SIKHS' RACE RELATIONS AND THEIR IMPACT ON INTER-RACIAL MARRIAGES IN COLONIAL AND POST-COLONIAL KENYA, (1895-1990)

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ABSTRACT

Sikhs are a distinct people with history. In India they have attracted various studies. The same has been done on diaspora Sikhs in Europe, America and Australia. This underscore the fact that Sikhs who left India established themselves abroad, resisted total integration or assimilation by either the colonialists or post-colonial host societies and remained united as a community. Surprisingly they interacted and affected the hosts in diverse ways exemplified in multi-disciplinary studies undertaken by broad spectrum of scholars globally. In Kenya, however scholarly interrogation of the Sikhs' race relations has been scanty yet their influx started as early as 1890's following the British imperialist control of East Coast of Africa and their expansion into the interior of what became Kenya. Though the coming of the Sikhs was necessitated by the demand for Indian labour at that time designated by Imperial British East Africa Company to work on the Kenya-Uganda railway, a century later Sikhs have not fully decolonized instead they have remained distinct, with their religious beliefs, practices, dress and worshiping places. The study interrogated the determinants of Sikhs' inter and intra race relations and their role in inter-racial marriages in Kenya against a backdrop of casteism and racism. The study was informed by atavism model. Data was collected from primary and secondary sources. Purposive sampling procedures were used particularly snowball. Data collection instruments included observation, interview schedules and focus group discussion. Data analysis involved qualitative procedures as was envisaged in descriptive research design applied in the study. The findings of the study were, Sikhs' social solidarity and inter-racial marriages were influenced by Sikhism, Sikhs geographical origin in India, inter-racial stereotypes and colonial racial laws in Kenya and India. In conclusion, the Sikhs race relations and impact in Kenya was influenced by factors ranging from Sikhism, colonialism and inter-communal nationalistic struggles. The study recommends the need to embark on decolonizing in order to catalyze development and human wellness.

Key words: Colonialism[1], Post-colonialism[2], Racism[3], Sikhism[4], Decolonize[5], Human wellness[6]

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The history of the Sikhs in Kenya is one aspect of the Asian past that has not been studied fully. From the literature reviewed, studies by Mcleod (1976), Delf, (1963), Bharati, (1972), Hollingsworth (1960) , Dharam (ed) (1965), Makhan(1980), Gregory (1971), Mangat (1969), and Pundit (1963), are general studies about Asians but only mention the Sikhs in passing. Cythia (1983) covers the culture of the Sikhs beginning from Guru Nanak, enunciation of Sikhs doctrine and the general pattern of Sikhs' way of life for example weddings and their spread in urban centres of Kenya but the author was not critical and hence ended up giving description of the Sikhs way of life without addressing the Sikhs cultural impact, their integration, nor did she evaluate the institutions that have been set up. The author is silent over Sikhs response to challenges in Kenya and the extent by which they have applied their religious ideals of humanity and industry to the wider Kenyan society as a step towards decolonization. On the other hand Gurwitz (1988), in her M.A Thesis, recorded Sikh's culture and social background of Sikh women, their life styles, their roles, changes in their status, rights and obligations. The author's bias of addressing only Sikh women in Kenya cannot be treated as representative of the entire body of Sikh community. Apart from introduction, most of the information is without dates hence lacks chronology. In essence therefore there is no comprehensive study of the Sikhs.

The Sikhs contact with East Africa coast did not start with coming of the first Indians who came in the second century AD. Indian ships came to East African coast before the birth of the Sikhism and its founder Guru (teacher) Nanak in 1369. It is important to note however that though the Asians started coming to the East coast of Africa centuries before the founding of Sikhism, it was not until the expansion of the British control over East Coast of Africa that the Indians, particularly Sikhs began to appear in large numbers. The process began in the late 19th century and was occasioned by the importation of Indian labour to work on Kenya - Uganda railway.

