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African Indigenous Knowledge Systems in the Contemporary Era: A Historical Reflection in Sukuma Land, Tanzania

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East African Journal of Education and Social Sciences

Abstract: This paper examined the Sukuma indigenous knowledge systems, which have for centuries been practiced by the Sukuma people of Tanzania. The study identified the Sukuma indigenous knowledge systems practiced in the contemporary era in Sukumaland. The study used the Transformative Learning Theory as an analytical tool to learn the Sukuma indigenous knowledge systems. The study used both primary and secondary sources of data. Data was gathered from Sukuma Custodians of indigenous knowledge systems and Bujora Sukuma Museum Curator through interviews to identify and different Sukuma indigenous knowledge systems. Documentary review sources such as Sukuma history books, journal articles, research papers and online sources were also used to supplement other sources. Findings revealed that Sukuma people still embrace and practice their indigenous knowledge in various aspects of life, such as health, religious beliefs, leadership, environment, numerical and mathematics. Some of the recommendations are that African custodians of indigenous knowledge systems should continue retaining, practicing, valuing and handling over the Sukuma culture to the next generation for the welfare and sustainability of Africans.

Keywords: Indigenous knowledge; African Indigenous knowledge; Sukuma society; contemporary era.

How to cite: Gregory, A., Luvumwa, P., Msuya, V. and Abel, M. (2024). African Indigenous Knowledge Systems in the Contemporary Era: A Historical Reflection in Sukuma Land, Tanzania. East African Journal of Education and Social Sciences 5(4), 94-102. Doi: <https://doi.org/10.46606/eajess2024v05i04.0397>.

Introduction

Indigenous knowledge refers to the knowledge recognized by ethnic groups. It also means the complex set of knowledge, skills, experiences and technologies prevailing and developed by communities, residing in a defined geographical location. Thus, it is the knowledge held by local people, outside the formal scientific domain (Mhache, 2017). Indigenous knowledge system is applicable and used at the local level by communities as basis for decisions relating to food security, human and animal health, education, natural resources management and other vital resources (Gorjestani, 2000). African indigenous knowledge has the following characteristics. It is local (Choy & Woodlock, 2007), it is oral by nature, stored in peoples' memories, its acquisition is collective and community oriented (Owusu-Ansah and Mji, 2013) and it exists when people interact with other people (Wane, 2005). Furthermore, it is practical-oriented, strengthened by experience and trial and error (Senanayake, 2006). It is not static but rather dynamic, possessed by all members of the society. Any people who have the indigenous knowledge are responsible for teaching and passing on to others (Wane, 2005) and the amount and quality of knowledge that an indigenous person holds differs based on gender, age, social - economic status, home or community roles and responsibilities and so on (Chilisa, 2012).

In Africa, as the colonial process fragmented many indigenous families and the families have been denied access to their cultural knowledge, many have turned to the materials kept in archives and libraries relevant to their own histories. However, Russell (2005) considers archival texts as sources lacking indigenous knowledge, perspectives and voices. The reliance on these sources could not portray the true African indigenous knowledge. With the understanding that traditional knowledge is a treasure, African societies have continued using much of their ancestors' knowledge in various aspects of life in the contemporary era. This study sought to fill the existing knowledge gap regarding the wrong and biased belief mostly held by the Eurocentric scholars that African indigenous knowledge systems are barbaric, unscientific, backward and irrational. Hugh Trevor Roper, a European scholar and historian had this to say as far as African indigenous knowledge and history is

concerned: *"Africans had no history of their own but only the European history in Africa."* Such a myopic and biased assertion of Europeans on Africans and African history and development centered on their argument that only written and recorded history is valid history and that oral or unwritten history (which is characteristic of African history) was invalid history (en.m.wikipedia.org).

Sukuma people are the largest ethnic group in Tanzania, living in the southern shore of Lake Victoria in North West Tanzania. The majority of the Sukuma people live in Mwanza, Shinyanga, Simiyu, Geita and Tabora regions (Kapinga, 2020).

