

# Clan Influence on the Political Economy of the Abanyala of Navakholo Sub-County From 1970-2013

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## Abstract

Clans were often viewed anachronistically in a world characterized by globalization. Yet, recent research highlights that clans not only determine how societies function, but play a central political role in many parts of the Middle East, Central Asia and Africa. The research focused on clan influence on the political economy among the Abanyala of Navakholo sub-county from 1970-2013. The main objective of the study was to investigate the influence of the clan on the political economy of the Abanyala in Navakholo sub-county. The objective of the study was to examine the relationship between clan and politics among the Abanyala. The research constitutes a literature review comprising of the current knowledge such as clans as political units, Nature of clan politics, influence of clan politics on development, challenges of clan politics, impact of clan politics on leadership, perception of clan politics and influence of clan politics on allocation and distribution of resources. This study was guided by Thorsten Veblen's theory of institutional change (1899) and Karl Marx theory on human consciousness. It adopted the descriptive survey research design in line with purpose and objectives of the study. The descriptive survey research design was adopted as the most appropriate in analyzing Navakholo's politics in relation to clans and in identifying whether the system would work with it. The target population consisted of 376 respondents comprising of 40 clan heads, 150 elderly people, 166 youth and 20 administrative and political leaders. Using stratified random sampling, quota sampling, and simple random sampling techniques, a sample of 114 respondents that composed of 13 clan heads, 45 elderly people, 50 youth and 6 administrative and political leaders were selected. Questionnaires and interview schedule were used to collect data from respondents. A pilot study was carried out in Ingotse-Matiha ward majorly comprising the Abatsotso who are in the same Sub-County. An independent group of clan heads, elderly people, youths as well as political and administrative leaders were interviewed. Qualitative data as well as quantitative data collection was used. The study findings revealed that political differences exist in majority of the Abanyala clans. Conflict among the Abanyala leads to fragmented development within the sub-county mainly based on clan affiliations. Clans continue to influence the political decision-making of the sub-county hence causing fragmented development in the sub-county.

**Key word;** political economy, centralized government, anachronistic, bicameral parliament, segmentary lineage

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Clan politics in the world involve clan network and deals which penetrate and transform the formal regime in many ways. This includes: clan based appointments and patronage, by stripping state assets to feed one's clan network, and by crowding out other mechanisms of representation. Politics of the clan manifests itself when they undermine formal institutions and create an informal regime best understood as "clan politics." (Collins, 2004).

Most African societies usually identified with the clan, a unit of social organization: This was a grouping of people with a common ancestry (usually up to about three or four generations). The clan underpinned social interaction and determined social relationships such as marriage and custom subsets. Marriage within one's clan was a taboo and was strictly forbidden (Masakha *et. al* 2018:74-75). The custom still persists today. There was significant heterogeneity in political centralization across African ethnicities before colonization (Murdock, 1967). There were states with centralized administration and hierarchical organization such as the Songhai Empire in West Africa, the Luba Kingdom in Central Africa, and the kingdoms of Buganda and Ankole in Eastern Africa. Also, there existed a cephalous society without political organization beyond the village level. Such societies included the Nuer in Sudan and the Konkomba in Ghana and Togo.

The present study proposed to find out how the non-collaborative nature of the numerous clans among the Abanyala of Kakamega, Kenya has influenced its people in terms of the social, economic and political aspects. The Abanyala are believed to be descendants of Nyala. Physically, Nyala is a region found somewhere between Ethiopia and Sudan. Abanyala is a Luhya sub-group residing in two counties, Busia and Kakamega counties of western Kenya in East Africa, (African Press International, 2008). The Abanyala are among the 18 sub-ethnicities which comprises of the larger Luhya group.

## **II. METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Orodho (2003) defined descriptive research design as administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals. The study was carried out among clans and administrative posts in Navakholo sub-county in Kakamega County. The respondents were clan heads, elderly, young people, administrative and political leaders. Data was derived from first-hand information through personal Interviews, Observation, questionnaire and document analysis. The data that was collected from the clan heads, elderly people, youth and political leaders was sorted, edited, classified according to various categories.

## **III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

Clan politics manifested itself on the leadership of the Abanyala of Navakholo in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Abanyala is a Luhya sub-tribe and hence the pre-colonial organization of the Abaluhya has been discussed.

### **Nature of Clan Politics**

For many countries with weak oversight institutions, distortion in public spending is not uncommon. The budget is not immune to bureaucratic manipulations; senior civil servants misdirect public spending in favour of certain regions or projects, factors which contribute to misallocation of resources and inequalities (Kiringai, 2006:15). Kiringai (2006) further attributes inequalities in Kenya to such factors as historical, natural resource endowments, political patronage, policy choices and cultural norms, exogenous factors such as trade and technology and even bureaucratic excesses.

Anyoya (2009) describes the clan as a center of reference and identity, reputation and pride. As a result clan leaders possessed tremendous political and social authority and were at the centre of all social, religious and political activities. In the pre-colonial Abanyala people were not under one political authority that governed all the clans and there was no clan that was superior to the others. A significant complex and subtle relationship existed between kinship and politics in which elders managed their internal affairs with minimum supervision (Vaughan, 1986:177). It was a vertical society before the coming of the British and establishment of a protectorate in 1895. People's affairs were run by charismatic traditional leaders who used unwritten social norms as a means of problem solving mechanism. The introduction of a formal bureaucratic political authority to the Abaluhya people commenced with British rule. It is unquestionable for someone to say women's exclusion from the political participation and decision making was formalized by the colonial administration, as formal politics took shape in Somalia after independence in 1960, political representation was based on the clan system and men continued to occupy that domain, ironically it was under the repressive regime when Somali women for the first time took political positions. But even then, women's role remains minimal and few taken positions were given to them, (Warsame, 2000).

Traditionally, Luhya culture is based on the concept of patriarchy and is manifest by male rule. The patriarchy as a system of male domination shapes women's relationship in politics. It transforms male and female into men and women and construct the hierarchy of gender relations where men are privileged and women are subordinated. Adrienne (1986) defines patriarchy as: A familial – social, ideological, political system in which men by force, direct pressure or through ritual, tradition, law and language, customs etiquette, education, and the division of labour, determine what part women shall or shall not play in which the female subsumed under the male (Adrienne, 1986:189).

The gender role ideology is used as an ideological tool by patriarchy to place women within the private arena of home as mothers and wives and men in the public sphere (Adamu & Mekonnen, 2009:17). Among the Abanyala the Patriarchal influences dominates Nyala clans and politics as part of an African clanism and politics.

Patriarchy was a reality in Traditional African Societies (TAS) and had a far reaching implication to the African people and their societies so much that it continues to manifest itself in various forms in contemporary Africa. The reality of communalism in Africa, as it appears does not lie in its existence but in the fact that it was institutionalized, intensified and lasted longer in Africa than anywhere else thus the impact that it has created in the continent (Wafula, 2003). Some of the communalised activities included cultivation, problem solving, construction of houses, feasting and initiation. The activities were accompanied by drumming and traditional dances. Osogo (1966) asserts that; Through the communal work, families within the kinship groups

lived harmoniously with each other thereby maintaining peace. Human virtues such as courage diligence, uprightness, obedience, justice, hospitality and humility were encouraged (Osogo, 1966).