During the railway construction exercise, the supply of the material, labour and personnel was contracted to a Karachi based Indian entrepreneur A.M Jeevanjee. The railway engineer had adviced that the labour force from Punjab was more reliable in military, police and construction work. Meanwhile, recruitment of the Indians was not a downhill task. The residents of the Punjab consisted of the Sikhs who were known for their resistance to any form of intrusion. The Sikhs had fought and nearly defeated the British by the middle of 19th century in what was referred to as the Sikh wars of 1845 – 1846 and 1848 – 1849. Though they later accepted British rule and during the Indian sepoy mutiny of 1857, they sided with the British and proved dependable soldiers in the British Indian Army, it was similarly, unlikely that India's colonial government would easily yield to this recruitment. Most of the Sikhs had become prosperous in India following British colonial expansion of agriculture. It is thus not surprising that the recruitment exercise picked up at a slow pace. In 1895, A.M Jeevanjee recruited and dispatched the first batch of 350 Indians via Karachi. In 1896, more Indians were disembarked at Mombasa. By 1899, a total of 18,000 Indians were working on the railway project. By 1902 out of 32,000 Indians who had come 2,493 had died 6,724 stayed on in Kenya after the completion of the railway construction. Sikhs who remained set up independent businesses in various fields but mostly related to their traditional artisan work. Others joined railway employment, colonial administration and farming. The migration of Sikhs into Kenya did not stop even after the completion of the railway as other Sikhs came not as total strangers but as relatives of already settled families in East Africa.

1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Sikhs are a people with history, as it can be established from various studies carried out elsewhere. This is sufficient reason for historians to study them. In India, many historical studies have been undertaken on this community for example, Khushwant, Singh, "A history of the Sikhs", Pyne, C.N ' A Short History of the Sikhs', Narang G.C. "Transformation of Sikhism". In Kenya however scanty studies have been undertaken on the Sikhs. There is of course literature about Indians generally called Asian in Eastern Africa for example; Hilda Kuppers" Indians in Natal", Floyd and Lillian Dotson's Indians in Zambia, Rhodesia and Malawi, Stephen, Morris Indians in Uganda", Mangat J.S; himself a Sikh wrote History of the Asians in East Africa", Gregory, R. India and East Africa" but in these the Sikhs have remained off focus. Kenyan Sikhs are a minority and a distinct religious group. Since their coming, Sikhs have not been absorbed by colonialism or other fellow Asians. Their religious beliefs, practices and dress differentiate them from other Asian communities resident in Kenya. The Sikhs have their own worshipping places, Sikh temples (Gurudwara), religious books" Adi Granth Saheb", social organizations, for example, Sikhs Student Federation, annual festivals and a well defined code of conduct.

Written records indicate that the Sikhs came to Kenya with the advent of colonialism. They lived and prospered. Consequently, there was need to analyze their race relations and their role in inter-racial marriage. It is also important to identify the possible forces that have held the Sikh community together as an integrated community, while others intermarried particularly with Africans obliterating colonial racial policies and Asian caste rules.

1.3 OBJECTIVE OF STUDY

> Investigate the determinants of Sikhs" race relations and their role in inter-racial marriages in Kenya 1898-1990.

1.4 Research Question

> What determined Sikhs" race relations and their role in inter-racial marriages in Kenya 1898-1990.

1.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Cultural atavism theory was the lens through which this study was visualized.

The study centres on the Sikh community which had migrated from their homeland Punjab to abroad, Kenya. They had to change from their traditional occupation, at first became railway employees and later adjusted to urban life, trade and the later generation went to school, studied and became professionals. They had to balance economic, political and social survival without compromising their conformity to their religion and culture. In essence, for the Sikhs to have maintained their religious rites, dressing pattern, institutions and pass on the experience of the adults to the young, defend itself from external and internal forces of disintegration they had to revert to ancestral traits hence cultural atavism Dana (2008) shifting to the ways of thinking and acting of a former time.

2.0 METHODOLOGY
2.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

The researcher adopted descriptive research design in order to report affairs as they existed.
2.2 STUDY AREA

The study was conducted in Kenya's major towns Nairobi, Meru, Makindu, Nakuru, Kisumu and Eldoret. These towns were purposively selected based on the nature of study. Besides, Sikhs are a minority community settled in major towns along the railway line. Meru was included because it is in here that the Sikhs intermarried with Africans in significant numbers giving forth an Afro-Sikh community.

2.3 Target Population
The target population from which the sample population was derived was 20000 Sikhs KNBS Census (2009). A representative sample was derived based on 384 units for 100000 in the population Ogula (1998)

2.4 SAMPLING TECHNIQUES:

The researcher applied non-probability sampling procedures because it was hard to get population through screening of general population. Purposive, more specifically snowball was used in order to get information rich cases for in-depth analysis. Informants for the study were specific that is, only those who were in a position of being conversant with the problem of research yet most of them were scattered in Kenya's major urban centres. Both Sikhs and non-Sikhs were interviewed for purposes of corroborating evidence. Religious leaders, association or institution leaders, the chairmen of Sikh Gurudwara, businessmen, Sikh social workers, Kenyan Sikh government officials of either colonial and/or post-colonial period, teachers and descendants of early Sikh settlers in Meru were interviewed.

