known of earlier

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Arab caravans, because this was the first notable one in Nandi oral tradition. It was the time when the Sawe sub-sets were warriors, and by 1854, the name Marmar ("to ornament a dress") had been conveyed upon a sub-set. The significance of this title might be derived from the major Arab defeat at Kipsoboi. However, it may have been attributed to the very successful raiding of Arab caravans by the Nandi. These were good years for the Nandi (Kiplimo, O.I., 20/02/2019).

4.3 Age-Set among the Nandi Community

The Nandi social system divided the male sex into boys, warriors and elders. The female sex is divided into girls and married women. The first stage began at birth and continued till initiation. All boys who were circumcised together were said to belong to the same *Ibinda*. Once the young men of a particular *ibinda* came of age, they were tasked with protecting the tribal lands and the society, the period when they were in charge of protection of the society was known as the age of that *ibinda*. Historically, the Nandi had eight cyclical age-sets or *ibinwek*. However, they dropped one the korongoro to settle for a total of seven. Legend has it that the members of this *ibinda* were wiped out in the war. This was because they were told not to go for that war, but they could not listen. It is said they,that *ibinda*, the korongoro, put on their ears some *septook* (broken pieces of calabashes) to avoid listening to the wise words of the Orkoiyot. During the war, they were unsuccessful. For fear of a recurrence, the community decided to retire the age-set (Kiptalam, O.I., 15/02/2019). The order of Nandi age set system (*ibinwek)* is as follows:Maina, Chumo, Sawe, Kipkoimet, Korongoro (no longer used), Kaplelach, Kipnyigei and Nyongi.

The Kalenjin sub-tribes have eight (8) age-sets revolving around the 100-year cycle. Each age-set had to span over a period of 13 years before moving to the next age set. Nandi traditionally practice circumcision of both sexes, although female circumcision is fast fading as a rite of initiation into adulthood (Kiptoo, O.I., 10/02/2019).

Boys' circumcision festivals took place about every seven and a half years, and boys circumcised at the same time are considered to belong to the same age-set; like other Nilotic groups, these age-sets (called ibinda, pl. ibinweek) were given names from a limited fixed cycle. Each age-set is further subdivided into a subset (siritieet, pl. siritoiik). About four years after this festival, the previous generation officially handed over the defence of the country to the newly circumcised youths. Girls' circumcision took place in preparation for marriage. Rotating age-sets formerly existed among all Kalenjin, with the same or nearly the same names in all groups [19]. There were eight sets among the Tugen, Marakwet, and Sabaot and seven among the Keiyo, Nandi and Kipsigis (with some evidence that there may have been eight formerly). The Marakwet, Tugen and Sabaot have formalized age-sets for women, and another Kalenjin probably once had them. Members of younger age-sets defer to members of older age-sets. Men initiated together to have a very high level of solidarity: they spend much time together, formwork teams, try to live in the same neighbourhood and marry sisters (wife's sister's husband is an important reciprocal kin type), and may not marry each other's daughters. Aside from territorial units and clans, there were no other formal associations. The Nandi age-sets formed the warriors whose role was to defend the community (Kosgei, O.I., 06/03/2019).

The two institutions were instrumental in the Nandi waging resistance towards colonial rule. The institutions stood against enterprising Arab traders passing through the Nandi territory. The Nandi warriors would often terrorize caravan traders. The Nandi sent parties of warriors to lead the prospective caravan into the depths of Nandi by the wrong road and then conduct a night attack. The Arab traders even attempted a tactic that had worked with other tribes, blood brotherhood. This consisted of sitting opposite one another, cutting the back of each other's hand and sucking the blood from one another's hand. The Nandi held no credence to such a foreign ceremony, and it only became another ploy to easily acquire coastal goods (Mosop, O.I., 17/02/2019).

The Nandi developed tactics to overcome the effects of a large number of firearms during this time. Like the Maasai, the warriors drew the enemy's fire by a sudden rush at which time they went "go to ground." Then the warriors charged the caravan porters before the muzzle loading weapons could be recharged. The porters bolted into the reloading riflemen followed closely by the Nandi warriors. In the confusion, the Nandi warriors could spear the panicked men. This tactic worked until the battle of Kimondi in 1895 (Maiyo, O.I., 19/02/2019).

