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Afya Jumuishi : towards Interprofessional collaboration between traditional and modern medical practitioners in the Mara Region of Tanzania

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CHAPTER V TANZANIAN CULTURE AND COMMUNITY LIFE

This chapter further explores the culture, traditional value systems and rituals in the Mara Region. The first Paragraph highlights the region's historical, administrative and organisational structure. It also shows the general Tanzanian livelihood patterns where norms, beliefs and leading philosophies dictate the way in which the Mara Region inhabitants think, behave and relate to each other. Lack of knowledge and understanding the culture can easily mislead external observers and researchers into bigotry or prejudice. This Paragraph seeks to elaborate some misconceptions about the locals' livelihood and the different factors interpreted traditionally as the cause illnesses.

The second Paragraph expounds on common socio-cultural values affecting people's health status. The third Paragraph is devoted to specific cultural attributes of health in Mara Region. The common social values affecting people's health status are discussed. The major challenges facing Traditional Medicine (TM) in the region are presented in detail. The chapter ends with presenting a summary of existing efforts on collaboration between Modern and Traditional Medical systems in Mara Region and Tanzania as a whole, including among others, meetings, conferences, working together towards safe male circumcision, positive development of related higher learning studies and the formulation of herbal products under the Muhimbili Institute of Traditional Medicines.

5.1 General Tanzanian Livelihood Patterns

5.1.1 General Values, Beliefs and Norms in the Society

In general, the ways Tanzanians think, behave and make decisions are shaped with indoctrinated societal traditional values and beliefs, which have been held since long before the arrival of colonialists. In contemporary Tanzania, the set of acceptable values and beliefs emanates from indigenous societal ethical standards, holy scriptures, the Tanzanian constitution of 1977, Tanzanian laws, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in 1948 by the United Nations General Assembly of which Tanzania is a member, the National Culture Policy (sera ya utamaduni) of 1997, and other international protocols ratified by Tanzania. The general values can be seen in people's leadership and governance, modes of production and ownership, attitudes and perceptions as well as in peoples' art and in the national symbols.

Tanzanians perceive basic rights as narrated in Part III of the Country Constitution of 1977 including: the right to live, the right of equality, the freedom of conscience, the right to work and the right to basic education. In the same clause, all Tanzanians are expected to carry such duties as active participation in working, abiding to the laws of the land and defending the nation.

The African philosophies on socialism (*ujamaa*) and self-reliant work support the sharing of properties together and taking communal responsibilities for the well-being of other members of the society. Kiswahili is the national language and a uniting force, while vernaculars are also allowed to be used among families and ethno-cultural group fellows. English is used as a commercial language and is also still used in secondary and tertiary learning institutions, amidst a fierce discussion whether it should be replaced by Swahili for more effective student outputs in the learning processes and translation of theories into practice which become easier in a language which a student is fluent in.

Some crucial national values are displayed through national symbols. Tanzanians are not only proud but respect their national symbols, such as the national anthem, the flag, the coat of arms and the *uhuru* (freedom) torch. The cross-cutting themes in the symbolism of all these symbols include freedom, unity, wisdom, peace, cooperation among men and women, and guarding the land, water and other natural resources for the common good of the nation.

5.1.2 Common Misconceptions on the Livelihood of Tanzanians

Evidence from tourists, some travel booklets and unscientific surveys by international mass-media papers have sometimes wrongly judged Tanzanians (or all Africans) as lazy, uncivilized and not open, or hypocrites with respect to livelihood and worldview (1). These sources do not understand well the intrinsic meanings of the Tanzanian culture, way of life and value systems. Below three common misconceptions are indicated:

i. Time Management

Tanzanians feel they are not slaves to the clock. Therefore, time and schedules are subjected to circumstances and context. For example, the death of one village member could mean cancelling or rescheduling a business meeting. Flexibility is always a value to be preserved. Notwithstanding, with a critical eye, the researcher believes that with a more proper management of time utilization especially when calling and having meetings, Tanzania could greatly improve its productions and in turn for its economic growth.

ii. Begging

As with every society in the world, sometimes begging is employed by the less privileged as a way of acquiring the necessary scarce resources for decent livelihood. Tanzanians are not just potential beggars as a matter of habit but poverty is the number one global deadly ‘*dis-ease*’ situation which takes away all prides of humanity.

iii. Indirect way of Communicating

Whenever possible, Tanzanians would like not to hurt others when speaking or writing. Therefore a careful choice of polite words, answers or questions are meant to protect good relationships at the expense of being seen as open or direct. To some foreigners, this indirect way of speaking can be translated to signify hypocrisy or even untruths. Occasionally, this behaviour proves difficult for public health workers who are forced to think hard on how to deliver the message on prevention or health promotion but without being considered as so direct or very critical or even inhumane.