The Sukumaland has the altitude varying between 3,700 feet and 4,200 feet above the sea level rising to higher altitudes in both east and west sides. The main area consists of undulating plains with scattered ridges of low mountain ranges composed of granite outcrops. The Sukumaland has an average rainfall of about 965 mm, which varies geographically and cyclically with occasional droughts (Kapinga, 2020). Sukumaland has hardly any perennial rivers and it has limited number of trees in the inhabited area. According to Gores and Kapinga (2017), in the 1957 official census, the Sukuma was the largest ethnic group with the population of 1,245,908 people in the districts of Kwimba, Maswa, Ng'wanza, Geita and Shinyanga. In the 1967 census, the Sukuma numbered 1,529,917. The 2012 census data revealed the population of the Sukuma people as 7,631,004 of which 5,963,689 lived in the regions of Shinyanga, Mwanza, Simiyu and Geita and the remaining 1,667,315 were scattered in other regions, such as Kilimanjaro, Arusha, Tanga, Rukwa, Ruvuma, Kagera, Singida, Mara, Morogoro and Dar Es salaam (NBS & OCGS 2013).

Currently, Africans who believe and embrace indigenous knowledge are considered uncivilized, uneducated, uninformed and conservative. In response, the third president of the United Republic of Tanzania, the late Benjamin W. Mkapa, acknowledged the importance of traditional medicine. In his article, "The Local Pathway to Global Development," Mkapa argued that the modern ways of responding to global challenges ignores local approaches despite the historical evidence of people depending on indigenous knowledge for their survival (Woytek et al; 1997). This study, therefore, sought to challenge the wrong

mindset of some people on the relevance and applicability of the African indigenous knowledge in contemporary societies, using the Sukuma in Tanzania as the case study.

Literature Review

This study reviewed relevant literatures on indigenous knowledge. From such readings, the study identified and analyzed various issues like forms, attitudes, significance and threats facing the African indigenous knowledge systems.

Bukurura (1994) conducted a study on the rise of Sungusungu as a form of indigenous security around 1980s in the Sukumaland and Unyamwezi of West-central Tanzania. The Sungusungu sought to fight the increased crimes like cattle rustling, witchcrafts, theft and laziness in the Sukuma and Nyamwezi communities. One of the methods the Sungusungu used to fight immoral behaviors was identification of the wrong doers using secret ballots. Sungusungu disciplined the wrongdoers in public. However, the study did not discuss other forms of the Sukuma indigenous knowledge, like medicine. Jangu (2013) examined the need for traditional medicine and its threat among the Sukuma. However, the study did not show how healing takes place among the Sukuma.

Other studies concentrated on the need to incorporate the indigenous knowledge in the formal education systems in Africa. The studies include one about African indigenous knowledge systems and relevance of higher education in South Africa (Kaya & Seleti, 2013). Another study was about Indigenous Knowledge and Education in Africa (Esiobu, 2019). The studies inform that indigenous knowledge should form the foundation upon which the formal education system of any society is constructed.

Some authors investigated about indigenous knowledge on food security. The studies include Pedagogical value of indigenous knowledge for food security: Learning from women farmers in Homa Bay County, Kenya by Ojwang (2020) and the Contribution of indigenous knowledge systems on food security in Mbokomu Ward found in Kilimanjaro Region, Tanzania (Mhache, 2017). The study established that indigenous knowledge is very important for food security for survival of any society. Russell (2005) argued that European writers distorted the African indigenous knowledge as they lacked African voices. They considered it

barbaric, unscientific, irrational and useless knowledge.

Theoretical Underpinning

This study employed the Transformative Learning Theory, proposed by Mezirow (1978). The theory guides and challenges the way people receive and interrogate issues regarding indigenous people and their ways of knowing and empowers them to critically analyze and assess pertinent issues concerning indigenous people. Transformative Learning Theory empowers indigenous people with knowledge to resist wrong mentality and inferiority complex given and caused by foreign oppressions and dominations through strengthening individual and collective spirit to deal with the colonial legacy and cultural imperialist relations in the academy (Dei, 2002).

This theory is relevant to this study as it equips the colonized and despised African indigenous knowledge systems with the tools to fade and oppose colonial hegemonic dogma and instead views such dogma as local, imposed, dominating, oppressive, irrelevant and carrying selfish motives. Therefore, the Transformative Learning Theory stresses the need of education, awareness and commitment to creating and valuing indigenous knowledge systems regardless of the colonial history the society passed through so as to make real dreams come true for justice, equal recognition, and harmony, peace and property rights (Purcell, 1998).

Methodology

This paper employed a qualitative approach through interviews and documents to collect data, which was analyzed thematically.