Frustrated by failures, the Arab traders attempted one last tactic. They established a series of fortified stations at Kimatke, Kibigori, Chemelil, Kipsoboi and Kobujoi, and began a campaign of intimidation. Donkeys were let loose to trample the millet fields, Nandi warriors were humiliated, Nandi boys were imprisoned, and Nandi women and girls were compromised. At Kipsoboi, four Nandi shields were propped against a tree, and the Nandi were offered the chance to shoot arrows into the shields. Once this was accomplished, the Arabs fired musket balls through the shields that had stopped the arrows. The Arabs then poured gruel over the attending Nandi's heads and shaved off their cherished locks (Kosgei, O.I., 06/03/2019).

The Nandi warriors through their Liabons(leading ritual expert) fought the Arabs and destroyed several garrisons. The Nandi kiptaiyat (raiding bands) then successfully attacked and slaughtered the garrison at Kobujoi. This was enough to force the Arab traders to withdraw from Nandi and to avoid the area (Misoi, O.I., 04/03/2019). The defeat of the Arabs created the "Nandi legend." The Nandi were undefeatable. Porters could not be hired, and expeditions could not be launched into Nandi for nearly forty years. The Nandi warriors stood proudly aloof from the events that were swirling around them, confident of defending their independence (Misoi, O.I., 04/03/2019).

Like many indigenous cultures, several Kalenjin prophets foretold the coming of the white man. Among the Nandi, the prophecies of Mongo and Kimnyole are best examples. However, it was only Mongo who foretold the arrival of white people who possessed great power and warned against fighting against them. Kimnyole, before his assassination,

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only predicted that the confrontation would have a significant effect upon the peoples of Nandi. Flushed with the victories against the other tribes and Arabs, the Nandi warriors believed that they would succeed in protecting their homeland (Saina, O.I., 04/03/2019). This faith was substantiated in November 1883 when a European caravan under Joseph Thomson crossed Maasailand into North Nandi. Thomson was part of a Royal Geographical Society expedition that numbered 100 men in a pioneer company. The confused and sketchy evidence of this expedition stopped the dispatch of European caravans from Mombasa from 1883-84 (Saina, O.I., 04/03/2019). The German Colonial Office also launched a powerful caravan led by Count Teleki and Hauptman Hohnel in 1887-88 that turned back before entering Nandi (Kosgei, O.I., 06/03/2019). Several colonial expeditions into Nandi land were also resisted. For example, the Jackson expedition of the 1890s was raided by Nandi kiptaiyat numbering possibly 1000 warriors (Seronei, O.I., 09/03/2019).

In 1892, the railway survey party was appointed to determine the possibility of expanding the rail system through Nandi. The survey went slowly as the surveyors were in constant peril. It was estimated by some that "men armed with Winchester rifles would have to be stationed at every 100 yards in order to keep off the attacks of the natives" (Kosgei, O.I., 06/03/2019).

The Europeans created a large amount of movement on the periphery of Nandi between 1890 and 1895. For instance, in 1894 twenty-six caravans passed through North Nandi and in the latter half of 1895 more than forty passed over the same tracks unmolested. The Nandi may have ignored this movement because it did not directly threaten them or because the caravans did not offer enough plunder to make them worthwhile attacking. However, the Nandi watched the caravans with a suspicious eye. The coming of war was only a matter of time (Tembech, O.I., 11/03/2019). The warriors believed that the Laibon had rendered the guns useless. Maybe the ancient prophesy meant that the Nandi would begin the end of the "white man" in sub-Sahara Africa. This idea was reinforced by the reactions of neighbouring tribes, most notably the Wanga and Kabras. The other tribes to join included the Kamasia, Kitosh and Kikelelwa (Chemeli, O.I., 01/03/2019).

The Nandi warriors turned their onslaught against the Imperial British East African Company agents. On October 2, 1895, a caravan under Mohamed Bau consisting of thirty rifles, two loads of spare ammunition, fifty head of cattle and twenty sheep and goats left Guasa Masa for Ravine. Two days out from Ravine the caravan was attacked during the night by ten Nandi warriors and suffered the loss of eight porters and a woman. Six men were wounded and four guns captured with 250 rounds of ammunition after only ten shots had been fired. Forty-two of the cattle were captured with the small stock and mail. The mail was returned sixteen days after the disaster (Samoie, O.I., 02/03/2019).