Sample distribution was based on sample size of 384 as representative of 100000 in the population in descriptive research Ogula (1998). Since the target population was 20000 therefore a sample population of 77 was appropriate. Proportionately out of 77 respondents Nairobi had 60 % of the Sikhs and the rest Meru, Makindu. Nakuru, Kisumu and Eldoret shared the remaining 40%, each having 7 informants while Nairobi had 46. Snowballing was used to reach special interest groups the over 75 years, religious leaders, former and current government officials of colonial and post-colonial Kenya.
2.5 DATA COLLECTION.

Both primary and secondary data were collected

2.6 INTERVIEW

Semi structured interviews were used to ensure reliable, in-depth, systematic, comprehensive and quantifiable information was acquired Kombo and Tromp (2006). Oral interviews made researcher come directly in contact with respondents who had in person participated in social, political and economic development of the Sikhs. NandhraT.S, a Sikh and a former councilor was versed with the Sikhs History and culture. Alongside was Rattan Kaur Channa, who told us a lot with regard to Sikh women and their changing roles in the traditional and modern Sikh society.

2.7 FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

Focus Group Discussion involved discussions of distinct homogenous groups of 6-8 people held at the Gurudwara.

2.8 DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS

The researcher read and analysed public, private and personal documents.

2.9 VALIDITY OF INSTRUMENT

Expert judgement by supervisors improved the validity of instrument Borg and Gall (1996).

2.10 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The following procedure were applied in data analysis, studying the notes, looking for cross-cutting trends, checking emergent patterns, corroboration, verify and networking various parts.

3.0 FINDINGS AND DICUSSION

3.1 OVERVIEW

Sikhs in Kenya are a resultant of the process of transformation and adaptation of Sikh society by the Sikh founder Gurus (teachers). The Sikhs of the founder of the Sikh religion Guru Nanak for example, the clean shaven *Sahajdharis* were unknown to the general public. To them, the clean shaven would be categorized as those who had been Sikhs but backslid from it. However, the Sikhs in Kenya do not overlook the tenets propounded by the ten founder Gurus, Guru Nanak, Guru Angad, Guru Amar Das, Guru Ramdas, Guru Arjun, Guru Hargobind, Guru Ha Rai, Guru Harkrishan, Guru Tegh Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh. Externally Sikhs in Kenya are uniformed Sikhs of Guru Gobin Singh founded on April 13, 1699 on the Hindu New Year day also called Baisakhi. They are distinctly identified by long beard, turban, *Kesh* long hair, *Kangha* comb, *Kara* iron bracelet, *Kirpan* sword, and *Kachha* under-wear normally larger than the normal sizes, worn by both men and women. All *Sikh* men are called Singh meaning lion and female Kaur princes. To the African Kenyans, Sikhs are *Kalasinghas*, reference limited to the beturbaned Sikhs. By extension thus, there was nothing inherent among the Sikhs and Sikhism that could inhibit their decolonizing the spirit.

The word Sikh was derived from 'Sishya" meaning disciple Ganda (1982). A Sikh is thus a disciple, who believes in one God and the teaching of the ten Gurus, starting from its founder Guru Nanak (1469-1539) up to the tenth Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708) and in the Sikhs holy book, the Guru Granth Sahib. Meanwhile as a result of differences in belief systems which emanated from expansion and transformation of Sikhism it split into branches that could be treated as sects, for example the Namdhari. Unlike the mainstream Sikhs who belief that the tenth Guru Gobind Singh was the last human Guru and in the enthronement of their holy book Granth Sahib as the final Guru, the Namdhari belief that Guru Gobind Singh was not the last human Guru but to date they belief in a human Guru as their leader. Within the Indian constitution, a Sikh is one who believes in the ten Gurus and the Guru Granth Sahib. A Guru' to the Sikhs was a teacher, to guide Sikhs across the fearful ocean of life.

Among the Asians in Kenya, Sikhs have their roots in the Punjab, India. The word Punjab etymologically means the land of five rivers. *Punj*, in Punjabi means 'five' and *abi* means water. The other Punjab groups, found in Kenya and other parts of East Africa, include Hindus and Muslims, most of them came from the North western pre- partitioned 1947 Indian subcontinent.