Some of these norms and value systems can be traced from the pre-colonial history of the indigenous Chieftdom formation. Others are the combination of the strong adherence to the ideals and virtues enshrined in *Ujamaa* (kind of African socialism). *Ujamaa* was tenaciously advocated by the late Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere, the founding father of Tanzania, who happens to be a native of the Mara Region and whose body lies in peace (1999) in the Mausoleum at Butiama village of Musoma rural. The museum, with notable memorabilia, is also considered as part of the most important and visited national, historical and political museum (Figure 5.1). Tanzanians, remember Mwl. Nyerere as a role model portraying servant leadership, unity, Pan-African patriotism, disdain of wealth at the expense of others and contempt for unwarrantable discrimination.

The following are general observations to supplement the qualitative results of this research, based both on the researcher's personal life experience in the area and on open-ended interview responses.

i. Socializing

The indigenous Mara Region people and Tanzanians in general ironically say '*deny me your food but let me socialize*'. People like meeting informally to socialize during leisure time. The setting depends on demographics and interests, such as the age group, occupation, gender, marital status, religious affiliation, sporting interests, etc. Long greetings and chatting encompass much of people's socialization. Unannounced visits are common. People who are very strict with appointments and formalities are considered bureaucratic and independent, which are not values to be proud of. To most people dancing and singing can be a very natural and powerful tool of communication. No wonder traditional health practitioners as well as prayer warriors often include music, dancing and singing as part of the process of treating and caring for their clients or for invocation to the spiritual world.



Figure 5.1 The Researcher visiting the Mausoleum of Julius Kambarage Nyerere, *Father of the Nation* in Butiama.

Source: Chirangi Fieldwork - 2008

ii. Respect and Equity

Commonly, Tanzanians respect each other. But even more engrained, respect is considered a hierarchical social function, for example, during the following interactions:

- when speaking to elders, the young use the greeting '*shikamoo- marhaba*' to show respect;
- capable siblings support their parents financially, or through any other form of assistance;

- community / organization members give leaders special seats and priority in some public services and meetings.

However, this does not mean respect is a one-way obligation, for the belief is '*respect others, to be respected*'. Neither does it emphasize inequality and subordination, but a vertical kind of equity, essentially summed up as 'give equal treatment to equals and unequal treatment to unequals'. For example, managers will get a higher salary but will also be more highly taxed than their subordinates. At times, this value is problematic, especially when a young, learned individual is brought to educate the more aged members of the society. The researcher had such experience while working with elders through the JUA Project for capacity building workshops on control of HIV/AIDS and care of People Living with HIV/ AIDS (PLWHA). Presentations to workshop participants included a facilitator who was a very young medical doctor speaking before elderly traditional healers, midwives and circumcisers.

iii. Generosity

Tanzanians are known to be generous despite their low economic status. This value is taken not as a choice or privilege to others, but as a moral obligation especially to visitors and guests. Therefore hospitality is held with high regards within the society, and therefore everybody continues to utter '*Karibu tena* (come again)' while bidding their guests farewell. On unannounced visits; there is no offence in being served meals that were not expected or being denied in paying for meals and drinks in a hotel when accompanied with a Tanzanian host who is capable of settling the bill.

iv. Communal and Interdependent Life

In contemporary market-driven economies, where socialism is not considered as the mode of production and living, communities still recognize the reality of helping others and sharing scarce resources such as food processing appliances, cars, bicycles, cameras, etc. with others. There is a strong belief that no one can be entirely independent: Humans need each other.

Getting community contributions towards weddings and funerals is very common in Tanzania, and recipients of such contributions are then expected to do the same to others. Such activities serve as an indigenous social welfare net, a system the researcher applauds, and takes a step further, advising all people to also extend the same benevolence to the increasing number of destitute 'street' kids, to fundraise to assist students without access to educational opportunities, and to give a lot of attention to the prevention and treatment of sick people rather than waiting to fund a big, elaborate funeral for a person whose life may have otherwise been saved.

v. Religion

As African writer, Mbiti, (1990) observes, Africans are notoriously religious. Tanzanians live in religious pluralism. There is freedom of worship and tolerance for others' religious beliefs. However, with few exceptions, anecdotal evidence shows that normally a person is expected to believe in God, whatever their religious affiliation. Even in governmental circles, any leader confessing not to believe in God will likely be unpopular.

By implication, religious virtues (be it Christianity, Islam, African Traditional Religion, Hindu, etc.) are used to completely reject practices like same-sex marriages, abortion, euthanasia and prostitution which are all considered by the majority as unethical. Furthermore, it is common for Tanzanians to pray before beginning certain activities, including taking an exam, travelling, eating, sleeping, and even before starting sports competitions.