Another well-armed caravan under F. Pordage of 160 men were threatened by a large Nandi kiptaiyat on October 13, 1895, at their camp on the Kamasai River. During the night of October 14-15, 1894, the camp was surrounded by Nandi warriors, but Pordage was up to the task and order three volleys fired into the darkness by his askari. The result was the confirmation of two dead Nandi and several blood trails. After leaving Guasa Masa, ten Sudanese askari joined the caravan on the 15th. When the Portage caravan camped, several Nandi were discovered attempting to set fire to the grass surrounding the caravan (Kosgei, O.I., 06/03/2019).

During the afternoon of October 16 1895, a water porter party was attacked by thirty Nandi warriors, but the rush was stopped by a volley from the five askari escorting the party. The Nandi retired without loss and contented themselves to watch the progress of the caravan outside of gunfire range until it reached Ravine on October 21, 1895. Although there was one more successful attack by the Nandi on a fortified Kabras village, the Nandi appear to have been content with the success of their raids on the Uganda Road. The operations had been well planned and executed as the warriors had defeated several European caravans with the loss of only two warriors. When provided the opportunity, the warriors had decisively struck. When the Europeans had the advantage, the Nandi warriors possessed the discipline to avoid a costly attack. Moreover, all this was accomplished by raiding parties, not the combined might of the Nandi tribes (Kiptoo, O.I., 03/03/2019).

The last months of 1895, the IBEAC forces were expended against the threats from tribes neighbouring Nandi. The Protectorate military establishment numbered 1,200 Sudanese troops, 250 of which were reservists. The porter establishment was chaotic, and the arms and ammunition supply system were forwarded through Mumias from German East Africa or Kampala. Foodstuffs were an entirely different problem as local purchases were minimal, and the arrival of caravans was haphazard. The Nandi clearly presented a threat that the IBEAC could not effectively counter (Misoi O.I., 04/03/2019).

In 1895, the crown took from the IBEAC the responsibility for the area including Nandi. Uganda became a separate protectorate, and the Sudanese troops were reorganized into the Uganda Rifles Regiment (URR) under the Foreign Office administration. Established at 800 men, it was organized into ten companies. The 27th Bombay (Baluch) Light Infantry Regiment (BLI) was also deployed to the protectorate with ten companies (Saina, O.I., 04/03/2019).

After considering several options, Major G. G. Cunningham decided to invade Nandi with a field force of 400 askari of the I, IV, V, IX URR, with a Maxim, 600 porters, and 800 followers from Kampala. The huge caravan attracted a lot of attention as it marched to Mumias. The local natives were awed by the spectacle that was arrayed against the Nandi. At Mumias on October 29, Cunningham was joined by Dr Mackinnon. The total column consisted then consisted of five Europeans, seven native officers, 367 askari, 23 Baganda "drilled and disciplined" auxiliaries, and a few armed "Swahili" porters in the Maxim detachment. After Captain C.H. Sitwell's column arrived, the number of askari increased to 428. This was more than one-third of the total regular troops available in the protectorate (Jelagat, O.I., 06/03/2019).

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All of the URR were rearmed with Martini-Henry rifles, and one Maxim machinegun was allotted to each of the reorganized columns. There was plenty of ammunition and supplies, but one of the main problems was providing carriers. The local populations at Kavirondo and Mau were not willing to offer their services. In the end, only 110 Swahilis and 80 Lendus were available. As most of the Swahili were specialist carriers for the Maxim guns, and the logistics of supporting over a thousand people forced Cunningham to reduce the number of followers to 350. Even then, the size of the columns would force them to depend upon raiding ripened millet fields in Nandi.

Another problem Cunningham faced was the lack of irregulars acting as guides and a shield for the columns. Bribed with gifts of Nandi cattle, even the Maasai refused to offer their services. This was most disconcerting as this had never before been a problem against other tribes neighbouring the Nandi. Cunningham was forced to enter the unexplored territory without the benefit of guides or skirmishers (Kipchirchir, O.I., 28/02/2019).