Wisdom was an important factor in appointing a man as a member of the council of elders or as a headman. The council of elders was responsible for legal matters embracing the observance of discipline and the adherence to traditional customs.

### **Pre-colonial organization**

Religion played a key role in the daily life of the Luhya people. The Luhya believed in a God whom they called *Were* and was usually regarded as the Supreme being though ancestral worship was highly regarded. The Luhya generally believed in life after death and elders were tasked with the responsibility of offering sacrifice at family level. The sacrifices usually involved animal and agricultural products; religion therefore was intervened with production modes.

Gumo (2018) asserts that the Luhya have always engaged in farming and land was therefore regarded to be of great economic and social significance. During the pre-colonial period land was owned communally and was under the clan elder (*Liguru*). Livestock was kept by individual households mainly for social functions such as payment of bride wealth. Therefore, one who possessed a large herd stood a chance of marrying many wives. Cattle also represented wealth and an index of social position. Furthermore cattle were the most vital aspect of the Abaluhya economy. From cattle they obtained meat, milk and blood for food, while skins were used for clothing and bedding. Livestock was also used in performing rituals and sacrifices to ancestral spirits thus played a major role in community rites. They also participated in barter trade, with the exchange of products mainly confined to foodstuff. The trade was both internal and external. It became common among neighbouring Nilotic communities (Gumo, 2018:125).

In the political sphere, the Luhya sub-ethnic groups were mainly organised into clan based governments headed mainly by elders. Were (1968), explains that the Abawanga had two major clans the Abashitsetse and Abakolwe possessing two dominant functions of leadership and executive functions. The former clan being known for producing the great leaders the Wanga have had over the years. The elders were to make political, economic and social decisions in issues such as warfare, legislation and use of land. Frequently, an influential, wise and an impartial elder was appointed by the other clan elders to streamline clan affairs.

The elder was bestowed with titles like; *Omwami*, *Omukali*, *Omukhulundu* or *Omukasa*. This position was highly untenable as an *Omukasa* could be easily removed in case of unpopularity. For others, security of office was guaranteed by the hereditary nature of that position. Amongst the Abawanga, however, a highly centralised government headed by the *Nabongo* (King) became the distinct point of difference in political organisation with the rest of the Luhya sub-ethnic groups that utilize the clan-based government. (Were, 1968)

### **Abanyala Clans**

Masakha *et al.* (2018: 12) describes clans among the Abanyala as *Ekholo* which is the basic family unit of organisation of closely interrelated members from the same lineage. They usually obey and conform to some basic laws, good behaviour and taboos. For instance when members of the same clan intermarry or even have sexual relations, it is considered an abomination as it is incest resulting to them being ostracised from the community. Abanyala are organised in clans though some of the clans currently existing have been assimilated from neighbouring sub-tribes like Ababukusu, Abawanga and Abakabrasi. The root of the individual clan always remains although it can be influenced by other clans.

Different Banyala clans are known for having different characteristics, cultural beliefs and practices. Examples include; *Abayirifuma* famous for producing leaders and rainmakers, *Abasanya* (leadership and harshness), *Abatecho* (totem snakes), *Abalanda* for their tall stature. Other clans include; *Abaafu*, *Abasia*, *Abatabani*, *Abaengere*, *Abasonge*, *Abauma*, *Abakangala*, *Abasaya*, *Ababenge*, *Abakhubichi*, *Abasumba*, *Abakoye*, *Abakwangwachi*, *Abahafu*, *Abalindo*, *Abalindavyoki*, *Abasaacha*, *Abasiloli*, *Abayaya*, *Abamuchuu*, *Abamugi*, *Abamulembo*, *Abamwaya*, *Abamani*, *Abaokho*, *Abasakwa*, *Abaucha*, *Abaumwo*, *Abagembe*, and *Abaero*, (Masakha *et al.*, 2018:13). Which form the original Banyala clans. All of whom are expected to strictly stick to their roles.

### **Clan politics**

Abanyala believe that politics amongst clans began way back in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century during their migration and settlement. The Banyalas of Navakholo sub-county are descendants of Mukhamba who handed over leadership to chief Nasokho wa Nalukuwo of the Abasaya clan and ruled the Banyala from Tororo in Uganda. According to oral tradition, Chief Nasokho had hired the services of a Maasai herdsman called Masirivai. It was during this period that there was a severe drought resulting to famine. One day, Masirivai performed traditional magic which resulted to rains after a lengthy period of drought. The people sang and danced in his praise. During a certain day as Masirivai was cleaning the cowshed, Nasokho's wife saw the

anointed bracelet of leadership on his wrist (*Omukasa Kwo Wami*) making her inform her husband. On learning about the discovery, the community urged chief Nasokho to hand over the leadership mantle to Masivirai (*Abayirifuma* clan). Since culturally two leaders could not stay in the same home at the same time, Nasokho was forced to hand over leadership to Masivirai and that is how he ascended to the chieftainship (Masakha *et al.*, 2018: 5).

Generally, the chieftainship was hereditary among the Abanyala and was mainly among the Abayirifuma clan not until 1949 when Paul Udoto, from the Abasia clan took up the chieftainship because of his experience as a worker in the tribunal court. (Masakha *et al.*, 2018:5). The transition of leadership from one clan to another motivated people from other clans to have interest in chieftainship since then. Unlike the pre-colonial era where chiefs mainly descended from a specific lineage, nowadays they are competitively hired after interviews from a group of qualified applicants mainly basing on academic merit and leadership qualities though some sought of political influence come into play in rare occasions.

### **Clan leadership identity**

During the pre-colonial era, the typical dress code for leaders included a headgear crafted from a colobus monkey. The attire was referred to as *ekudiusi* and was usually covered in a skin of the black and white colobus monkey (*Esulusi*), a spear (*Efumo*) and shield (*Ekhumba*), a traditional stool (*Enjeve yo wami*) as well as a copper bracelet of leadership (*Omukasa kwa wami*). Also part of the dressing was a leopard cloak. The ruler received the fines paid by offenders as well as being offered beer and the best part of a slaughtered animal (Masakha *et al.*, 2018:36). Since the colonial period the dressing code has greatly changed; chiefs usually wear official government uniform with an emblem of authority, a black swagger stick as well as black beret with the national emblem and coat of arms which is a symbol of nation unity.

### **Administrative Units**

Currently, Navakholo constituency comprises of five wards. These are: Ingotse-Matiha, Shinoyi-Shikomari-Esumejiya, Bunyala West, Bunyala East and Bunyala Central wards. They mainly comprise of the Abanyala and Abatsotso. The Banyala are majorly located in three wards; Bunyala East, Bunyala West and Bunyala Central wards of which Members of the County Assembly are the elected representatives.