A major challenge is to contextualize African Christianity and Islam to be able to appreciate African cultural heritages while lessening unnecessary yolk of imposed foreignness such as Christian names, Western hymnal melodies, Western church building plans, disregard of purely indigenous medicinal plants and curative skills and so on in the name of biblical or koranic absolutes. Generally, leaders from all religions are still held with high regard in the society as to most members of the population. Furthermore, because interprofessional collaboration is a behavioural act influenced by different factors including the views of *the significant others*, (such as religious leaders, teachers, elders), some modern medical practitioners (especially in religious health facilities feel uneasy even having medical discussions with traditional healers, let alone considering collaborating with them, as previously discussed in Paragraph 2.4.2 on the *Theory of Reasoned Action*.

vi. Meals and Table Manners

Staple foods are very much determined by tribal or ethnic origin and environment. Due to globalisation, Tanzanians have access to different foods and drinks. Traditional foods include potatoes, cassava, bananas, and *ugali* (a stiff porridge), rice, meat, fish, beans, vegetables porridge and milk. Foods and drinks introduced from outside (were not there traditionally) include homemade pancakes known as *chapati*, tea, coffee and sodas.

Before meals, Christians prefer that someone gives thanks and ask for blessings over the meal. A Muslim also will pray by confessing that he or she begins in the name of *Allah*. Hand washing is also normally done before and after meals with respect to a queue of seniority and other equity considerations (as explained in item *ii* above). Children are expected to be somewhat calm and show proper table manners while eating. Excessive cleaning of the plate as one finishes, may be taken to mean the person was not satisfied, and did not have enough to eat. People may eat seemingly significant amounts of food, but not necessarily have balanced diets with all the required nutrients and variety of foods. Therefore, malnutrition remains a problem for some children especially in rural areas.

vii. Clothing

Depending on the economic status of the family, people long to look smart. Youths strive for the prevailing fashion. Due to the warm weather, people mostly wear lightweight clothing. However, unquestionably, the society expects its people to dress decently. For example, very tight miniskirts could be seen as provoking sexual harassment, while an oversized, patched pair of trousers may indicate hooliganism. Though the masculine-feminine clothing gap is narrowing, with the exception of some artists, for example, a Tanzanian man is still not expected to wear earrings, unless he wants to be considered homosexual. The daily feeling of self-evaluation in relation to feeling under- or over-dressed is new to most Tanzanians.

viii. Gender Issues

The country is now very much engaged in gender inequality alleviation strategies. However, some Tanzanian women and girls still suffer under some practices of traditional patriarchal systems. In many families the husband is the ‘head’ of the family, the bread winner, the decision maker, the spokesperson and the resource allocation. Sometimes, misinterpretation of religious books has been used to confirm the supremacy of men over women.

ix. Privacy

Socially, Tanzanians are open to discussing nearly all aspects of their lives. They typically take no offence when asked their age, family size, work, beliefs, etc. One exception is anything related to sexuality. Perhaps somewhat in jest, they do not want people other than their partner to see or touch their underpants after being washed.

To withdraw from discussing issues such as sexuality with young people has long hampered efforts to fight against HIV/AIDS. The Tanzanian National Bureau of Statistics Report of June 2011 (*Tanzania in Figures* pg. 35) shows the HIV prevalence rate for women 15-49 years is 6.7% while of men of same age is 3.5%. More vigorous campaigns on attitude change by the district health authorities, media and NGOs are slowly gaining ground in every district.

5.2 Traditional Leadership in the Mara Region

5.2.1 Chiefdom Divisions in the Mara Region

Until 1916, the Mara Region was known as a Musoma sub-district, part of what was named the Mwanza District. After the British administrative changes, the district was subdivided into North Mara and South Mara, with the Mara River as the border. All Musoma, Mwanza, Kagera and Shinyanga were part of one province named Lake Province. Not until 1 May 1963, were the regions recognised; Mara, Kigoma, Mwanza, Moshi and Ruvuma. On 7 July 1963, the Honourable Oswald Mang'ombe Marwa became the first Mara Region Commissioner, holding office until 1965.

In the Mara Region's pre-colonial period of time, groups had their own local leaders, known as Chiefs (*Watemi/Machifu*). Building on British administrative changes which took place between 1950 and 1958, chiefdom divisions were formed in North Mara and South Mara to help the smooth governance of the colonial masters through indirect rule. Tables 5.1 and 5.2 show the historical administrative and organisational structure of the Mara Region.

Table 5.1 North Chiefdom Divisions

Chiefdom Division	Chief	Sub Division/Sub-Chiefdom	Division HQ
1 Girango	Philipo Misoke	Kyoro, Bukwe, Sang'ombe, Nyanduga, Mirare, Malongo, Kitembe, Roche, Goribe, Ikoma	Ryagoro
2 Inchage	Haruni Rhobi	Binagi, Genge, Nyarero, Kibasuka, Nyakonga, Kiamairi, Turwa, Tarime minor settlement	Nyamwigura
3 Inchugu	Marwa Bhoke	Mbogi, Mwema, Pemba, Nyamhunda, Nyamamaga	Sirari
4 Ingwe	Amani Chogo	Gorong'a, Kemambo, Kibununaria, Muriba, Nyamwaga, Nyanungu, Matongo	Nyamwaga
5 Inano	Martinus Waryuba	Kwigego, Manga, Mikoma, Nyandoto, Kwikerege	Mtana
6 Kiseru	Shem Ariri	Bukura, Kirogo, Shirati, Namagaro, Omoche, Nyamtinga, Mkoma, Kigunga, Nyahongo, Nyamburi	Shirati
7 Luo Imbo	Clement Odemba	Nyathorogo, Rorya, Rabuor, Surubu	Nyathorogo
8 Suba	Johannes Chacha	Kyang'ombe, Tingirime, Komuge, Nyamunga, Baraki, Kisumwa	Kinesi