Undaunted, Major Cunningham sent the small force of a few Baganda irregulars under Sgt.Chongo with fifty Sudanese regulars to chastise the irreconcilables in the Kikelelwa forest. The forest was deserted, and the houses were burned. The Nandi appears to have expanded to create a "burned" no man's land between the British protectorate and Nandi. Cunningham then marched his column out of Mumias on November 4. He detached F. G. Foaker with the Company (90 men), twenty reservists, and a number of porters to Guasa Masa as the main column continued east to the Kabras food depot. After marching south on November 8, the column turned east again and reached the first Nandi huts on an escarpment 6,000 feet above the column. A patrol dispersed a number of Nandi warriors and continued southwards to a dense forest. This first encounter with the Nandi resulted in two askari shot, and sixteen Nandi cattle and nine goats captured (Sego, O.I., 08/03/2019).

On November 9, 1895, the column retraced its path seeking a way either around the escarpment or the forest. Two miles to the north, Cunningham discovered a path which was used contested by Nandi snipers who rained arrows and rifle fire into the flanks of the column. Cunningham claimed four Nandi dead with a loss of one wounded Sudanese follower. However, Cunningham, once he had reached the plateau, turned north and a party of Nandi were dispersed by his Maxim. He then sent a patrol to find Captain C. H. Sitwell's missing column (Leting, O.I., 08/03/2019).

Sitwell and Foaker left Guasa Masa on November 10 1895, with 168 Sudanese askari, 51 porters, a Maxim, and a number of followers with directions to progress south for fifteen miles to join the Cunningham column at Kabiyet. Captain Sitwell was deceived by his Maasai guides and ended his first day's march west instead of south. Sitwell believed that he had reached Kabiyet within a six-hour march, and not finding Cunningham's main column, he camped overnight. While both Cunningham and Sitwell were ineffectively searching for each other's column, both became embroiled in increasing Nandi resistance [19]. The Cunningham Column was running low on food by November 13, and he decided to move back to where he thought the Sitwell Column might be. Patrols from Cunningham's column skirmished with Nandi attempting to protect the grain-rich country the column had entered. The Nandi skirmished but were dispersed by the Maxim losing one warrior killed by a patrol and another captured by foraging porters near Kombe, and foraging patrols accounted for three more warriors and one rifle southeast of the Kipsomoitei camp (Rop, O.I., 22/02/2019).

Then the Nandi Kiptaiyet main force fell upon the column near dark Company IV received the brunt of the Nandi attack when the Nandi got between a patrol sent west by that Company and the Company. The Company IV was forced to retire and send for reinforcements. IX Company was left to guard the camp and the battered IV, and fresh V Company were sent to relieve the Baganda irregulars who had accompanied the IV company section southeast of the camp near the Kimondi River (Kogo O.I., 22/02/2019).
The relief companies could hear heavy firing as they neared the battlefield. Company V was held in reserve while a section of Company IV was detailed to secure the bridge across the river. The remaining three sections of IV Company covered by the Maxim crossed the bridge and began climbing up the left bank. It was then that the Nandi Kiptaiyet of 500 warriors appeared. The warriors ran straight at IV Company wheeling to the left. Ignoring the effects of the Maxim, the warriors continued forward until just thirty yards from the Company IV line, they broke. The section left at the bridge crossed over at the first warning and fired into the fleeing warriors. V Company was sent to cut off the warrior's retreat but was recalled due to the growing darkness (Bargoiyet, O.I., 02/03/2019).

It had been a near run battle. It had looked at the moment by observers that the IV Company sections would be over-run. However, the Sudanese askaris and their British officers had stood their ground, and both participants had experienced the capabilities of the one another. The British learned something of the Nandi discipline, eland, and tactics, and the Nandi learned something about the effectiveness of the gunfire they had never experienced before. However, it had come at a cost to both sides. The Nandi lost over a hundred warriors killed, and the British lost fourteen askaris and irregulars killed, including Sergeant Chongo[19]. On the morning of the 14th, IV and IX Companies were sent out but saw few of the enemy. Cunningham decided to move his camp across the Kimondi to Kapkobis. The move was made with the loss of only one porter. The column constructed a five-foot thorn enclosure which proved invaluable (Kosgei, O.I., 06/03/2019).