Primary sources include oral interviews or written testimonies while secondary sources involved account descriptions of persons who were not eyewitnesses. The sources were available in libraries. The process of conversation or asking of questions was organized using the constructed interview guiding questions focused on specific objectives of the study. The questions in the interview guide were open-ended questions. The study used Kiswahili in conducting the interview and for those who did not know Kiswahili an interpreter was used during the interview. The information collected was translated into English during the process of writing. In case interviews contradicted each other and interviews provided inconsistent

explanation in different interview conditions, the researchers crosschecked information found in interviews with other published works, documentary reviews and oral interviews. This helped to strengthen the historical facts.

Regarding secondary data, the scholars read various works done by other scholars which relate to the study to establish what have already been done to complement the primary data. The researchers visited St. Augustine University of Tanzania's Library and various online libraries. The materials the authors surveyed included dissertations, manuscripts, journal articles, research reports and books that address the objectives of this study.

The collected information was analyzed through the content analysis approach. Based on this approach, data analysis involved three stages. Firstly, the preliminary stage of data collection by which the authors analyzed documentary data related to the study. This helped the researchers to realize some facts about the study. In the second stage, data from various sources were selected and categorized thematically, depending on the objectives of the study. Secondary sources were used to establish a comparative analytical framework to avoid subjectivity and bias.

The authors asked for the letter of their introduction from the St. Augustine University of Tanzania to access different documents appropriate to the study. The authors maintained objectivity in data collection, data analysis, data interpretation and data reporting. The conducting of the interviews and recording of the information considered the willingness of the interviewees. To those who were skeptical to digital recording, the researchers used note books. This made the respondents confident with the process.

Findings and Discussion

The discussion of the findings on Sukuma indigenous knowledge systems have centered on an assessment of some of the identified contemporary indigenous knowledge systems in various parts of the Sukumaland.

Research Question: What are the indigenous knowledge systems in the Sukuma land?

This research question sought to establish the indigenous knowledge systems in the Sukuma land as it appears in various themes:

Sukuma Medical and Clinical Knowledge

Sukuma healers and traditional doctors, commonly known as *Bafumu*, are well knowledgeable on diseases and healing, disease preventive skills, indigenous medical information and education. For example, herbalists, traditional birth attendants, born setters, fortune tellers, psychiatrists and midwifery are responsible in ensuring a healthy society (Lupande, 1995). A Sukuma custodian of indigenous knowledge asserted, "Sukuma herbalists, healers (*Wafumu*), midwifery birth attendants (*wakunga*) and medicine men (*bhanyamiti*) detect, prevent and heal common diseases such as *bhudumi* (obesity), *mang'ondi* (hemorrhoids), *Mbinji* (leprosy) and *Buhama* (osteoporosis)" (Interview, 2024).

Also a Sukuma midwifery birth attendant and herbalist from Ngasamo village in Simiyu Region added,

Some of the plant leaves (*bhugota*) and roots (*mijhi*) or barks of tree (*mabhale ga miti*) used by Sukuma herbalists to prevent, cure and help pregnant women with abdominal complications and newly-born infants like *Nungu gwa mapando* and *Nungu sheku* treat hernia, *Ng'wihunge*, *Imala* and *Salyungu* prevent communicable diseases (Interview, 2024).

Sukuma Dances and Music Knowledge

Sukuma dances, music, drama, folklore and songs for entertainment are good example of the ethnic group's indigenous performing arts. Sukuma people have popular dances (*mbina*) or drum beating and dancing, which originated from Bagalu and Bagika legendary Sukuma societies which are commonly found in districts such as Magu, Kwimba, Bariadi and Kahama (Lupande, 1995).

Bucheyeki Dance

Bucheyeki dance involves dancing in a moving circle while the dancers move their bodies in elegant waves that attract observers. This dance happens when the youth participate in harvesting activities (Lupande, 1995).

Buzwilili and Bunungule Dance

Buzwilili engages snake charmers with deep knowledge of snake poisons and their antidotes. The *Banungule* group, on the other hand, plays an important role in hunting the much-hated porcupine. They also hunt and domesticate hyenas.

They use snakes, hyenas and porcupine in dance competitions to express the dancer's skills and knowledge regarding those animals (Ibengwe, 2018).