Source: The Mara Region Commissioner's Office Report of 2011

5.2.2 The Role of Traditional Chiefs

Among the mentioned chiefdom of the Mara Region, the family of Chifu Wanzagi Nyerere (Butiama), Chifu Makongoro (Ikizu) and Chifu Sarota (Issenye) are the only remaining, having strong, yet only symbolic and ceremonial powers. Through oral history accounts, it is known that the chiefs' role in traditional Tanzanian societies was much broader and stronger than during colonial period of time. At the time time, chiefs were not only the leaders from the royal family, but also served as the *magico-spiritual* intermediaries between the local people and their ancestors. Ancestors, according to the Bantu religious cosmology, were buried elderly members of the community who had lived a pious lives as good citizens.

Table 5.2 South Mara Chiefdom Divisions

	Chiefdom Division	Chief	Sub Division / Sub - Chiefdom	Division HQ
1	Bukwaya	Wakili Cleophas Musira	Busamba, Bukiroba, Munguru(Nyakatende)	Mukirira
2	Mugango	Mutwenge Sondobhi	Mugango, Bwai	Mugango
3	Zanaki	Edward W. Nyerere	Busegwe, Buhemba, Buruma, Butuguri, Bumangi, Magana, Muganza	Nyamuswa
4	Ikizu	Matutu Matutu	Ikizu	Muriaza
5	Ushashi	Masanja Kitereja	Ushashi	Bunda
6	Majita	Daudi Majinge	Majita, Bwasi	Bwasi
7	Nguruimi	Simeon Clement	Ikorongo, Ringwani, Chawatema, Iramba, Kisaka	Majimoto
8	Ikoma	Nyihoraha	Nata, Issenye, Ikoma,	Nata
9	Kiagata	Isangura Matiku	Bukenye II, Bwiregi II	Kiagata
10	Musoma Mjini		Musoma Mjini, Iringo minor settlement	Musoma Mjini

Source: The Mara Region Commissioner's Office Report of 2011

These chiefs could communicate to the Supreme Being for sufficient rainfalls, good fortune, victory, health and livelihood on behalf of society. Chiefs were also custodians of the cultural materials and symbols of every society. Some of the vivid examples were the chiefdom loyal regalia, which would be passed down from one chief to another in the succession line. Table 5.3 shows some of the most common loyal artefacts and their symbolism to the indigenous people of the Mara Region. Such symbolic materials could be seen at the chief's homestead, chief's attire, displays during festivities and ceremonies in the society.

5.3 Community Life in the Mara Region

5.3.1 Social Institutions and Values

The family is a unique social institution, formed by a marriage, either monogamous or polygamous in the Mara Region. Polygamous marriages are always polygyny, not polyandry. Traditionally, all ethnic groups in the Mara Region value the extended family ties, credited for assisting each other and socialising the young. Marriage ties are very much respected in the society with regard to social obligation, legality, and in relation to major religious teachings (Christian or Islam).

Table 5.3 Common Chiefdom Regalia and the Underlying Symbolism

Artefacts	Name (Indigenous and English)	Cultural symbolism
	<i>Insimbo yo Omukama (Jita/ Ruri/ Kwaya)*</i> <i>Fimbo ya Mtemi(Swahili)</i> (Royal Cane)	Leadership, Unity and Judgment
	<i>Obwose (Jita/Ruri/Kwaya)</i> <i>Mguisho (Swahili)</i> (Fly Whisk)	Leadership, Blessings and Peace
	<i>Echitebhe cho Omukama (Jita/Ruri/Kwaya)</i> <i>Kiti cha Mtemi (Swahili)</i> (Royal Stool)	Authority
	<i>Olwayi Iwa Intare (Jita/Ruri/Kwaya)</i> <i>Ngozi ya Simba (Swahili)</i> (Lion's skin)	Strength and power
	<i>Obhukoma no Omusimu (Jita/Ruri/Kwaya)</i> <i>Upinde na Mshale (Swahili)</i> (Bow and Arrow)	Military power
	<i>Ingofila yo Omukama (Jita/Ruri/Kwaya)</i> <i>Kofia ya Mtemi (Swahili)</i> (Royal Crown)	Royal Family
	<i>Ingóma yo Omukama (Jita/Ruri/Kwaya)</i> <i>Ngoma ya Mtemi(Swahili)</i> (Royal Drum)	Ceremonial