Just before dawn on the 17th, November 1895, an alarm was given by the sentries who discovered a large Nandi Kiptaiyet that had crept within a hundred yards of the enclosure. Incredibly, the warriors were not impressed by the earlier battle and were now attempting a night attack that had been so successful in the past. This time, however, the Nandi discovered that the firepower and thorn enclosure was too much to overcome. Leaving one dead warrior, the Nandi retreated but succeeded in carrying off the wounded into the night (Kimutai, O.I., 26/02/2019).

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After determining that there were no Nandi close, the column moved again on the November 17 1895, to a camp at Kipture. At this point, large numbers of Nandi warriors were seen, and the local villages were looted for food, but the Nandi did not attack the column as it moved. On the 18th large demonstrations were made by the Nandi that were dispersed by skirmishers as the column moved forward to cross the Mogong and Choimin Rivers. Pieces of bloodied cloth hung from the bridges as a sign of defiance by the Nandi. As the column climbed up the valley of the Choimin large bodies of Nandi were seen and disbursed by the Maxim and skirmishers from the IX Company. The column continued until it was in a heavily populated area and camped on Teito Hill. No attack was launched, but large herds of sheep and goats were seen moving away from the column (Kipchirchir, O.I., 28/02/2019).

The Nandi changed their tactics beginning on the 19th, November 1895, when the warriors began harassing the column as it moved east through thick forest, and wounded several animals and one man in an arrow attack on the column during the night. On the 20th, November, huge boulders were rolled upon the column as it descended down a narrow trail in the Sagane Valley. That evening arrows rained down upon the camp wounding one man and a cow. The Nandi arrows ceased when the Sudanese returned fire into the darkness. The Nandi managed to spear two followers at a water hole by evading the sentries on the 21st (Korir, O.I., 23/02/2019).

To end the resistance, the British Col. Richard Meinertzhagen invited Koitalel to negotiate a truce. The peace meeting was to be held at 11:00 AM on October 19, 1905. Suspecting that he would be killed as his father Kimnyole had feared, Samoei instructed the British Colonel to come with five companions to meet him at Ketbarak (present-day Nandi Bears Club). Samoei was to come with five foretellers (Simat, O.I., 23/02/2019).

Contrary to the agreement, Meinhertzhagen marched from the fort at Kaptumo with 80 armed men, 75 of whom hid near the venue of the meeting. It is reported that when Koitalel stretched his hand to shake Meinhertzhagen's, the British Colonel shot him at point-blank range, thus killing him and effectively ending the Nandi Resistance [19].He was succeeded by his brother, KipelesarapTamasun, while his son, BarsirianarapManyei (born 1882), and would later become the Nandi leader from 1919 until 1922 when he was detained by the British. Barsirianwas not released until 1964, making him the longest-serving political prisoner in Kenyan history [20].

The earliest recorded mention of Arab caravans in Nandi oral tradition date to the 1850s during the time when the Saweibinda (age-set) were warriors. The contact was antagonistic with raids on the caravans carried out by Nandi warriors. By 1854, the name Mararma (to ornament a dress) had been conveyed upon a sub-set of the Sawe possibly as a result of the very successful raiding of Arab caravans or perhaps as a result of the major defeat at Kipsoboi. These were good years for the Nandi (Keter, O.I., 17/02/2019).

The Nandi warriors had never encountered a foe armed with firearms before, and they had to develop new military tactics to overcome the effectiveness of a large number of firearms. Like the Maasai, the warriors drew the enemy's fire by a sudden rush at which time they went go to ground. Then the warriors charged the caravan porters before the muzzle loading weapons could be recharged. The porters bolted into the reloading riflemen followed closely by the Nandi warriors, and in this confusion, the Nandi warriors could spear the panicked men. This tactic would be deployed effectively until the battle of Kimondi in 1895 (Mosop, O.I., 17/02/2019).

Part of the reason for the Nandi success was the limited access. The most straightforward approach was from the north-east, but a caravan had to travel two or three days before reaching principal Nandi settlements. This evidently was not preferable as the Arab caravans diverted east to Kavirondo and Mumias where food and protection were located. Due to the casualties to the caravans, direct trade increasingly became difficult. Caravans rarely entered or camped in Nandi, and a strange middle man system evolved after the 1850s. Trusted Sotik and Dorobo agents were employed to act as middlemen who would trade ivory and other coastal goods for cattle to the Nandi for a large commission (Ngisirei, O.I., 17/02/2019).