The onset of devolution in 2013 was preceded by the successful constitutional referendum conducted on 8<sup>th</sup> August, 2010 and promulgated on 27<sup>th</sup> August, 2010. According to the constitution of Kenya 2010, there was to be a devolved government referred to as County government with a County Assembly. During the first election after the promulgation of the Kenyan constitution in 2013, the initial Members of County Assembly (MCA's) were elected. The occupants of the prestigious position in wards occupied by the Abanyala included; Dennis Wekesa (Bunyala central), Robert Bushuru (Bunyala west) and Muhammed Kulova (Bunyala East). After the 2017 general elections Benard Wanjofu from Abairifuma clan was elected to represent Bunyala central, Rodgers Nato from Abaafu clan represents Bunyala East and Bunyala West is being represented by Edward Namunyu from the Abasiloli clan. Since then the original Lurambi Constituency that comprised of the Abanyala and Abatsotso has been sub-divided into Lurambi and Navakholo constituencies.

### **Development**

Most of the Abanyala clans came together in very many occasions both happy and sad. For instance during a calamity unity was clearly evident as members of the family, close relatives and members of the clan as well as other clans clearly took part in all the arrangements being put in place. Funeral ceremonies among the Abanyala were and are still public and open events (Masakha *et al.* 2018:17)

There was this notion that specific clans could do certain activities to perfection, for instance good leaders were perceived to be from Abairifuma and Abasenyia clans. Consequently, other clans who had potentially good leaders were discriminated against because of the belief that they were not capable of holding the leadership position. This for a fact led to emergence of some leaders like Ndombi wa Namusia who governed with an iron fist from 1911 to 1913, making many of the Banyalas to flee to neighbouring locations hence being referred to as *Banyala ba Ndombi*, an identity existing to date. Fortunately, he was a revered chief who initiated development of roads in Bunyala. Most of the Abanyala ba Ndombi practised polygamy. The Abayirifuma, Abasenyia and Abauma clans are good examples. It was believed to be a sign that one could rule over other people without a problem. This was a characteristic of Ndombi wa Namusia who had 42 wives in one big homestead with his hut in the middle where he brought in newly weds (Masakha *et al.* 2018:35).

A good number of the respondents clearly criticised disunity among clans. They clarified that, it has been the vice that has led to many parts of Bunyala lagging behind in various aspects of development. The respondents (Nangila Jane and Naututu Joyce, 10<sup>th</sup> May, 2018, Interviewed at Buchangu) were not very sure when clan politics began but most of those interviewed mentioned that real divisions among the Abanyala clans began in the years after Kenya's independence in 1963. It became clear as various clans wanted to safeguard the

interests of their people in terms of development projects and opportunities that arose within the government as well as within the society.

It is as a result of such individual efforts that a good number of clan members were motivated to pursue their education. This resulted to most of them taking up key roles in various sectors of the economy thus enabling them invest widely in the sub county. This reward was also given to the elders who educated their children more than others leading to clan members changing their negative attitude in matters education as they were able to observe the magnitude of development brought about in those families that had seriously invested in their children's education.

It was also mentioned that, an individual who grew major crops like maize and sugarcane and managed to secure a bounty harvest as compared to others was rewarded so as to encourage them to keep up with the same spirit and make others invest more in agricultural activities. This was done also as a way of ensuring there is food security within the clan. Another area of reward was when a clan member built the best house. This was acknowledged so as to foster progressive development as others would emulate such kind of success. Besides this, the clan members did participate in the improvement of the state of houses of some members more so those who were not fortunate enough to have sufficient resources. This was done by members of the clan contributing financially and in kind so as to ensure comfortability and improvement in the living standards of some of their clan members.

It was also observed that some areas of Navakholo sub-county were more developed as compared to others and this was as a result of clan affiliations involved. This has led to most of the Abanyala people lacking essential services nearby hence have to move for long distances to access some of the essential services like transportation, health, education and security. A good example is the polytechnic located at Lutaso in Bunyala East Ward should have been located at Navakholo Sub county headquarters which is in Bunyala Central ward this would be suitable because of accessibility, centrality and availability of other essential services that would be required by both the students and the workers.

In a group interview conducted on two senior members of Abasenya clan, Jane Nangila and Moses Chemoto on 10<sup>th</sup> May, 2018. revealed that the deficiencies in the afore mentioned areas was as a result of disunity among Abanyala clans and poor leadership. They concurred that both unity and real divisions among clans emerged after independence due to the introduction of new electoral boundaries. During the 1974 elections, unity among the Abanyala was evident as they voted in Shadrack Okova from the Abalindo clan as their MP with the belief he would take care of their interests, which he did partly. This was followed by the election of Wasike Ndombi from Abayirifuma clan, whose tenure was marred by allegations of misappropriation of funds meant to tarmac Lurambi-Bungoma road. This is said to have caused serious divisions among the Abanyala clans as a good number of clans felt that they were being segregated in terms of development and project implementation thus resulting to their division and subsequent election of Jawan Ommani from Abatsotso sub tribe in 1992.

Moses Chemoto a clan elder in an oral interview carried out on 10<sup>th</sup> May, 2018 at Siyombe. observed that most roads in Bunyala East ward had been ignored for a very long time and had become impassable making transportation of sugarcane to the sugar millers a night mare as well as traders taking their goods to the market. He mentioned this as one of the reasons for the downward trend in Bunyala's economic progression. He attributes existence of poor roads and lack of roads as avenues that propelled the careers of some individuals. The late Joshua Khaemba will be remembered for his self initiative to open up roads in areas such as Siyombe from the early 1990s. This enhanced easy access to the markets for the people eventually leading to his election as the councillor of Bunyala East ward in 1992 and re-elected for a second term in 1997.

Jane Nangila from her interview at Buchangu on 10<sup>th</sup> May, 2018, affirms that there was a health crisis as people had to move from the most remote parts to seek medical attention at Navakholo Health Centre that has since been upgraded to Navakholo Sub County Hospital. This resulted to a lot of deaths due to the distance that was to be covered. Clans had to come together to petition the government through their then MP, Wasike Ndombi to set up other health facilities in the area to cater for the ever increasing population. Medical facilities were as a result set up at Sivillie in the late 1980s and at Buchangu in the 1990s. In terms of social services, both Chemoto and Nangina affirmed that there were very few schools in the ward before 1970. They included; Siyombe, Sivillie and Namirama primary schools, forcing those in pursuit of education to walk long distances to attend school. The local population that included a variety of clans pushed for the establishment of more primary schools and this was realized in the 1970s onwards when schools like Weremba, Sikubale and Buchangu primary schools were set up.

The need for Secondary education also led to establishment of Buchangu and Sivillie Secondary Schools to add on to the already existing Namirama and Lutaso Secondary Schools. Both also pointed out the establishment of a polytechnic in the late 1980s was an initiative of the different clans in the ward to ensure their children are able to acquire various skills after their primary and Secondary Education.

### **Interaction of Clan Members**

According to Okafor (2002) the economic life in African Traditional Societies centred around hunting, food gathering, animal herding and farming. In African societies and cultures social institutions and cultural traits are types of relationships which though operate at various levels, are closely interwoven. It is because of this single factor that the survival of some elements of traditional economic practice in Nigeria and other African countries (Oluwabamide, 2007). The inhabitants of Bunyala are generally animal herders and agriculturalists.

The pre-colonial history of the Abanyala suggest a society whose interactions were closely linked to the clan. In the early twentieth century, the Abanyala lived around Bunyala forest. In this modified equatorial climate the Abanyala mainly engaged in food growing, hunted wildlife and gathered edible plants and roots.