Source: Fieldwork 2009 Collections from J.K. Nyerere Museum, Butiama and Bujora Cultural Centre – Kisesa

The Mara people, as with all Tanzanians, observe an aspect of exogamy known as incest taboo, which is a prohibition of mating with or marrying a close blood-linked person. Apart from the early anthropological thinking of incest as a universal phenomenon of preventing genetic deterioration due to inbreeding (Morgan 1877; Westermarck 1896), or religious guidelines such as Leviticus 18:6-16, there are other historical view of incest taboo as a mechanism to promote alliances between groups. This view proposes that, by marrying outside of bloodlines, the family becomes larger, thus gaining more support (White 1949). In some ethno-cultural groups in the Mara Region, whenever a woman's husband dies and leaves her childless; the woman remarries one of her husband's brothers as a continuation of the patriarchal family.

Similarly, ethno-cultural groups such as the Luo which traditionally observed a kind of sororate marriage. In such a traditional system, when a man's wife is not able to bear children or dies without bearing a child, the husband was allowed to marry her sister to protect the family lineage.

Apart from the legality of marriage ties, traditionally, people in the Mara Region, consider bride prices and the availability of siblings born into a particular marriage as social mechanisms for maintaining families. When the wife wants to leave her husband, it shall be expected that the value of bride price once paid during the wedding is returned to the husband's family. Therefore, some women have continued persevering matrimonial abuses in fear of such restitution should they decide to leave. On the other hand, following local customs, few childless marriages have survived in the society as the will end up in divorce.

Cultural Individual Identity

Identity leads to the distinguishing and differentiating aspects of reality as compared to other realities. This view considers the etymological analysis of the term 'identity', consisting of two words; firstly, '*id*' (derived from Latin *psyche* and Greek *idios*) to mean one's own, and secondly 'entity' from '*ens*', the present participle of '*esse*' which means 'to be'. 'Identity' therefore refers to the individuality of the thing or person; of what the thing or person is. Identity also indicates the belongingness and similarity (sameness) to a social group and sub-groups in contrast to others.

Locke (1689) contemplated personal identity (the self) to originate from consciousness and not on the substance of either the soul or the body (2). Human are unique in their consciousness of their past and future thoughts and actions in the same way as they are conscious of their present thoughts and actions. In the same way, the inhabitants of the Mara Region continue to be conscious of their traditional tribal and cultural identities, despite the scorn of the colonial times under the umbrella of (Western) civilization as well as the prominence of national unity in the post-colonial period of time when Swahili and national leaders were given priority at the expense of local vernaculars and tribal chiefs.

Normally, the Mara Region follows paternal lineage. The current typical young person's identity in the region starts with nationality, followed by his or her full name, which includes a given name (the majority have Christian or Muslim names), the name of the father and lastly the grandfathers name. Some consider it important to mention in an introduction that they are devoted Christians (saved) or Muslims first. On the contrary, the traditional way of identifying oneself was more elaborate. One would start by giving his or her full traditional given name followed by the names of the father, grandfather, great grandfather and at least as far back as the great great-grandfather. This would be followed by the tribe and clan name, and finally, the chieftdom.

Family identity has a much wider meaning in Tanzania and Africa as a whole than in most Western countries. The family includes grandparents, parents, uncles, aunts, children, nephews, nieces, and grandchildren who may have their own siblings and other relatives in the homestead. The Mara Region people value the extended family ties (Van Pelt 1982; Mbiti 1994).

Verbal and Nonverbal Communication Signals

Based on fieldwork interviews in 2006 and 2007 with key informants in the different districts of the Mara Region as well as the researcher's life experience, it is apparent that in addition to the verbal tribal vernaculars, people of the Mara Region use a variety of non-verbal communication signals to convey messages to the intended receiver(s). These non-verbal signals include different body movements such as; eyebrow movements, head movements, handshakes, and arms akimbo. Various audio messages are also shared through songs, drumming (Swahili: *ngoma*), playing harps (Swahili: *zeze*), flutes (Swahili: *zomari*), xylophone (Swahili: *marimba*), percussion packs (Swahili: *manyanga*), traditional galato (Swahili: *gitaa*), etc. Other non-verbal signals include the sense of different smells and tastes, the use of pictures the symbolism of colours, the use of space and different styles of arrangements, the variety of writings, the use of different cultural artefacts, and use of time. These communication signals are ethnic and sometimes clan-determined. For example, the Luo would lament the death of a beloved by singing and dancing vigorously, the Jita would be silent or crying in sorrow. While a Kuryan woman may whistle, the Ruri would not expect to hear a whistle from their women. While the Ikoma youth could wear black during an initiation ceremony, the Wakwaya would put on different colours but not black. While a Zanaki woman is decorated in reddish rocky colour and dairy oil, this is a taboo for the Waruri.