Besides religion, the genesis of shaping the social, political and economic history of the Sikhs was at first natural environment but later colonialism and decolonization. It was as a result of the environment under which the Sikhs found themselves in India that they adopted agriculture and related crafts like artisan. The agriculturists Jat became predominantly rural dwellers in India, while the Ramgarhia Sikhs became both rural and urban dwellers. The latter were traditionally classified as Craftsmen, *Tarkhans* (Carpenters) *Lohaars* (black smiths) and *Raj* (brick layers). They were low in social status compared to the Jat Sikhs according to the traditional hierarchical system prevailing in the Punjab. Both groups are found in Kenya. The Ramgarhias constitute the majority. They are in different occupations though closely related to their Indian traditional occupations.

Similarly the socio-political environment of Punjab influenced the Sikhs. Originally Punjab the main homeland of the Sikhs was not only the main overland gate into India but also a battle field whereby nearly all invaders of India, the Mughals, Persians and Turks except the British entered India through Khyber Pass Sanu (2015). The invaders settled in the conquered domain of the Punjab, intermarried with local Punjabi women as a result the ancestry of the Sikhs came to constitute the Arabs, Persians and Turks. The languages Arabic, Persian and Turkish influenced Punjabi language Raghbir, (O.I:1997).

Partly, the British divide and rule policy in Kenya and India inhibited the Sikhs' ability to integrate or decolonize as was propounded by Sikh founder Gurus. Sikh religion was hived from the Indian society which was sunk in rigid caste system. It was a terrible sin for a *Shudra* (the lowest rank before the outcaste according to the Hindu hierarchical grading of people) to hear a *vedic* hymn (Body of knowledge texts from ancient India). Hindus were not free to associate with each other without regard to caste differences. Inter-caste marriage, initially common in ancient India had ceased. Material progress had become impossible because ability and skill had been clipped and replaced by caste laws, which made occupation a hereditary. Guru Nanak preached at the time when bigotry and superstition was rife. At the same time there were conflict between Muslims and Hindus whereby Muslims forced Hindus into their fold, and those who refused were killed. The Hindu converts had to refrain from eating pork, forbidden by the Quran, be circumcised (for male converts) and fast during the month of Ramadhan. Guru Nanak, denounced discrimination based on caste, creed, race or religion, and proclaimed, that both Musalman and Hindu were brothers Khushwant (1963). Guru Nanak thus, emphasized the intrinsic essence of humanity a quality that could have enhanced Sikh decolonization spirit in Kenya but was far from being realised.

Practical channels towards social equality among the Sikhs, which would have worked as an avenue for decolonizing the spirit included communal inter-dining *langar* (free communal kitchen), it was a central part of the Sikh worship, all the Gurudwaras had a *langar*. Every Sikh had a religious duty to contribute towards the successful operation and implementation of the *Langar* and partake of it as part of *Kar seva* (religious voluntary service) and worship.

The institution of langar in Kenya is not successfully integrated though it remains popular among the Sikhs but not partaken of by Africans. This is as a result of legacy of colonialist induced mutual suspicion between the Sikhs and Africans as well as being people of different faiths, thus distanced Sikhs' spiritual ideal from

real life situation. It also downplays Sikhs' belief in universal brotherhood that had to be expressed in righteous deeds Dharam (1994). By virtue of one being a Sikh devolved responsibility to achieve the level where spiritual idealism took precedence over secular values Dharam (1994) a virtue that would have promoted decolonizing spirit.

Although it was established that all religion to the Sikhs were the same yet in India as is the case in Kenya was far from being achieved by the Sikhs yet it would have largely boosted decolonization from colonialist divisive policies which divided Kenyans on religious lines. Guru Nanak taught unity among religions Raghbir, (O.I: 1997). To him different religions were different paths or lens through which light entered the soul of man, though the density of light could vary but the rays of light were not different. The differences in religion did not justify conflict or rivalry Gupta (1984: 422). Nanak respected all religions that emphasized the suzerainty of God. There was only one God whose qualities were described as incomprehensible, timeless and all pervading. The nature of God was beyond man's capacity to comprehend or to describe. Sikhism was thus opposed to animosity in society brought about by different religious beliefs Cole (1978). However, instead of integration Sikhs in Kenya began to underscore their exclusive cultural heritage. As a result Sikhs social life in Kenya, like in India is predominantly Punjabi. Sikhs' demand for their own independent state of Khalistan in India had both political and socio-religious underpinnings. Sikhs social interest was linked to the maintenance and preservation of their identity Cole (1978). In Kenya, Sikhs demonstrate keen interest to what happens in India generally, but more specifically to their fellow Sikhs in Punjab Grewal (O.I). There has been concern among the Sikhs in Kenya to retain their mother tongue Punjabi in order to keep their religion, culture and identity. In U.K the Sikh community leaders requested the government to make provision for the teaching of Punjabi as part of the school curriculum Lou (O.I: 1996). In Kenya there is provision for teaching of Sikhism under Hindu Religious Education. Thus despite the fact that the Sikh Gurus particularly the founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanak, propounded Sikhism unhampered by geographical, caste or creed limitations, Sikhism in Kenya is practically found amongst the Punjabis.