Among the interactions Abanyala clan members engaged in included: circumcision, marriage, funeral and birth ceremonies also referred to as rites of passage as well as farming activities. During the post-colonial period, most of the clans discovered that for them to compete favourably they needed to embrace other forms of interaction apart from the existing ones. This was the period between 1970 and 1990, where for one to take up a meaningful role in society one had to be educated and there was no other way besides it. Marriage was one way where clans interacted and still interact today. It was rare scene for members of the same clan to get married. Also, intermarriage between some clans among the Abanyala was prohibited as they traced their origins from a common descendant. A good example was the intermarriage between the Abayirifuma from Ndombi's lineage cannot intermarry with Abasia as Ndombi's mother was Namusia.

Traditionally, the Abanyala got married in a simple way. From the written sources gathered among the Abanyala and oral interviews. It was either an arranged marriage between the parents without their children's knowledge. The boys' parents usually identified a hardworking girl from a reputable family in a different clan, spies would even be sent to actually see the prospective wife at work. Discrete inquiries were made about the girl's character and her ability to work. In the pre-colonial day's academic status was not a factor. The parents first paid a token (*esi echo*) to symbolise the intent to marry thereafter they paid dowry comprising of twelve cows for the father, a goat for the mother and aunt (*senge*), a cow for the uncles, a blanket for grandfather and money for both father and mother (Masakha *et al.* 2018:74-75).

Masakha *et al.* (2018) identifies funeral and burial rites was another way of interaction. When one died among the Abanyala communication was usually through screaming and wailing. Family began the wailing and it was followed by neighbours for the next three days. Dead bodies were preserved by placing a coin on the body and wrapping it with banana leaves and sand as well as sprinkling water on it. The old men and women were buried in animal skins while children were buried in leaves (*emikhakhala*). There was setting up of a communal fire by elders where people gathered every night for three days before burial accompanied by mourning and feasting. The feasting mainly depended on the economic power of the bereaved family hence varied from one family to another.

It was a common sight for each family member to scoop soil and drop it in the grave as a sign of goodbye to the deceased who was part of them. For an elder a traditional rite (*Esirembe*) is done a day after burial and it involved bulls from neighbouring homesteads fighting over the grave of the elder as a sign of respect. There were various forms of death and how they were to be handled. For instance when people committed suicide by hanging on trees, a special burial ceremony was held. The person who stumbled on the dead body had to remain on site mourning till he was paid some token. If the deceased was male then a bullock was to be given and if female a heifer. The rope used is then cut and body allowed falling with a thud. After which the tree is cut and uprooted. Sprouting of the tree spelt doom. When suicide occurs inside a house it is usually destroyed to prevent siring of children in such a place as the children sired would inherit the incurable death spirit (Masakha *et al.* 2018:78).

Death and funeral rites did not just involve the family but extended to other relatives and the larger community. Burial of the deceased always took place in the homestead. Funeral ceremonies in Bunyala were and still are public and open events (Masakha *et al.* 2018:77). Before the coming of the missionaries in Navakholo Sub-County, the luhya family was closely knit and tradition was the dominating power of the family and society as a whole. In the family the child acquired values and learnt skills and techniques, which were part of traditional cultural heritage. It was the family that played the primary role in the formal instruction given to initiates during rites that prepared the individual to assume the status and obligations of manhood and womanhood in the society (Osogo, 1966).

The process of initiation concerns undergoing a fundamental set of rites to start a new phase or beginning in life. Initiation marks the passing from one phase in life to the next more mature phase. The practice of initiation fundamentally has to do with transformation, and has been a central component of traditional African cultures from time immemorial (Ampim, 2003). Among the Banyala, it is done through circumcision of

male initiates thus without these, proper and requisite child's manhood would not be recognized by the society. The initiation of girls was done through imparting of necessary knowledge and skills to be able to behave responsibly by carrying out their roles as women and future mothers.

Circumcision is also a traditional rite of passage. Though the Abanyala initially did not engage in circumcision of boys, they picked up this traditional rite through intermarriage and interaction with other tribes such as the Elgon Maasai and their immediate neighbours who include the Bukusu, Kabras and Tachoni. It is a culture that they face west (*Mumbo*) while undergoing it as they believed that their ancestors came from that direction, unlike the Tachoni who face East (*Eukwe*).

Initiation of young boys into manhood was also a culture that involved members of different clans and as a custom. Preparations began as early as June but the ceremony usually commenced and still commences in August every even year and not any other month. As a rule unlike the Abakabras who engage in it in the month of December. This was to coincide with the harvesting season when plenty of food was expected.

After being circumcised, boys were taught cultural issues like defending the clan against aggression as well as how to become focused in performing their roles as responsible men in future.

Those circumcised during the same year (*bakoki*) respected and honoured each other. Whenever one of them circumcised the son he has an obligation of inviting his *bakoki* and slaughters a bull in their honour. The circumcision age groups among the Abanyala are based on the Ababukusu age sets which have a cycle of one hundred years. Before naming a new age group it was a custom to ensure all the people of that age set have died.

In an oral interview with Benard Oduki on 20<sup>th</sup> June, 2018; he affirmed that circumcision came with a huge burden on the initiate. He further states that one of the major learning areas was on responsibility and leadership. On responsibility an initiate was supposed to be able to come up with ways and means of feeding for the family and other dependants as he was considered to be an adult. As regards leadership, he was expected to make sound decisions that would propel his household forward both socially and economically which would as a result impact on the clan he traces his origin from.

At birth, the child was usually received with a lot of love as ululation was evident among the immediate family members, close relatives as well as the neighbours. After birth, the Abanyala gave names to their children according to weather seasons, days of the week, after their great ancestors as well as after major calamities in the community. All this depended on the sex of the child. For the community members to show solidarity with the new mother, they brought presents of various kinds as a sign of appreciation for the new addition to society.

Interestingly, each clan has its own unique family names, for instance, Waudo, Wangia and Siganga (*Abatecho*), Ndombi (*Abairifuma*), Udoto and Urandu (*Abasia*), Olut (*Abalanda*), Ekina and Likhayo (*Abadavani*); Khaoma (*Abavenge*) Ongaya and Webbo (*Abakhuvuchi*). Therefore, the clan had a say in the name a child was to be given. According to John Nyongesa of Malaha village, his second name Nyongesa meant that he was born during the weekend and on Saturday to be precise.

### **Religious Systems**

Clans also had a say in the kind of worship members were to engage in traditionally, most Banyala clans believed in God (*Were*) as well as ancestral spirits. They held that there was Were-Khakaba the creator of all things who resided in the mountains. Mukhobe-Sia-Murumwa was believed to be the chief mediator between God and human beings. He interceded for clans before they went to war or when illness had struck. Clan members were required to occasionally worship and intercede for the clan so that they could be successful in all their undertakings. *Were-Mulahi* was believed to bring good tidings whereas *Were-Kubi* was believed to bring death, sickness and disaster. (Masakha *et.al* 2018: 93)

The Banyala had traditional anointment known as *omusambwa*. It enabled one to take up certain roles on being born as they had been ear-marked for it by their forefathers. This was evident in some clans as those anointed were able to perform special acts like circumcising, traditional medicine, night running and divination.