Generally, Tanzanians communicate freely, but in a responsible polite manner. At times speaking or writing indirectly by use of proverbs and 'sayings of wisdom' is preferable as a way to maintain and or restore harmony and one's dignity. (See Appendix II on the impacts of irresponsible communication.) Swahili has many different proverbs and special sayings frequently used as a way of giving a warning, encouraging, comforting, rebuking or showing affection. Examples of collected proverbs and sayings and their intended role are shown in Table 5.4.

Public Rituals

Public rituals are periodic actions, statements and thoughts which express and renew certain basic values in the society regarding the relationship of human-to-human, human-to-nature and human-to-supernatural powers (3). In all districts of the Mara Region there are various public rituals which use certain valued symbols, including particular styles, materials, attire, songs, scent, gestures, and recitals. These societies are not only tribal in nature, but also include social organisations such as age groups, women's societies, self-help groups, health facilities, professional groups, religious groups, training schools, cooperative societies, political parties, business organisations and government agencies. Based on the anthropological theories of rituals narrated in *The International Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* (2008: 520-526), below are three common public rituals in the Mara Region. In general, all three of these types of rituals are performed to help the society or individuals psychologically and socially to redress misfortunes and/or restore human health status.

1. *Cosmic cycle or calendric rituals*: A celebration of changes, for example, in the weather (e.g. rainy versus dry), agricultural seasons (e.g. planting, weeding, harvesting),

appearance of the moon (which determines most Islamic festivals), national public holidays, or a general election following vigorous campaigning. In calendric rituals, different activities are normally performed, such as specified prayers, singing, dancing and being off duty.

2. *Rituals of misfortune*: These are performed for unexpected happenings in the society, such as natural calamities, including windstorms. During a prolonged drought, rain makers may perform special rituals to appeal before the Supreme Being and through ancestors for the land to receive enough rains. Customarily it has been common in the Mara Region to observe married women (and sometimes men) who have not been able to bear children, consulting traditional healers and or prayer warriors (spiritual healers) as a way to conduct appropriate rituals as a way to restore their reproductive ability.

Table 5.4 Traditional Proverbs and Sayings and their Role

Local Proverbs / Sayings	Literal English Translation	Implied / Role
<i>Mficha maradhi kifo kitamfichua</i> (Swahili)	Death reveals the one who hides illnesses	Timely health intervention
<i>Nyuki hakumbatiwi</i> (Swahili)	A bee can't be held in a palm	Warning of a threat
<i>Unachokiona hakifai sasa kianike kitakufaa wakati wa njaa</i> (Swahili)	Isn't useful now, but dry it to help during famine	Importance of preservation
<i>Dobi wa kweli utamjua siku akipewa nguo nyeupe</i> (Swahili)	A competent launderer is known when given white linen	Performance appraisal
<i>Hata saa mbovu (ya mishale) huwa sahihi mara mbili kwa siku</i> (Swahili)	Even a defected analogue clock is right twice in 24 hours	Accepting humanity
<i>Umaridadi huficha ufukara</i> (Swahili)	Decent appearance hides poverty	Decent clothing
<i>Omulumu ogukomela gutakolelwe</i> (Jita/Ruri/Kwaya)	By not starting, work may seem difficult	Encouragement
<i>Akasyo okwitokoma nkusya karaseye</i> (Jita/Ruri/Kwaya)	The curvature depth of a grinding stone shows how it has been used	Experience matters
<i>Tangata unyake obhukama bhuli imbele</i> (Jita/Ruri/Kwaya)	You have got to toil before you become a king	The benefit of perseverance
<i>Olubhata-lubhata wakuru ailiye mubhui</i> (Jita/Ruri/Kwaya)	The loitering of the tortoise cost its life in a burnt grass	Risks of idling and aimless living

Source: Fieldwork 2006-2007 (Collection from oral history and life experience)

3 Rituals of Social Transition:

Here, a society takes a bold step to accept a new member who has fulfilled certain criterions such as the rituals of the rite of passage from boyhood to manhood and girlhood to womanhood during an initiation ceremony. While the Kuryan-related ethno-cultural groups continue to observe strong male circumcision and female genital mutilation (which is publicly prohibited, but done secretly by some traditional birth attendants), traditionally the Jita, Ruri, and Kwaya ethno-cultural groups accept only male circumcision.

Other transition rituals include colourful pre-wedding and wedding ceremonies. Furthermore, when a beloved member of a society dies, funeral activities and lamentations are observed in accordance with tribal and religious customs, as also occurs with illness, then attaining the *sick role*, and hospitalisation.

When hospitalized, people leave their normal life and are transformed into a new 'health facility society', where clothing may be different (use of hospital pyjamas), patients' identities are changed into cases, and their society roles are changed into 'sick persons' characterised with a sense with vulnerability and considered incapable to carry on normal societal roles.