The pioneer Sikhs in Kenya were socially pre-occupied with the preservation of their community than propagate the unity inherent in Sikhism, and drifted to social separatists than decolonize the spirit. Effort by the Sikhs to sustain the ideals of their religion, culture and identity both in India and Kenya was however challenged by modernity. Technological improvements, associated with electronic media and education, which expose Sikh youths to secular music, cinemas and dressing resulted disuse of the turbans and clipping of hair. Sikhism unlike Hinduism and Islam is faced with greater danger because of visible disappearance of outward symbols.

3.2 Sikhs Inter and Intra-Communal Relationships

Sikhs as part of Punjabis in East African region constitute 20% of the Asian population. Many live in Kenya where they constitute majority of Punjabis both in numerical strength and influence. This is like India, where though they constitute only 2% of the entire Indian population their economic role is marked by higher per capita income. The Punjab state (the homeland of the Sikhs) has higher life expectancy than Indian's national average. The other Indian immigrant communities in Kenya include the Gujarati and Cutchi speaking Hindus constituting 70% of the Asians in East Africa. The Gujarati and Cutchi speaking Muslims are numerically at par with the Punjabis found in East Africa. Other smaller Asian (Indian) communities in East Africa include the Gujarati speaking Jains, the Patels, the Goans, the Maharastrians the Parsees and Sindhis. It is with these communities, more specifically Hindus and Muslims that this paper sought to explore their relationships with the Sikhs and by extension determine the levels of decolonization.

The Sikhs in Kenya like the 19th century India were demographically classified together with the Hindus. The census of 1911 in colonial Kenya had this manifestation. This reflected the initial small numerical strength of the Sikhs, and the assumed social linkages between the Sikhs and Hindus. In India, Sikhs remained without a clear-cut legal definition as distinct group, partly anchored on the fact that a section of Sikhs, for a long time paid homage to both the Sikh Gurus in addition to Hindu deities. The colonial government in India similarly regarded the two faiths, and traditions as inter-linked and overlapping *Government of India Census 1881.*

With passage of time Sikh population in Kenya increased and a distinction was drawn between the Sikhs and Hindus as was reflected in the census of 1926. In that year Sikhs were 2,089, and by 1962, they had increased to 21,169.The greater influx of Sikh migrants to Kenya apart from those drawn by the British who brought them to work on the railway construction others came as ex-soldiers after the first and the second World Wars, and during the post-world War II building-boom. Additionally Sikhs were pushed out of their Indian sub-continent as a result of Sikh-Muslim animosity, which followed the partition of India into Pakistan and India in 1947. The following table is a reflection of the Sikhs' demographic changes in Kenya covering half a century *Report on non-native census* 1911-1962.

Asian Population by Religion.

YEAR

Religion	1911 Population	1926 Population	1931 Population	1948 Population	1962 Population
Hindu					
Sikhs	3,205				
Hindu	-	12,262	19,748	51,395	97,841
Muslims	5,939	11,520	15,006	27,585	40,057
Sikhs	-	2,089	4,427	10,621	21,169

The inter-communal relationship between the Sikhs and other Indians (particularly the Hindus) at the turn of the 20th century was amicable. This was unlike in India, where the Sikhs continuously sought for political and social identity, which often led to hostility among them. The social link between the two in Kenya had situational factor (being in a foreign country), religion and historical reasons.

Sikhs and Hindus relationships and thus decolonizing the spirit was based on common culture and geographical descent. The founder Gurus of Sikhism were born Hindus Khushwant (1963). The foreign and isolated environment abroad in which the Sikhs and Hindus found themselves in Kenya threw them back, to revisit their historical and cultural memories.

The Sikh-Hindu relationship in Kenya was similarly enshrined in the harmonizing and therefore decolonizing spirit teachings of the founder Gurus. During the evolution of Sikhism, Guru Nanak adopted

from the Hindu, the wisdom of the past as was contained in the vedas' and the Puranas. He, however, stressed on some to suit the new religion, 'Sikhism'. Nanak revitalized some of the neglected but important tenets of the vedic teaching. He set an example for harmony between the Hindus and Sikhs.