Bugobogobo-Bukonongo Dance

Bugobogobo-Bukonongo Dance is an old dance in the Sukuma society. Field cultivation in the night wearing skin straps is among the few decorations that make Bagobogobo and Bakonongo dancers popular in the society. Above all, during dance show Bagobogobo and Bakonongo dancers demonstrate high skill of dancing and using the hoe when hoeing or tilling the land. In the Sukuma area of northwest Tanzania, farmer-musicians or farmers who composed and performed musical labor resulted to fraternities such as medicinal societies, hunting societies, porters and military organizations for their personnel and dance paraphernalia (Gunderson, 2001).

Ndono Musical Dance

Ndono is dance accompanied by traditional musical instruments from neither *Bagalu* nor *Bagika* societies. It is a mixed Bagalu and Bagika Sukuma teenage group organized on the basis of helping each other in cultivation. Non-members are allowed to hire the group by paying money. Ndono is a teenage group organized on the basis of helping one another in cultivation for free. Members within the society help one another in any other challenge. Ndono is practiced in places such as Bariadi, Magu, Kwimba, Kahama, Igunga and Busega districts (Bujora Sukuma Museum Curator, 2024).

House Building/Architectural Knowledge

The Sukuma Museum Cultural Curator from Bujora - Mwanza, argued,

Sukuma have peculiar family-house building style called "Ibindo" with its two concentric walls to give space like the today's western self-contained roomed houses. "Ibindo" houses have parents' sleeping space, cooking and women living space, grain-grinding stone and boys and girls' sleeping space. Another Sukuma building architectural designs include the Ipagale house, which has only one cycled wall, Idukhu, Majhi. This Ibindo house building style ensure secret keeping among the Sukuma family members and

express gender roles and division of labor at the family level (Interview, 2024).

Environmental Conservation and Management Knowledge

Sukuma, like any other ethnic groups in the region are still knowledgeable on environmental conservation and management issues. Sukuma have knowledge on some plants, which are believed to be sacred and some plants, which attract rain. One of the interviewees revealed that,

A good example of the environmental conservation and management strategies employed by the Sukuma is Ngitili-an indigenous environmental conservation and management method, which involves enclosing a grassland hilly area by prohibiting human activities within the area, such as cattle grazing, cutting or collecting firewood and cutting grasses. This system was accompanied by by-laws commonly agreed by the villagers under their local ruler or village head, mostly Ntemi of a specific area. Environmental conservation and management by-laws violation by anyone in the society was accompanied by societal punishment and it was the Sungusungu (the local soldiers and police) who punished the by-law breakers." Trees believed to be sacred by the Sukuma society are such as Njimya, Nyughuyu, Nkuyu, among others. These trees attracted rain and some are believed to be ancestral homes. (Interview, 2024).

Religious/Godly Knowing Knowledge

Sukuma are historically religious people. They believe in supernatural being/ powers called "*Liwelelo*", meaning "the Universe." Liwelelo or Universe unfolds and manifests into different attributions. The attributes of Liwelelo are in the form of aesthetics/ goodness or beauty (Lupande, 1995). The interview revealed that,

.....Apart from Liwelelo as Supreme Being, Sukuma have many other names connoting God. Such names include Mulungu, Lyuba, Ngasa, Ndimi, Likunze, among others. Sukuma Fishermen, call Him "Lingasa" meaning "God of fish." Cattle herders call him "Ndimi" (Shepherd) -God of green pastures, water, cattle

multiplication and security. Wasukuma use ancestors as intermediate agents to send prayers of the living to the Liwelelo. Sukuma ancestors have qualifications and to be an ancestors, one must have lived a good life and be wealth or prosperous and well known person in the society. Sukuma also believe in the afterlife and perform different religious rituals for thanks giving, sacrifices, offerings and purification of twins (Mabasa) and Kashinje- a child born while legs coming first (Interview, 2024).

Sukuma indigenous religious practices do not take place within a mosque like the Muslims or a church, like the Christians. Instead, prayers, offerings or sacrifices are led by the healer (*Nfumu*) around *Numbha ja Masamva* (small ancestral huts/houses) built within the family compound. Clan heads or Mtemi could lead prayers on behalf of the family members or community under big trees or caves or any other special place chosen by the custodians of the sukuma culture. Prayers are directed to the Creator God in hopes of providing rain, harvest, children, water, pasture, fishes, good health and prosperity or getting rid of misfortunes in the society, such as pandemics, drought, famine and deaths (Lupande, 1995).