4 Social Security

The people of the Mara Region like other Tanzanians live a communal life. Although globalisation and a more cosmopolitan lifestyle is encroaching on most African countries, including Tanzania, the community life of Mara residents has, to a greater extent, still shaped with ingrained African socialistic values. Such values guide people to have a spirit of helping each other and share their lives, which includes their wealth and whereabouts to a greater degree than is typical in Western societies. Whereas the Mara people, like others in Tanzania, understand the liberalisation of their main economic functions where market forces and privatisation is the order of the day, quite a number of them do not subscribe to this idea as they feel that such policies benefit investors and affluent businessmen more than the common middle and low income citizens.

From the colonial times to the present era of globalisation, some of the traditional social institutions such as the chiefdom leaderships and close extended family ties have been dismantled. There is a gradual change of values, which shifted priority from a the wider extended families, to now having closer ties remain within the realms of the nuclear family. However, people have used both their customary and newly-adopted modern values to redesign social institutions such as the microfinance organisations with principles of cooperative societies well known as *Saving and Credit Cooperative Societies* (SACCOS). These *Saving and Credit Cooperative Societies* (SACCOS) in villages, towns and workplaces, are now used to provide kind of 'soft' loan facility. With the failure to implement the old communal village farms (*mashamba ya vijiji vya ujamaa*), propagated under the *Arusha Declaration*, currently most people do individual family farming, fishing, mining and retail business activities.

Through the social security reforms in Tanzania, people now have access different *Social Security Institutions* (SSIs) such as the *National Social Security Fund* (NSSF), the *Local Authority Pension Fund* (LAPF), the *Government Employees Provident Fund* (GEPF), the *Parastatal Pension Fund* (PPF), the *Public Service Pension Fund*, *National Health Insurance*, and the *Community Health Fund* (CHF). For years, these *Social Security Institutions* (SSIs) have been offering conventional benefits such as retirement benefits, disability benefits and withdraw benefits only to employees, leaving many with unmet social and economic insecurities. The *Social Security (Regulatory Authority) Act* of 2008 helped in regulating and supervising performances as well as giving advice to the minister in charge of policy changes to address the challenges of limited benefits, uneven benefit packages and sometimes-unregulated investment activities. More important are the recent training campaigns to educate people about the goals and benefits of *Social Security Institutions* (SSIs). Such training is also been given to leaders in the workers union umbrella organisation namely the *Tanzania Union Congress of Trade Associations* (TUCTA).

Although many criminal and civil cases are brought before the judiciary courts to resolve disputes between opposing parties, parents, elders in the village, employers, school teachers/tutors and religious leaders have continued to act as arbitrators in conflict resolution

and management. Among the ethno-cultural groups of the Mara Region, the Kuryan still have a strong elderly judicial system (*baraza la wazee wa kimila*) which also acts as a tribal decision making body. Major religions in the area are Christianity, Islam and, with the fewest followers of the three, African Traditional Religion. Within each religion, there are different institutions and rules dictating entrance and the rules of remaining an accepted member. Consequently, religious beliefs largely affect people's worldviews and behaviours.

As explained in the beginning of this chapter, politically, the Mara Region was originally built under the chieftdom leadership, and the community would pay high respect and listen to their chief. Currently, the Mara Region people are members of different political parties. Every five years, the National Electoral Commission calls for the national general election where leaders are democratically elected to represent them in the local government council and in the Parliament of the United Republic of Tanzania. Elections also determine the president, who serves as the head of state and chief of defence forces and forms the cabinet of ministers to run the government.

5.3.2 Patterns of Life in the Region

Inhabitants of the Mara Region learn their traditions and patterns of life by socialization in the families, peer groups, schools and to a lesser extent through both governmental and traditional meetings. The family is considered as the most important institution where members of the society learn to respect societal ethics, traditions, knowledge of family ties, and various skills.

The way people plan and conduct their daily business follows the regional administrative and local government authority structure and bylaws. The Mara Region, as with all other Tanzanian regions, is divided into urban authorities who include municipal and town councils, and rural authorities who include district councils with township councils and village councils. Both urban and rural authorities have autonomy in their geographical boundaries. The main functions and duties of local government include:

- formulating, coordinating and supervising all economic, industrial and social development plans;
- monitoring and controlling staff performances;
- ensuring collection and proper utilization of the council's collection;
- developing and reviewing bylaws;
- regulating and coordinating development plans, projects and programmes under the village and township authorities;
- regulating and monitoring the collection and utilization of revenues in villages and townships;
- performing other required governmental acts subject to the existing laws.

In rural areas, the lowest authority is called *Kitongoji* which is the smallest unit of a village, composed of an elected chairperson and a an advisory committee;

while in urban areas have a *Mtaa*, which is part of the ward consisting of elected chairperson, six members and an executive office.

Local government election is done democratically every five years, with universal adult suffrage at 18 years of age. The district council chairperson and mayors are elected by elected members (Councillors) of the respective authority while the village councils members are elected by the village assembly. At least one elected member of the parliament serves in every district council to represent the interests of the people from that particular constituency. There is a direct linkage between the central government and the lowest authority in every area due to the linkages in the organisational structures.