The Sikh Guru, who came after Nanak demonstrated unity between the Sikhs and Hindus. Guru Amardas, the 3rd Sikh Guru, demonstrated a friendly co-existence with the Hindus. He appealed to the Mughal Emperor not to levy tax upon the Hindu pilgrims who visited Haridwar on the sacred river Ganges Grewal and Raghbir (O.I: 1997). Similarly, Guru Amardas prior to his conversion to Sikhism had been a devout Hindu. Guru Arjun, the fifth Sikh Guru, respected the 'Vedas' as a repository of God's message, he admitted that the 'Vedas contained the pure name of God however, the ignorant men (referring to Hindus, particularly Brahmins) did not listen to it and wandered in illusion *maya*. To Guru Arjun, the 'Vedas', the 'Puranas' and the Smiritis, were made pure and holy by the letters of the name (nam) of one Parmat man (God) that embodied in them Khalsa (O.I: 1996). Guru Arjun built bridges of understanding. He taught that the God worshipped by Hindus and Sikhs was the same only differing in language Khalsa (O.I: 1996) and while compiling the Sikhs holy book, the Siri Guru 'Granth Sahib' he included hymns of Hindu and Muslim mystics.

On the historical plane, the Sikhs and Hindus social integration and decolonization of the spirit was influenced by common history and common historical problems associated by the Mughal leaders. In India the Mughal rulers indiscriminately inflicted atrocities on the two groups, the Sikhs and Hindus. The Sikhs in particular were driven to adopt militant attributes against the Muslims after the murder of their fifth Guru, Guru Arjun. He was killed on what the Sikhs described as framed-up and this subsequently forced them into Militancy Khushwant (1963).

The subsequent Sikh-Muslim wars made the Sikhs be regarded as the Hindus military wing Indu (O.I). Later Sikh military role in colonial India embittered them with the Muslims. This was fueled by the British divide and rule policy whereby as Sikhs were employed into the high ranks of the armed forces Muslims were reduced, especially after the sepoy mutiny of 1857.

Similarities in socio-cultural practices between the Sikhs and Hindus reconciled and therefore influenced the decolonization of the two against the inter-communal divisive colonial policies in Kenya. Though the Sikhs' code repudiates the keeping of fast for religious functions, it was practiced by a fraction of Sikhs Binapal (O.I:1996). Both Sikhs and Hindus celebrate the Hindu festivals of *Holi, Baisakhi* and *Diwali*, however with different meaning. Baisaikhi to the Hindus was a New Year day according to the Indian calendar. Whereas Sikhs celebrate it to commemorate the founding of the *Khalsa Panth*. *Holi* was spring festival associated with Krishna, to the Sikhs, Holi took the form of military maneuvers. It involved mock battle, archery, wrestling contests and music. The identical celebration promoted communal understanding Binapal(O.I:1996).

Unlike the Punjabi Muslims who did not intermarry with the Sikhs, the Punjabi Hindu families and Sikhs continued marriage liaison by extension influenced decolonization against colonialism. The Punjabi Hindu families left their eldest son's hair grow like that of a Sikh *kesh*, tied a turban and put on a Sikh emblem 'Kara'(an iron ring) on his right wrist Raghbir (O.I: 1997). Sikhs and Hindus in Kenya inter-changeably visited each other's temples. At Meru for example, the Hindu community used the Sikh centre for their religious functions, particularly during major religious festivals Bhagat (O.I: 1996).

The drastic reduction of the Sikh population and that of the general Indians after the completion of the construction of Uganda railway in 1901 enhanced isolation, and loneliness among Indians. As a result, revived memories about their common socio-political background and contributed to the Sikh-Hindu inter-communal unity and decolonization

spirit. Out of the 31,983 indentured Indians who immigrated to work on the Uganda. Railway, 16,312 went back to India after indenture period, 6,454 had been invalidated to India and 2,493 had died, leaving about 6,724 Indians *Final Report, Cd 2164.*

The reduction of the Sikh population at the turn of the 20th century was closely followed by the anti-Indian' sentiments first perpetuated by white settlers and later by African nationalists thus influenced Sikh-Hindu and African decolonization spirit. The three groups competed over resources and power, they saw each other as a hindrance to their socio- political and economic progress. In essence therefore the .colonial ' period was marred by anti-Asian sentiments which forced Asians to get united. The fact that the Asians had a common enemy, the British colonial government who indiscriminately instituted ant–Asians ordinances, drew the Sikhs and Indians together. The gradual flexing of the former rigid Indian custom of non-commensality among various castes of the Hindus" increased the interaction among the two Binapal (O.I:1996).