Astronomical and Naming Knowledge

Naming knowledge and identification or application of the right agricultural seasons, using lunar month skill was and is still common in Sukumaland. The productive activities performed for each season are well identified mostly by healers (*Wafumu*) before the year begins. It was revealed that,

Wasukuma use a thirteen (13) month lunar calendar instead of a twelve (12) month calendar. Some unique signs help to signify or identify alien event at a particular period of time such as the occurring of anthills, stars-knowing skill or astronomical knowledge like Ndimila, Kitangafugo and the Southern Cross direction. Agricultural seasons are accompanied by blowing winds carrying infectious pathogens, which cause communicable diseases and are easily detected and prevented from harming domestic animals, people and crops. Sukuma seasonal knowledge help to know

the preparation time or clearing period of an agricultural field, till the land, sow, and weed and harvesting crops (Interview, 2024).

On the other hand, it was reported that

Wasukuma name new-born babies within the first week of delivery. Names given are carefully chosen with consideration to circumstances, events or situations a child was/is born. Such circumstances or situations include, among others, time or season, situations faced by the mother during pregnancy, child succession and event recurring. For example, baby boys born during daytime or afternoon are Malimi (denoting day time or afternoon). A baby girls born during afternoon are Limi (sunny time). Names associated with seasons of a year include Mabula (a baby boy born during rainy season) or Mbula (a baby girl born during rainy season). Mayala for baby boy or Nyanzala for baby girl born during famine times. Some difficult or joyous situations faced/ experienced by Sukuma mothers/wives during pregnancy compelled the family members or community members to name a child a historic name. Names such as Makoye (meaning 'problems'), Kusekwa (meaning 'laughed at') or Buyegu (meaning 'joyous') are example of the names given to baby boys whose mothers faced and endured hard times and difficulties while pregnant. Shija/ Masaga (meaning 'remained') are/were names given to Sukuma babies born either following twins (Kulwa and Dotto) or after one of the twin babies dies within few days or a month after delivery." Other common Sukuma names with historicity are such as Mhoja, Masalu, Magokhu, Kashinje, Manyanda, Makubi, Bujiku, Bundala, Limbe, Mashima, Madila, Mang'ombe, Kija, Bulambu, Misoji, Ngunda, Ngeleja, Minza, Kaniki, Mandi, Mange, Mabele and Luja (Interview, 2024).

Administrative and Leadership Knowledge

Up to 1500 A.D., Sukuma had already developed into Ntemiship type of administration. Ntemiships

were independent territories of their own because they had clear demarcation between one Ntemiship and the other. They were also administered independently by each Ntemi, having clear administration hierarchy or structure. Ntemiships were a kind of institutionalized administrative systems (Kapinga, 2020). Sukuma political and administrative structure were as follows:

At the top, there was Ntemi or Mtemi assisted by Banangwa (political advisors) and Banang'oma (religious advisors). Ntemi or Mtemi hold both religious and political powers. Politically, Ntemi was advised by Banagwa, Batwale, Banamhala and Nsumbantale. On religious matters, Ntemi was assisted by Banang'oma whose major task was to install or enthrone a new Ntemi or Chief and had to advise him on religious and welfare of his people in the particular chiefdom. The Banang'oma studied the agricultural year before it begins. They also foresaw the type of the forthcoming year using four (4) compass directions (Kadawida). Banang'oma were important people for the wellbeing of Ntemi reign and his health. In case Ntemi fell ill, the Banang'oma were responsible to find and bring to him a right healer (nfumu/manga). It was Banang'oma who prepared Ntemi's corpse and buried him. Up to 1960s, there were 52 kingdoms of Sukumaland. By that time Sukuma Chiefs had advanced to the Sukuma political federation, which consisted of 52 chiefdoms or kingdoms, such as Nyanza, which included among others Ng'wanza (Ilemela), Sukuma (Kisesa), Bujashi (Kisabo), Beda (Nyasalangwa), Negeji (Sweya) and Bulima (Igokelo), among others (Interview, 2024).

Clan Lineage/Family Tree Tracing System

History suggests that Sukuma are a matrilineal society where the child belongs to the uncle's or mother's lineage system/family or clan (Kapinga, 2020).