Anointing was normally through one's clan inheritance, maternal uncle's clan at birth, as a dying person's wish and by stumbling on items discarded from a person whose anointing had been healed. When one showed symptoms of *Omusambwa*, then it was to be officially installed with the anointed believing in the spirit and following prescribed rules otherwise the power would be lost. Spiritual anointment had to be treated traditionally for it to hold. This was done by first identifying the components associated with it and assembling them, the spirits were also identified. This was followed by installing the trait to become operational.

The Banyala built shrines in which the spirits dwelt. The huts were constructed by a specific type of wood called *namuima*. There was a section *esikimbiro* from where rainmakers operated as well as spirits. Prophets (*omung'osi*) was one who had powers to foretell the future or explain future events. They usually employed divinatory means to arrive at possible knowledge of things in a process called *okhung'ola*. They were generally good people who worked for the good of the community. When evoked by the spirits, they possessed special abilities that they would use to offer solutions to problems. According to Moses Wekulo (Interview on

18<sup>th</sup> May, 2018, at Mukhweso), prophets played a critical role in the political economy of the Abanyala by identifying those with a negative attitude towards the progress of others within the clans resulting to them being austrosised from the community as they deter progress by all means and protecting those with good ideas on the well being of the community. As it is through their advice and input that various development projects are initiated.

Introduction of other religions in the colonial period, for instance Christianity, led to the establishment of schools starting with Chebuyusi Intermediate School followed by Namirama Girls School meant to cater for the girl child education. Most of the community leaders who emerged owe their success to these institutions. Satellite churches were encouraged to begin their own schools which in effect became centres of development. Chebuyusi has since changed from an intermediate school to a Harambee school, then a government sponsored secondary school and finally a High school with the capacity to accommodate students from different regions. Colonization therefore played a critical role in the opening up of the Abanyala economy therefore enhancing establishment of critical aspects of development.

### **Political Alliances**

Political alliances usually occurred when an electioneering period was near. Political leaders with a common ideology usually came together in unity so as to be able to take up political seats. Navakholo constituency which comprises of the Banyala and the Batsotso, has led to the need for political alliances. This is because, the Banyala feel that if they loose the parliamentary seat to the Batsotso; they would lag behind in development as well as the opportunities that come with leadership from within.

During the 2017 general elections, for instance, the incumbent Member of Parliament, Emmanuel Wangwe from the Abasuu clan, was clearly preferred by most of the clan leaders despite the fact that most Banyalas had offered their candidature. This was because of the kind of development that had taken place and his development agenda for the constituency.

Lack of completion of the Lurambi-Bungoma road has brought about mistrust among the Abanyala leaders. This has been brought by the lack of urgency by the political leadership on the completion of the road. Those aspiring for political office in 2022 have already began creating awareness among the people on the possibility of it being a campaign tool. The road has impacted negatively among the Abanyala in terms of movement of goods and people. It has slowed down development in Navakholo Sub- County as all public service vehicle owners have pulled out their vehicles due to the poor state of the road. There were varied ideas about political alliances being influenced by clan leaders. Those who agreed with this research question clarified that; the clan leaders usually organized for meetings with potential political aspirants either from the same clan or different clans so as to guide people on which way to go politically. This is to ensure that during elections they are able to get leadership which will in turn favour them development wise. They also stated that during clan leaders meetings politicians were usually guided by elders on how to sell their ideologies among their clan members which will in turn gain them support in terms of votes.

It was also evident that most Banyala clans had a desire of fielding their own candidate so as to fully benefit from the leadership. This makes them solicit for the support of other clans in order to be in a better position to succeed during election and this is with a promise to be included in the development agenda and benefit from the opportunities that would arise. Traditionally, there are some clans that believed they were superior to others and must always be given a shot in leadership in the political sphere. Clans typically privilege agnatic descent from the patriline and are characterized by extreme subordination of women affected through marriage practices particularly those that rise to particular types of political orders and may be fiercely guarded for this particular reason. Jacobson (2013:58), asserts that at the heart of tribes, to varying levels, is a severe patriarchy.

Clan leaders are also believed to craft political alliances by presenting their preferred candidate and persuading members of their clans to support the candidate by voting for them. Subsequently, whenever clan leaders decided on a candidate, the clan members had little option but to support the person chosen as they respected the leaders as they were perceived as wise. Besides they feared to be cursed by elders for going against their wishes, though most of the youths and elders agree that this notion is slowly fading away.

Kasfir (1976:77) argues that some of the attributes of ethnicity, such as language, territory and cultural practices, are objective and their objectivity is partially underscored by the fact that they are seen by both insiders and outsiders of a given ethnic community, as significant indicators of identity, to such an extent that they may be used as bases for political mobilisation. It was also mentioned that clan elders had been side-lined in the making of political alliances as in the modern times. Those that are illiterate have been neglected; politicians usually pick on the learned few within the clans who in turn drive their political agenda. Political alliances are also believed to be formed by leaders who believed it will help them as individuals and not the society hence no need to involve the elders in crafting of alliances.



In addition, another respondent pointed out that political alliances were brought about when other political aspirants felt that one of their opponents was financially endowed and therefore offered their support to him or her so as to gain in terms of the financial aspect. Most of the respondents were of the view that most of the political alliances that were created in the early 1970s and those being created nowadays have been influenced by clan leaders who as per the moment a good number of them are literate and have an idea of Bunyala politics.

### **Economic Activities**

In the mid-twentieth century, clans still had a major say in which economic activities its members were to engage in as it was for the welfare of the whole clan, the clan was to ensure that its members had food security and that they were living a healthy life (Group Interview 4<sup>th</sup> July, 2018, at Nambacha). The main economic activities then were cultivating, livestock keeping, trading, hunting and gathering. Distribution of land among clan members was usually done by the clans as they were the owners of the land. Families were allocated land mainly according to their size and position a family head held in the society, the man was therefore in charge of the land. He established his homestead in the allocated land. Most of the Abanyala were polygamous hence had a large homestead to accommodate the wives as well as the children. In ordinary circumstances the man's hut was located at the centre of the compound, with the wives surrounding his hut depending with the number of wives he had. The picture below shows a view of how the homestead appeared.

Farming activities were conducted in such a way that; the land near the homestead belonged to the woman and the end products usually vegetables were supposed to be used for the daily consumption of the family. The entire family usually participated in the farming activities as it was all for the welfare of the family and in the event that the land was vast then hired labour that was to be paid in kind was used. Nowadays, planting of trees around the homesteads is widespread. The practice has led to an additional source of income to the family as when the trees matured they would be sold thus earning the family extra income to cater for various expenses within the family and clan. It was part of the culture among the Abanyala that men were not allowed to sleep in the kitchen as it was purely reserved for the in-laws who were visiting. Children were also forbidden to step on the cooking stones, while it was a serious taboo for a husband to remove the cooking stones as it amounted to possible separation with the wife. Masakha *et al.*, (2018:47).

### **Pre- Colonial Economic Activities**

The Banyala used to till their land using hoes and other iron implements obtained during trade with their neighbours like the Wanga, Kabras and Bukusu. With the possession of such implements and the use of ox-drawn ploughs, the Abanyala were able to cultivate large tracts of land. Prior to the colonial era, land usage patterns never showed any evolutionary tendency towards individualized land tenure by farmers. This combined with the notion that farming is required to satisfy needs and not to maximize gain, curtailed incentives (Lesthaeghe, 1989).