Enterprising Arab traders hoping to circumvent this arrangement often fell victims to a Nandi ploy. A few old Nandi warriors would meet the armed caravan and tell them that a large supply of ivory was only two- or three-days journey from the caravan. However, the Nandi were only willing to entertain a small Arab party to negotiate a trade. Dutifully, a party of twenty men would be dispatched with cloth, wire, and other trade goods only to be ambushed by the Nandi and massacred. Another ruse used by the Nandi was to send a small party of warriors to lead the prospective caravan into the depths of Nandi by the wrong road and then conduct a night attack. The Arab traders even attempted a tactic that had worked with other tribes, blood brotherhood. This consisted of sitting opposite one another, cutting the back of each other's hand and sucking the blood from one another's hand. The Nandi held no credence to such a foreign ceremony, and it only became another ploy to acquire coastal goods quickly (Chepkirui, O.I., 18/02/2019).

Frustrated by failures, the Arab traders attempted one last tactic. They established a series of fortified stations at Kimatke, Kibigori, Chemelil, Kipsoboi and Kobujoi, and began a campaign of intimidation. Donkeys were let loose to trample the millet fields, Nandi warriors were humiliated, Nandi boys were imprisoned, and Nandi women and girls were raped. At Kipsoboi four Nandi shields were propped against a tree, and the Nandi were offered the chance to shoot arrows into the shields. Once this was accomplished, the Arabs fired musket balls through the shields that had stopped the arrows. The Arabs then poured gruel over the attending Nandi's heads and shaved off their cherished locks (Jerop, O.I., 19/02/2019).

The Nandi warriors had had enough. They sought permission from the KaptalamOrkoiyot to kill the Arabs. He gave permission, and the post was stormed. Some accounts

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credit the Orkoiyot's charms with making the defender's ammunition disappear, while others credit the error of the garrison commander to provide ammunition to the riflemen. Regardless of the reason, the garrison at Kipsoboi was destroyed (Kiplimo, O.I., 20/02/2019).

The Nandi Kiptaiyat (raiding bands) then successfully attacked and slaughtered the garrison at Kobujoi. This was enough to force the Arab traders to withdraw from Nandi and to avoid the area. The defeat of the Arabs created the Nandi legend. The Nandi were undefeatable. Porters could not be hired, and expeditions could not be launched into Nandi for nearly forty years. The Nandi warriors stood proudly aloof from the events that were swirling around them, confident of defending their independence (Kosgei, O.I., 06/03/2019).

By the later decades of the 19th century, at the time when the early European explorers started advancing into the interior of Kenya, Nandi territory was a closed country Thompson in 1883 was warned to avoid the country of the Nandi. The latter were known for attacks on strangers and caravans that would attempt to scale the great massif of the Mau. Matson, in his account of the resistance, shows 'how the irresponsible actions of two British traders, Dick and West, quickly upset the precarious modus vivendi between the Nandi and incoming British'. This would cause more than a decade of conflict led on the Nandi side by KoitalelArapSamoei, the Nandi Orkoiyot at the time (Keter, O.I., 17/02/2019).

The conflict would end on October 19 1905, when Col Richard Meinertzhagen called for a peace meeting. Instead, Meinertzhagen killed Koitalel and his entourage in cold blood on the grounds of what is now Nandi Bears Club. SostenSaina, grand-nephew of one of arapSamoei's bodyguards, notes that "There were about 22 of them who went for a meeting with the 'mzungu' that day. KoitalelarapSamoei had been advised not to shake hands because if he did, that would give him away as the leader. However, he extended his hand and was shot immediately". Shortly after this event, the Nandi Resistance ended, and Nandi was incorporated into the British East Africa Protectorate (Mosop, O.I., 17/02/2019).

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper has discussed two important socio-political and economic institutions among the Nandi. The institution of the Orkoiyot performed judicial, religious and security function. As regards to the age-sets, their security function was paramount because they not only protected the community but they were also an instrument of acquiring recourses such as water, pasture and livestock for the sustenance of the community.

The study recommends that further research be carried on the role of traditional security systems in the resolution of modern conflicts. Further to this, more research may be required on the role of traditional institutions in maintaining social cohesion. The role of women as agents of peace building also needs to be investigated further. The is also need for comparative studies between traditional and modern methods of conflict resolution in the context of the Nandi society.

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