The social relationship and by extension decolonizing spirit between the Sikhs, Indian-Muslims and colonialists in Kenya was however on a low key Patterson (1907: 51). Sikh-Muslim relationship had religious, historical and colonial dimensions based in India and carried abroad. The founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanak, advocated for religious tolerance, had castigated his contemporary Muslim leaders and advised them to change their policy of religious intolerance. He warned them against falsehoods and earning unfaithfully Grewal (1997)

The atrocities, which the muslim Mughal rulers inflicted on Sikh spiritual leaders survived. These included the murder of Guru Arjun, Sikhs' fifth Guru, Guru Tegh Bahadur, the Sikhs' ninth Guru including the first five beloved Sikh faithful of Guru Gobind Singh, Bhai Daya Singh, Bhai Dharam Singh, Bhai Mohkarn Singh, Bhai Hirnrnat Singh and Bhai Sahib Singh, the four sons of Guru Gobind Singh. The names and deeds of the Martyrs are remembered in the Sikhs *ardas* (supplications). They are un-detachable part of their daily prayer. Such prayers, promoted both heroism and hatred Raghbir (O.I: 1997) and hence negatively influenced Sikh-Muslim decolonization spirit in Kenya.

The fragile communal relationships between the Sikhs and Muslims came handy to the British policy of Divide and Rule that was applied in India and in Kenya. In India, for example after the two Anglo-Sikh wars in 1845/1846 and 1848/1849, many Sikh were encouraged and recruited into the British-Indian army and allowed to retain their external symbols. During the Indian Mutiny in 1857, the Sikhs fought on the side of British colonialist against the Muslims Raghbir (O.I: 1997). After the Mutiny, Sikhs were rewarded by the colonialists by increasing their number in the colonial Indian army as Muslims were suspected.

It was both the religious zeal, British divide and rule policy and skewed decolonization spirit that encouraged Sikhs and Muslims to demand for a separate representation in India's legislative council in the late 19th and early 20th Century. The Muslim demand for separate communal seat for their representation forced the Sikhs to demand the same both in India and Kenya. Hence, the political competition between the Muslims and Sikhs started in India had an impact in Kenya, on the political and social plane. The Sikhs in Kenya became closer to the Hindu organization both in political and social fields. Consequently, the communal political speeches in India, particularly by Muslim leaders including M.A Jinnah in the 1930's and 1940's hindered the prospects of Sikh, Hindu and Muslim inter-communal decolonization and harmony Rajendra (1946).

The inter-communal animosity among the Indian religious communities remained unsolved up to and after India's independence in 1947. The rivalry was expensive in that it marked the eventual disruption of decolonization spirit and breakup of Indian Sub-continent along religious lines embittering Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims till today.

Meanwhile as Indian Subcontinent was breaking so was inter-communal hostility between Muslims and

Hindus on the eve of India's independence. At Nairobi, close to Khoja Mosque Hindus on one side and Indian–Muslims on the other wielded hockey sticks and stones against each other Joginder (O.I:1996).Whence the climax of hostility grew by extension enhanced the low level of decolonization spirit between the two communities.

Unlike the Indian Muslims the inter-communal relationship between the Sikhs and the Hindus in Kenya is functional and decolonizing spirit. The Sikhs are members of the Hindu council of Kenya (HCK) Sharma, (O.I:1996). This is an organization uniting all people whose religion's descent from India for example the Hindus, Buddhist, Sikhs, Jains. Muslims are not members.

Leadership of HCK is held on a rotational basis, involving its member communities. T.S Nandhra, a Sikh held the chairmanship of HCK between 1975 and 1978 followed by a Hindu. HCK co-ordinates activities of the member organizations. It takes keen interest in the celebration of *Diwali, Holi*, including Sikhs' celebration of the inauguration of Guru Granth Sahib as Guru and Parkash Utsav Khalsa (O.I: 1996). Both Sikhs and Hindus champion inter-communal unity by taking note of either community's celebrations. At national level, the HCK and Sikhs collaborate in national inter-communal projects, financing of self help projects, helping the disadvantaged people in the country, promotion of education, health, medical camps, welfare projects, business and professional advice through services and workshops *Daily Nation, Oct.22, 1987*.