Before the Abanyala engaged in planting, the men and boys were required to participate fully in tilling of the land, moreso if it was a large tract of land. Unlike in the pre-colonial period where land was tilled using family labour, ox-drawn ploughs were used which played a critical role in effectiveness of work as well as time saving. Abanyala plough their land from as early as January to as late as March in a typical planting season.

The Banyala usually grew and still grow traditional foods which include, sorghum (*amavere*), finger millet (*owule*), simsim (*enuni*), a variety of nuts especially groundnuts or peanuts (*enjuuku*), mbambara nuts (*embaande*), peas especially (*eng'oli*), pumpkins (*esuusa*), sweet potatoes (*amapwoni*), bananas (*amachemwa*), and arrow roots (*enduma*). The Abanyala harvested sorghum and millet using special knives (*engeso*) and maize by hand. Beans were uprooted by hand and sun dried. Maize was ground into flour using hand stones *olukina* or hand driven posho mills *ereko*, with the coming of the white man. (Masakha *et al.* 2018: 64)

Most of the grains including maize, sorghum and millet were stored in granaries which were mostly respected in a Munyala's homestead. Women were prohibited from entering the granary and would only do so on being instructed by their husbands. This was a mechanism to guard against famine and ensure that both the nuclear and extended family were safe from engaging in food borrowing until the next harvest.

Another economic activity was livestock keeping which was always vital for every Munyala in the sense that one was to at least have a cow in their homestead. This was to satisfy some of their basic needs at home, for instance the requirement of milk for the young ones. Animals kept included cows, sheep and goats which provided the different families with meat (*enyama*), milk (*amaveere*), blood, manure was also got from the livestock to improve on the fertility of soil thus increasing agricultural production, cow dung was mainly used in the building of houses and more often to smear the floor and of course, the skins were used for clothing and bedding. They were also used for cultural functions like paying bride wealth. Thus, an individual with

several herds of cattle had a high likelihood of marrying many wives. This increased not only labour power in his homestead but also surplus food.

Cattle also represented wealth and an index of social position, giving out sacrifices as well as in performing rituals to the ancestral spirits. Animal sacrifices played a major role in community rites. Prestige was attached to wealth measured in the number of herds of livestock that the individual had or in the amount of foodstuff that his land produced, the amount of land he had, and the number of wives and children in his possession. Oxen were kept in most homesteads among the Banyala purposely for cultivation of their land while donkeys were also kept by some clans so as to provide transport. All this took place with the clan leaders acting as an oversight.

Okafor (2002) describes market in traditional economy as only a place for buying and selling; also used as a judicial and communication centre. Ayittey (1999) defines a market as a place where exchanges could be made more easily. According to him, where the exchanges occurred regularly, a market place would develop. Economic specialization in different fields was also observed among the Abanyala. Elaborate basketry and weaving, leatherwork, pottery and sewing of different fibre material. These industries flourished as their products were exchanged at the village level and local markets. Work takes place in familiar context of daily life, along with recreation, politics and religious worship. All of these articulate with kinship. Work and family life are not segregated in traditional work, as it is in modern organizations (Okafor, 2002).

The Banyala clans also involved themselves in trading activities so as to satisfy their needs. Clan leaders had a say in the kind of trade goods that were supposed to be dealt in so as to ensure the needs of their clan members were realized. Most of the trading activities usually involved their immediate neighbours like the Abakabras, Abatsotso, Abawanga and Ababukusu with whom they carried out barter trade. Masakha *et al.* (2018) identifies some of the trading goods from the Banyala as grass ropes (*emikoye*), fishing basket (*ebamo*), bells (*enyimba*), pots (*enyungu*) bracelets (*ebitiiri*), livestock, fish, foodstuff among others. Another economic activity that clan leaders encouraged and at times organized their members to engage in was hunting and gathering. This was as a measure to supplement what they grew and domesticated. Some of the animals hunted included squirrels (*emuna*), porcupines (*enjejeje*), antelopes (*embogo*), hare (*entuyu*), warthog (*engiri*) and ant eater (*mwaka*). This particular economic activity was mainly undertaken by men. Hunting within clans was organised in two ways one of which was individual hunting where one would place a trap and visit the trap later to find how lucky he was in terms of the catch. The clan also organised for hunting expeditions that included the best hunters within the clan, whatever proceeds that were got was distributed among the different participants as well as the less privileged in the clan.

The Banyala got meat from wild animals they hunted, which was in turn roasted, boiled or smoked into hard meat (*esiango*) which could be cooked only when need arose by use of specific ash filtrate (*omukherekha*). They also gathered termites (*amake*), grasshoppers (*amatete*), birds (*enyuni*), white ants (*eswa*) of which; *eswa ekhanu*, *enjunda* and *amasechere* were the edible ones. The Abanyala also engaged in fishing, more so for those that lived along rivers they were fortunate enough to get fish (*eng'eni*). This was a delicacy as it was a rare type of meat. This was made successful as the Abanyala were involved in production of fishing rods (*olusianyama*) and fishing basket (*ebamo*) Masakha *et al.*, (2018:65).

### **Post-colonial Economic Activities**

This section tackled the economic activities that Abanyala began engaging in immediately after independence. Most of the Banyala clans began embracing new methods of farming, livestock keeping and crop farming in order to improve their economic situation as well as to enhance development within the societies from the proceeds. The newly embraced and improved economic activities included cultivation, livestock farming, mining and trading. Majority of the Banyala clans have all along been involved in crop cultivation as a means of their livelihood. Some of the food crops cultivated included sorghum, sesame, millet and bananas. Initially, use of bullocks to cultivate farmland was widely spread among various clans as it was seen as the fastest and easiest way of land cultivation. With the introduction of cash crop farming, which involved planting of crops like, sugarcane on large tracts of land. The need for a faster and more reliable means of cultivation emerged thus leading to mechanization of farm operations where tractors were embraced by some of the clans. They majorly involved themselves in food crop farming until some years after independence, when some clans began carrying out cash crop farming. There have been numerous developments in the agricultural sector, whereby farmers moved away from cultivating crops on small parcels of land to plantation farming thus enhancing a greater harvest. Crop diversification began beyond maize and sugarcane in the late 1990s, but maize remained the leading staple and cash crop and has stayed the case to this day. This was viewed as a way of increasing income in various family households and moving away from the culture of over reliance on sugarcane proceeds. Farmers in a majority of the clans were sceptical about the new diversification areas and had a belief that if they engaged in such practices they would end up making losses.

Since the promulgation of the constitution of Kenya 2010, and subsequent establishment of the county government, which has pumped resources into the agricultural sector such as offering farmers with subsidised farm inputs like fertilizers, as well as the success of some of the farmers, has prompted farmers in Bunyala to engage in a variety of farming activities. The farming activities include: horticulture which is currently being done in green houses during the dry season as well as on natural land. One of the people who have ventured into this type of farming is Elkana Malava who doubles up as a businessman.

