

HAIR: A SAMBURU IDENTITY STATEMENT

RUTH NYAMBURA
(EGERTON UNIVERSITY)

&

TOM NYAMACHE
REUBEN MATHEKA
PETER WAWERU

INTRODUCTION

Hair in Africa: An Overview

Hair reacts to our state of mind

Hair has a meaning in African culture and similarly to the Samburu

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- ▣ **Observation**
- ▣ **Interviews & focus group discussions**
- ▣ **Photography**
- ▣ **Secondary data in the libraries**

RESULTS & DISCUSSIONS

ORIGIN OF THE SAMBURU

- ▣ Samburu are *Maa* speakers from Southern Sudan others are Maasai & Ilchamus
- ▣ *Sampurri* butterflies by maasai
- ▣ *Ngikor* Beautiful people of the red feet as described by Turkana
- ▣ People of the land '*lokop*'
- ▣ *Samburu hairstyles have been adopted during the migration, settlement and neighboring communities*

Discussion (cont.)

- ▣ Hair is used to cause childlessness
- ▣ Hair of a newborn is kept long till weaning time to chase away evil spirits. The hair is referred to *Imasin*

Discussion (cont.)

- ▣ From age nine , beading process starts for a girl. The mother shaves her hair and paints it with red ochre to attract suitors



Discussion (cont.)

- ▣ A boy ready for circumcision is shaved by the mother and a small tuft of hair is left at the middle, *Imanjeu*



Discussion (cont.)

- ▣ Womanhood, *sumelei* is identified by shaving roundly making a circular hairline known as Kub. a crown, *saen e ngwe* and a mass of red neck beads, *Ichatata* are worn

Discussion (cont..)



Discussion (cont.)

- ▣ *Moranism* the most significant stage of a man's life. A Moran is expected to be "beautiful" throughout the *moranism*. Ochers hair is key in adornment.

Discussion (cont.)



Discussion(cont.)



Discussion (cont.)

- ▣ An elder has responsibilities and doesn't have to be colourful



Discussion (cont)

- ▣ At death all members of a dead *Moran* shaves their heads
- ▣ Wives of a dead husband and their clans shave their heads once he dies
- ▣ A mother to a dead bride also shaves her hair
- ▣ A mother shaves her head to mark a child's death

Conclusion

- ▣ Samburu community still value hair in transmission of traditions.
- ▣ Samburu culture didn't change much in the colonial period as the British government didn't develop the area
- ▣ Kenyan communities imitate the Samburu hairstyles as part of modern fashion today.

RECOMMENDATION

- ▣ There is need to incorporate art in our school curriculum
- ▣ There is need to preserve our indigenous cultures because they mirror our societies.