The Mara profile from the regional commissioner's office reports a notable immigration of people from other regions such as Shinyanga, Kisii (Kenya) due to land and food shortages mostly in the Tarime and Serengeti district. Other minor migration within the Mara Region occurs when the Kurya people move from the densely populated area of the Tarime highlands to the sporadically populated eastern and central midlands of Serengeti, displacing the indigenous Ikoma people.

CENTRAL GOVERNANCE MAINLAND TANZANIA: President Government Parliament: National Assembly			
REGIONAL GOVERNANCE Regional Commissioners (RC) & Regional Administrative Secretaries (RAS) District Commissioners (DC) & District Administrative Secretaries (DAS)			
LOCAL GOVERNANCE			
Urban Authorities			Rural Authorities
CITIES City Councils	TOWNS Town Councils	MUNICIPALITIES Municipal Councils	DISTRICTS District Councils
WARDS Ward Development Committees			
MTAA		Village Councils	Township Authorities
VITONGOJI			

Figure 5.2 The Local Government System in Tanzania

Source: The Local Government System in Tanzania, 2009

In the past, there was a high population density around Lake Victoria as compared to the hinterland due to access to sufficient water, the soft soil easy to till by hand hoes, abundant fish and easy transportation by use of canoes (Mara Region Farmer Initiative Project, Vol. I, FAO/IFAD of July 1995). Subsequently, people in Mara Region engage in different agro-economic activities at a differing rate depending on the available ecological zones, which displays different socio-economic parameter as it shows in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5 Mara Region Agro-economic Zones

Parameter	Lake shore	Lowland inland and Midlands	Highlands
Population density	High	Low	High
Cattle ownership (No)	Low	High	Low
Ozonization	Low (10%)	High (60%)	Intermediate
Intensivity of agriculture	Intensive	Extensive	Intensive
Off-farm income earning opportunities	High	Low	High

Source: Mara Region Farmer Initiative Project, FAO/IFAD, 1995

Humans share similar basic needs of food, shelter, protection and health for maintenance of life. Every society develops social patterns and organisations to tap resources from its environment to meet these basic needs. Ethnic groups in Mara Region, such as the Ikoma and Ikizu, engage in *hunting*, while the Jita, Luo, the Ruri and the Kwaya do more *gathering*, which includes activities such as fishing. Others engage in animal husbandry, in keeping cows, goats, chicken, and sheep for food and their skins; dogs and cats for protection (against burglars and animal attacks and damages), while donkeys are for transportation. Almost every ethnic group does work in *horticulture*, using mainly hand tools to grow food such as corn, sweet potatoes, cassava, beans, rice, vegetables, etc. as well as cash crops such as coffee, cotton and sisal. Some food crops can also be produced in large quantities for business.



Figure 5.3 Women and Children Fetching Water from Lake Victoria
Source: Fieldwork (2012).

The other similar but more advanced technology is *farming*, where the people use a plough pulled by oxen. Few have tractors, which are being facilitated by the government through local district councils under the *Kilimo Kwanza (Agriculture First)* national resolution of 3 June 2009, which has a strategy of transforming agriculture into a modern, green and commercial sector to combat poverty. In Mara Region, the majority own small farms, and use both manure and chemicals as fertilizers.

Nevertheless, productivity has decreased due to unreliable rainfall, pests, land infertility, unaffordable pesticides, and farm implements as well as fishing gadgets. This has brought tremendous challenges to the agricultural sector, which the *Kilimo Kwanza* strategy must to address for economic growth and as part of response to the escalating unemployment problem in the region.

Although the Mara Region has adequate water sources, which include Lake Victoria and Mara River, access to clean and safe water at homesteads is one of the biggest challenges in the region. Inhabitants, especially women and children, usually have to walk to the sources several times in a day to fetch enough water for their families as shown in Figure 5.3.

Few industries are in operation in The Mara Region. These include the fish processing industries in Musoma, a coffee factory in Tarime, cotton ginneries in Musoma rural and Bunda and the Musoma textile industry, which is already running under capacity. Tarime, Serengeti, and Musoma rural districts have a mining industry, where people work either as employees or are.

The Tanzanian Ministry of Energy and Minerals has advised them to formulate social groups, for the ease of giving them substantial technical and financial assistance.

Notes

1. One example is Stephen Moyes' article, *Life of O'Reilly* from the Mirror (UK), September 2005, ranking Tanzania the worst place to live after Zimbabwe and Haiti.
2. John Locke writes about consciousness as the repeated self-identification of oneself through moral responsibility, which could be attributed to the subject. This discussion is in his book entitled *On Identity and Diversity* in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Book II, Chapter XXVII (1689).
3. London, J. B. (1966). *Private stress and public ritual*. Journal of Psychosomatic Research 10, pg. 101-108 defined public rituals as 'those aspects of prescribed and repetitive formal behaviour is those aspects of certain aspects of certain customs has no direct technological consequences and are symbolic'.