Through Oral tradition from the late Charles Waudo, revealed that Wambichi often harvested more than 150 bags of maize yearly. Such achievements were not evident among the Abanyala ba Ndombi and that made the Abatecho clan to be proud of his achievement. Livestock farming has been taken to another level by most farmers among the Banyala. Farmers have embraced keeping of exotic breeds of animals ranging from cows, pigs, goats and poultry. This is due to pioneer farmers who undertook the risk of keeping dairy animals like the fresian, arshire and gurnsey and were able to boost their income hence improved living standards. Those farmers who were still deeply rooted to the keeping of indigenous local breeds of cattle like the Zebu and Boran had their income stagnating hence poor living standards. It is as a result of such success that most farmers have begun rearing dairy animals and embracing new breeding techniques like artificial insemination.

The county government led by the county governor Wycliffe Oparanya encouraged dairy farming, by giving out exotic dairy animals to some of the less privileged families among the Banyala (Kakamega County Dairy and Development Act, 2018). This was among his first tasks to engage in after his election in 2013, purposely to create self-employment and improve on the families' income. Another notable *Mtecho* is Silvanus Ng'ombe who engages in serious pig rearing at Mukangu village has been classified as pioneering large scale farmer among the Banyala.

Mining of sand is another economic activity the Banyala's engage in. Most of the mining takes place along the major permanent rivers passing through Navakholo sub-county. They are river Lusumu at the heart of Navakholo sub-county and river Nzoia which is found at the border with Bungoma County. Sand is usually scooped and sold to potential buyers from within and outside the sub-county, who intend to engage mostly in the construction industry. This has been a success as the need for this important construction material has helped many people not go far away to acquire it thus reducing transportation costs. Several development projects have occurred in Bunyala easily as a result of the presence of this very important construction commodity.

Today most people from different clans operate independent of clan restrictions in terms of business related activities. A variety of businesses have been set up dealing with a wide range of goods both in retail and wholesale. One is allowed to buy and sell goods to whomever he or she wishes. This has been brought about by the free interaction among members of different clans and the need to acquire a particular commodity. Nowadays this has been completely done away with as most of the families, regardless of the clans they belong are responsible for the kind of goods they wish to acquire as well as dispose off.

Most of the respondents concurred to the fact that clans had a major say in the kind of cultural activities people in their clans were involved in as it was part of the foundation of the clan and that is how different clans were known. This is evident even today as any cultural festivals being held in Bunyala must be graced by the clan leaders.

### **Cultural Activities**

During the pre-colonial period, marriage was either arranged or by eloping. In an arranged marriage, parents to the boy identified a hard-working girl from a reputable family in a different clan. This was very important as a hardworking girl would be of economic importance to the clan, as she would ensure there is enough food for the family and surplus to cater for eventualities like famine. In case of death widows were inherited by brother-in-law or close relative of deceased (Masakha *et al.* 2018:74-75).

Marriage was usually sealed in a traditional ceremony called *Okwich eyechio* confirming one has received a wife and was given willingly by family or clan (Masakha *et al.* 2018: 76). Elkana Malava stated that among the Abanyala, it was norm that a young male adult was to marry and a young female adult to be married. For the male it was to purposely ensure continuity of the clan whereas for the girl it was basically to ensure survival of the family line. The two were expected to work together to ensure they amass enough wealth to sustain themselves and for the well being of the society. They also became part of decision making within the clan owing to their status, thereby driving the clan's economy (Interview report, 9<sup>th</sup> July, 2018).

Masakha *et al.* (2018) further explains that the Abanyala made their clothes from animal skins, hides and plants. They made a variety of dresses from weaving. Their dress code was mainly based on status, sex and age. It was a common sight for men to put on hides and skins from their domestic livestock. Men usually preferred red colour, and made royal robes (*Ekutiusi*) from hides and skins of various wild animals. Women had a special clothe *Eschengwa* a skin used to cover their shoulders and breast region. The dresses were traded on and it became a source of income to those involved in the industry.

Music was also another important aspect of culture among the Abanyala. It was used for celebration of the birth of a child, marriage ceremonies, important societal issues, funerals and entertainment among other uses. In funerals music was important as it consoled the bereaved, praised the departed and kept people awake at night. Music generally helped people work, praise or criticize society members, record history and instill social values in members of the society. Music played a critical role in improvement of the economy among the Banyala by encouraging them to work extra hard to meet their targets and even surpass them thus improving their living standards (Masakha *et al.* 2018: 84).

The man generally owned the home (*engo*) whereas the wife owned the house (*munju*). The man's pride was to have a home, whereas the woman's was in owning and managing her own house. To enhance peace and harmony, each person was expected to understand the respective roles. Mature boys more so those that had been circumcised were encouraged not to stay with their parents but build their own huts (*Esimba*) commonly known as a cottage (Masakha *et al.*, 2018). This was the initial test of responsibility among them as they received very little assistance if any. Such an approach encouraged the emergence of responsible members in the clan therefore leading to a prosperous clan in the future as a self driven generation emerged.

Masakha *et al.* (2018:87-88), points out that Banyala clans had specific practices by which a clan could be identified with. For instance, the Abaengere clan was gifted with the power to determine the truth of a matter, that is in case of a crime or abomination equipment by the name (*Oluengera*) Truthmeter was used in identifying the culprit. At the same time, the pine of a porcupine would stand vertically erect inside the ball fruit of erende without touching the sides. A man with *Oluengera* was to be faithful to his wife to the hilt. Those in charge of weapons of defence (*Abalindavyoki*). Those that were front fighters (*Abasindusi*) and those who could predict the future (*Abahola* and *Abakwangwachi*).

Masakha *et al.* (2018) mentions that, other people inherited certain traits with inherent power over many things. This includes foretelling events (*Abalakusi*) mainly among the Abairifuma clan, circumcision (*Abakhebi*) and Black smith (*Omukaba*) among the Abasaya clan. Others also had rainmaking power (*Okhukimbaefula*) among Abairifuma clan. All the individuals mentioned as pertaining certain responsibilities were usually appeased for the specific roles they undertook within the community in kind as well as being given monetary rewards thus formed their basis of economic empowerment.

### **Distribution of Resources**

This section deals with how resources received from the National and County governments as well as Non-Governmental organizations are spread among the Abanyala ba Ndombi. The term refers to the way in which resources including land, water, minerals, fuel and wealth in general are spread among corresponding geographic entities. Resource distribution has the potential to ignite economic development, raise living standards, and reduce income inequality, some of the goals most governments in the developing world are keen to achieve. Mwanika (2010) explains that the widespread demand for state resources has resulted to contention on how it is distributed. In clan based societies, government positions are sought and used to obtain additional assets for the clan and its members, and not to build up the broader society or the institutions of the state. Valerie *et al.* (2015) asserts that the resources of the government are always viewed as a potential booty, which clans feel should be pre-emptively stripped lest they fall to the control of other clans. For instance in Kenya, there is a term used for the asset stripping clan in power "eating" therefore as a new clan takes over power, members announce "its our turn to eat." (Wrong, 2010)

The way in which resources are being distributed has often been a major cause of concern. During the pre-colonial days, for instance, land was distributed among clan members basing on issues like family size, status in the clan as well as one's strength and ability to work better. Families with more boys were also favored in land distribution over a family with more females. It was viewed they were their father's successors. In the colonial period, the British took most of African fertile land and made Africans live in Native Reserves thus rendering a good number landless. (Van Zwanenberg, 1975; Berman 1990) stated that in the Native Reserves, there was a general problem of congestion and absence of land to absorb the growing population. Size of land continued to drop as families subdivided existing land holdings among family members. In the post-colonial era, issue of land as a key resource still exists. This is because some of those who took up leadership positions acquired large parcels of land for themselves at the expense of other citizens.