The Sikh-Hindu identity, was similarly, facilitated and maintained by intermarriages between certain smaller sections of the Sikhs and Punjabi Hindus. This depicted a greater social association between the two superseding the unity amongst the Sikhs; the Jat and Ramgarhia with regard to marriage liaison. The Hindu-merchant class Malhotra Bauri intermarry with the Sikhs of the same caste. Despite sharing common religion the Ramgarhia and Jat Sikhs do not intermarry traditionally. This is where caste override religious tenets among the Sikhs. Sikhs however agree that with the changing trend it is possible to find intermarriage liaisons between the two Sikh communities Indu. (O.I). Thus the success of the Sikhs to get rid of caste, in accordance with Sikhism was lukewarm.

3.3 The Sikh- African interracial Marriages

Unlike most Indians in Kenya, Sikhs were among the first Asians to initiate at least on a large scale decolonization characterized by inter-racial marriages. In the Maasai the early Sikhs who penetrated the area in the 1930's ate local food, dressed like Maasi, had intimate relationships with African women and above all transacted business in hides and skin Bharat (1972). At Meru, the pioneer Sikhs married African women bringing forth, an Afro-Sikh community *Now, july5, 1992*. The inter-marriage of Wanja WaM'inaga (African lady) and Naurang Singh in 1920's marked a significant stage in Sikhs' racial inter-marriage hence influenced decolonization of spirit. The couple's descendants dispersed through migrations and further intermarriages to several parts within and out of Kenya.

Mansingh Munene, Bhagat Singh and Tarlchon Singh living at Meru are among the Afro-Sikhs in Kenya. Munene's father was born in the Punjab India. He was first employed by the British as a soldier and brought in Kenya by the British during the World War 1. While in Kenya he ventured into private business after having left military service. He first established a sugar factory at Nairobi, before moving to Fort Hall, the present Muranga where he married the African lady from Kerogoya. The two (Luxman and his wife) moved and settled at Runyenjes, where they once again established a brown sugar factory. After the death of Luxman, his son Munene was employed as a driver before he moved to Kianjai and established a retail shop business which initially flourished but business went down forcing the Afro-Sikhs move to Meru town.

To a larger extent the African-Sikh intermarriage gave the Sikhs a unique identity of decolonizing the spirit from other Indians. It enhanced inter-racial understanding. The inter-marriage dented the belief of African backwardness as unfit partners for intermarriage as had been propagated by colonialists. Meanwhile though the inter-marriage went along way to shatter the casteism amongst Sikhs, however these intermarriages remained exception and casteisrn among the Sikhs became handy to divisive colonial racial laws with regard to matrimonial alliances in Kenya as was the case in India Indu (O.I: 1997).

The Afro-Sikh community earned disapproval from the Sikh community. This forced the offspring to hate their African heritage. As a result, most of them (Afro-Sikhs) reacted by getting married to Indian girls, in an effort to rid themselves of black complexion. Bhagat Singh, an Afro-Sikh, admitted that there was racism between the Afro-Sikhs and Sikhs. He observed that racism influenced socialisation. Thus, the total integration of the Afro-Sikhs into the larger Sikh community remains incomplete. The fact that the Afro-Sikhs lost touch with the Punjabi language and could not read Gurmukhi, further distanced them from the larger Sikh community, though they cling to Sikh practices of religion Joginder (O.I:1996).

Three decades after independence, a large number of Sikhs expressed reservations towards inter-racial marriages *Sunday Times, Sep.29, 1985*. Sikhs, felt disgusted with African culture that permitted men to marry several wives Joginder (O.I:1996).The increased accessibility between India and Kenya also reduced such incidental inter-racial marriages between the two groups. The different socio-economic status between the Sikhs and Africans was yet another factor that hindered inter-racial marriages. The fact that there existed suspicion between Africans and Indians invoked since colonial period was yet another reason. Similarly reports of murders, claimed to be perpetrated by African women against their Indian husband for the sake of inheriting wealth inhibited further marriages Mutharu (O.I:1996).

3.4 Conclusion and Recommendation

Sikhs' race relations and impact in Kenya was influenced by factors ranging from the time of the Gurus as enshrined in their holy book the Guru Granthi Sahib to India and Kenya's colonial racial laws and inter-communal nationalistic struggles for independence. The stereotypes and prejudice perpetuated by the colonial white society divided Kenya into communities, which were at competition to each other till today. Sikhs' social institutions which enhanced their culture and largely became defense against social disintegration and integration was anchored among other factors on colonial racial laws and independent inter-communal suspicion rooted in colonialism but pricks post-colonial Kenya obliterating integration, hence the study recommends the need for further decolonizing the spirit by applying home grown procedures involving traditional African and Asian elders, and the educated class. Inter-denominational religious elders and government machinery as a perquisite for cohesive Kenya and human wellness.

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