Sukuma clans origins are traced basing on clan-greeting ancestors-Nzwimbo (ancestral-clan song) of ancient times such as Minza, Munghu, Nega, Ngolo, Shola,

Ng'hwela, Nkwimba, Ng'hungu, Sega, Ng'washi, Siya, Ng'wisabi, Nkamba, Mkwaya, Nkela, Nsonge, Nyungu, Ndihoa and Ntimba. Therefore, Wasukuma trace clan lines through Nzwimbo. Nzwimbo enable a well- recognition and identification of clan origin. Sukuma family tree practice is still common among contemporary Sukuma. Example of a short Wasukuma clan lineage system or family tree tracing knowledge have been shown by the clan of Balemeji, who migrated from Uganda through Bantu migration in the 18th century, settling along Western Lake Victoria shores in areas of Kagera and Ukerewe islands and later on crossing from Ukerewe islands to Bugomba and Kwizu villages (countryside) in Magu district led by Shiju (male) as clan head. Shiju gave birth to Nyang'oma. Nyang'oma's child was Ndongo (male). Ndongo married Nkamba Ng'wana Nyarobi and gave birth to Mlingwa and Ibeshi (baby boys); Togile, Lola and Luja were baby girls. Mlingwa's children are Jahula, Mali, Ng'walu the first, Wilecha, Kayenze, Fafa and Ng'walu the second. Ibeshi married Ng'wana Kashili and gave birth to Balaja, Malongo the first, Malongo the second, Kulwa and Shija (Interview, 2024).

Mathematics/Numerical Science

Sukuma are knowledgeable on numerals and arithmetic according to their age groups. For example, Sukuma men's ways of counting numbers are such as: 1. Solo (one), 2. Bili (two), 3. Satu (three), 4. Yane (four), 5. Nhano (five), 6. Nhandatu (six), 7. Mpungati (seven), 8. Nane (eighty), 9. Kenda (nine), 10. Ikumi (ten). Sukuma women' ways of counting: 1. Kamo (one), 2. Kabili (two), 3. Kadatu (three), 4. Kane (four), 5. Katano (five), 6. Katandatu (six), 7. Mpungati (seven), 8. Inane (eighty), 9. Kenda (nine), 10. Ikumi (ten) (Interview, 2024).

Childrearing/ Upbringing Practices

Sukuma had unique ways of upbringing children to fit in the society. Elders taught children to behave well in the society. Sukuma, used *Shikome* (a

fireplace) set in the late evening to teach and instruct good behavior among young boys. Sukuma young boys were taught customs, norms, responsibilities, beliefs and traditions through oral narrations, sayings and proverbs. The Sukuma cherish traditions and culture carved out of nature, carried over the past and shared through people's lives. Hundreds of year-rings of learning passed through its roots. Shikome is not common among the Sukuma today; just few still practice such in villages.

On the other hand, girls were taught good manners such as respecting elders and cooking well by elder mothers in the kitchen, during family meal preparation. "Sukuma girls were carefully and systematically prepared by their mothers, aunts, grandparents and community members to live, respect and handle their families and elders, including husbands after being married. Sukuma family good reputation depended mostly on the behavior and manners of both a mother and daughters in the Sukuma family. This knowledge should be appreciated and valued by all people, since it sustains the wellbeing of the people. (Salakana, 2004).

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

The study concludes that the Sukuma Indigenous knowledge systems, which have been inherited over generations and practiced over time, basing on skills, abilities and problem solving techniques that change over time, depending on the historical material conditions, prevail in the contemporary Sukumaland. Such Sukuma indigenous knowledge systems include medical or clinical knowledge, dances and musicology, house building or architectural design, environmental conservation and management, religious or godly-knowing skills, astronomical and naming system, administrative and leadership knowledge, clan lineage or family - tree tracing system, mathematics and numerical knowledge and child-upbringing knowledge. Thus, Wasukuma still recognize the value and power of indigenous knowledge systems towards sustainable Sukuma community welfare and livelihoods.

Recommendations

The study recommends that African custodians of indigenous knowledge systems should continue retaining, practicing, valuing and handling over the

Sukuma culture to the next generation for the welfare and sustainability of Africans. Researchers must proceed through theoretical and practical grounds identifying, examining, analyzing and suggesting the best African indigenous knowledge practices and usage. UNESCO and Ministry of Education and Culture need to invest heavily in understanding and exploring the dynamics and adaptability of various significant African indigenous knowledge systems for the prosperous peoples' lives in the contemporary era and in the near future. Policy makers and activists should work on African indigenous knowledge equal recognition with global or westernized knowledge. Custodians of indigenous knowledge must be protected by the same property rights that protect the western knowledge's producers.

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