Nangedo (1981:10) argues that the African land tenure system was communal and guaranteed rights of access and control over land. It was therefore a communal responsibility to allocate pieces of land to community members if necessary. This control did not imply ownership of the physical parcel. The conceptualization of land to Africans did not include fixture as being part of it. This clearly explains Kibwana (1990:233) assertion that individual autonomy in land matters was alien to pre-colonial land tenure system. Majority of those interviewed were of the view that the idea of clan politics on resource distribution was there during the pre-colonial days as they were narrated to by their grandparents.

According to oral tradition, politics mainly revolved around allocation of clan land to individual family members. They asserted that land was allocated by clan leaders basing on several factors (Group Interview 5<sup>th</sup> July, 2018). While allocating land they considered size of one's family, in that the larger your family was the more land you were allocated. This was to ensure that one was able to produce enough food to feed the family and also have enough space to set up houses '*esimba*' for the grown up male children immediately after circumcision. The wealth of an individual was also a determining factor on what size of land one was allocated. A person who was endowed with wealth was allocated a greater piece of land than one who was lacking in resources. This was meant to enhance hard work among people despite one's background. An individual's position in the clan was also critical in land allocation as they were usually allocated a greater piece of land than those holding no positions within the clan.

Masakha *et al.* (2018:10) identifies 1939 as the year chief Ndombi wa Namusia died. The son, Andrea Ndombi, took charge and was sacked in 1940 by the District Commissioner for irregular allocation of forest land to the Banyala people. It was due to a power vacuum that Paul Udoto Urandu *Omusia* was appointed to be chief due to his working experience in the tribunal court. The leadership of chief Udoto from 1944-1955 was credited for spear heading the carpeting of roads in some parts of Bunyala such as Musaga to Navakholo thus made Bunyala accessible laying a strong foundation for future development. Most land ownership had shifted from the clan to individual ownership. Thus, some of the Abanyala individuals who embraced development donated their land on being requested or out of being visionary just as those that donated collectively so that the Mission at Chebuyusi could be established. He is also remembered for asking his maternal uncle Phillip Manueri *Omulanda* to provide land for the construction of the present Navakholo market which was identified to be at a central position. This is the current headquarters of Navakholo sub-county. This kind of selflessness on the part of Chief Paul Udoto, who hailed from Musaga, but initiated development projects else where was admired by many despite their clans. It became a challenge to other leaders who were also expected to emulate him. Thus, this ensured resources are distributed not basing on clan affiliations but viability of a given project and its economic importance in the sub-county.

### **Choice of Leaders**

Some of the considerations made before choice of clan leadership of the Abanyala will be dealt with in this section. Leadership among the Abanyala was known to be influenced by clan leaders, though family ties and specific clans were preferred as compared to others. This made potential leaders from other clans to be avoided for fear of going against the culture which preferred a certain clan of the Banyala over others. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century during the migration of the Abanyala, Chief Mukhamba was their first leader after which Chief Nasokho wa Nalukuo *Abasaya* clan took the mantle. His successor was his own Elgon Maasai herdsman called Masivirira who performed a traditional ritual and caused rainfall after a prolonged drought. Maero wa Masivirai took over leadership from his father. On Maeros death Manyuru took over the leadership. Because of Manyuru's rebellious nature, between 1895 and 1900, the colonial Administrator C.W. Hobley sent Hamisi Ndombi to take over from Chief Manyuru. He took over and Manyuru had to flee (Masakha *et al.* 2018).

Looking at the history of succession of chiefs from the period 1970, when Johnson Barasa Ongeti (*musenya*) took charge as chief (his younger brother married chief Paul Udoto eldest daughter). Chief Ongeti was succeeded by Matayo Oyalo (*mukoye*) in 1980, who married Chief Paul Udoto's niece. The two marriages had a great significance in that they were aimed at creating confidence among the subjects who hailed from various clans and would question their legitimacy in that very position of chief. In 1990, Ferdinand Muterwa (*mutecho*) took charge till 1994 when Bunyala was subdivided into three locations; Bunyala East, Bunyala Central and Bunyala west. It was thus a common occurrence for clans currently on leadership and those that had been in power to intermarry so as to ensure the leadership is safeguarded amongst their clans. Bakari Nandikove, the son of former Namirama senior assistant chief Makokha Nandikove, became chief of Bunyala East in 1994, Moses Wegulo Wachakana, the grandson of chief Ndombi wa Namusia became chief of Bunyala central in 1995 and Bunyala west went to Ferdinand Muterwa. After Muterwa's retirement, Bunyala west got a series of chiefs who did not last for long because of administrative issues. They included; Chirikona Mundalo Wakhisi, Davies Wakhisi 2002, Peter Wesonga assistant chief Budonga acted as chief from 2006 to 2009. Brown John Wasike became chief of Banyala west in 2010 (Masakha *et al.*, 2018: 36).

It was generally believed that the leaders hailing from clans like Abayirifuma had what it takes to lead people to prosperity and development as it was part of their calling. Some of the youths were of a different view and felt that, belonging to a specific clan should not be an issue in leadership but the qualities an individual possesses regardless of the clan should be a key factor.

The Abanyala have for a long time been under Abayirifuma leadership apart from some few instances when other clans were able to safeguard leadership roles. From the several Abanyala clans it has been researched and noted that the following clans have taken up leadership roles. The clans represented are; Abayirifuma, Abahafu, Abatecho, Abaengere, Abasenya, Abakoye, Ababenge, Abasumba, Abasia, Abauma,

Abasuu and Abalindo who have taken up both administrative and elective roles. The other clans not represented in leadership include Abasonge, Abasumba, Abamisoho, Abasiondo, Abakwangwachi, Abalindavyoki, Abasaacha, Abasiloli, Abamuchuu, Abamugi, Abamulembo, Abamwaya, Abaokho, Abasakwa, Abaucha, Abaumwo, Abagembe and Abaero.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Specific areas occupied by the Abanyala people across the three wards in terms of the locations were identified. The different Abanyala clans have been identified from various sources. The background of the Abanyala clan politics has been discussed in brief and subsequently connected to the politics that existed in the post-colonial period. The development of the politics involving the clan has also been looked into. Clans among the Banyala interacted as a result affecting the kind of attitude they had towards each other based on clan affiliation. The areas of political alliances made by the Banyala and mainly situations that influenced such political alliances have been identified. The way leadership of the Abanyala influence economic and cultural activities they carry out has been pointed out. Some of the ways in which the leadership influences distribution of resources has also been discussed. The way clans influence the leadership amongst the Abanyala of Navakholo Sub-County basing on how politics involving the clan affects the kind of leaders the Abanyala put in place has been identified.

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