



Indigenous Education among the Endorois: An Examination of Pre-Colonial Practices up to 1895

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to examine aspects of the indigenous education among the Endorois in the pre-colonial period to 1895. Education, whether indigenous or modern, plays an important role in society. The Endorois community has not embraced modern education well due to the effects of indigenous education, which is still practised. The Endorois indigenous education still persists despite modernity, but the community has not fully embraced modern education because aspects like school dropout and poor performance are evident. The Endorois community is one of the minority groups of the Kalenjin-speaking ethnic group found in Kenya. They are traditional inhabitants of Baringo, where the study was carried out, and they still practice some aspects of indigenous education. This study utilised structural-functionalism theory and the articulation of modes of production theory. This study also utilised an ex-post facto research design. In order to ensure the validity of the instruments and for reliability, external and internal criticism were used. Purposive and snowball sampling techniques were used to enhance a comprehensive and orderly collection of data by use of an interview schedule and focus group discussion. Data was analysed qualitatively through the deduction of themes based on the objectives of the study. The findings of this study would be useful to policy makers in the field of education, social sciences and other relevant fields in formulating policies that would integrate relevant knowledge, skills, attitudes and values into the current educational system from the indigenous education of the Endorois community.

Key terms: Apprenticeship, education, Endorois, indigenous education, informal education.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Indigenous education was very significant among all African communities, including Maasai, Nandi and the Endorois ethnic group, who are marginalised but have maintained their traditional indigenous education, which still persists despite modernity, while modern education has not been embraced fully because of high school dropout and poor performance among other aspects, which are evident in the society. The Endorois valued indigenous education since it inculcated knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values, such as respect, general aspects of the rites of passage and maturity. The Endorois are a distinct Kalenjin-speaking ethnic group found in Kenyan communities, who were the traditional inhabitants of Baringo, within Rift Valley Province in Kenya. It is a Community of approximately 60,000 people (Population and Housing Census ROK, 2010). They are scattered all over parts of Kenya, but the majority of them are found in Baringo.

They have practised Agro-pastoralism since time immemorial. Depending on their livestock for survival, the Endorois' traditional way of life has consisted of grazing their animals (cattle, goats, sheep, donkeys) in the lowlands near Lake Bogoria during the rainy seasons, and turning to Mochongoi Forest during the dry seasons. It also includes performing various cultural rituals to their gods and the community at large in the African tradition style. The land surrounding Lake Bogoria is fertile, providing green pastures and also medicinal salt licks that are vital for the health of the livestock. The Lake has always been of the utmost importance to the religious and traditional practices of the community (Ronoh, 2011).

Indigenous education is the acquisition and transmission of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values from one generation to another or within the same generation (Sifuna & Otiende, 1994). Apart from socialising youth and members of society into the norms and beliefs of the society, it also enhances practical skills and the acquisition of knowledge, which is deemed to be useful to individuals and society as a whole (Sifuna, 1990). Indigenous Education was meant for survival and solving problems that individuals and society encountered in day-to-day life, ranging from challenges in social situations to health situations.

As Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, former President of Tanzania, arguably maintained that indigenous education is an integral part of life (Hino & Comozzi, 1996). Indigenous education takes many forms depending on historical and cultural background. It is influenced by the prevailing economic, social, religious and political systems of the society according to Ishumi (1996). Education sustains community development as postulated by Mwalimu Jullius Nyerere (Hino, 1996). In any society, education, whether indigenous or Modern, remains a vital aspect through which the society models and determines its existence by propagating desirable knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to the succeeding generations. Every society, whether simple or complex, has its own system of training its members (Fafunwa, 1974).

African indigenous education was quite effective during the pre-colonial period. The early Europeans who came to Africa thought they brought education to uneducated people who were left in total ignorance. This was untrue since the African people had their own developed systems of education before the coming of Europeans and Arabs to Africa. The African indigenous education was meant for adaptation to the environment, conserving the cultural heritage of the family, clan and ethnic group (Sifuna & Otiende, 2006).

The study examined aspects of indigenous education among the Endorois in the pre-colonial period to 1895. The study attempted to answer the question: What were the aspects of Indigenous Education among the Endorois in the pre-colonial period to 1895? The study assumed that the aspects of indigenous education among the Endorois Agro-pastoralists of Baringo, Kenya, in the pre-colonial period, 1895-2010, still exist despite the introduction of modern education/modernity.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Aspects of Indigenous Education

Sifuna and Otiende (1994) defined Indigenous education as the acquisition and transmission of desirable cognitive, psychomotor and affective domains from one generation to another or within the same generation through appropriate methodology. The former president of Tanzania, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, described indigenous education as an integral part of life, as articulated by Hino and Camozzi (1996). Before the coming of the Europeans, Africans had an elaborate system of education which was fit for/the African way of life, but when the Europeans came, they demonised African indigenous education as backward and retrogressive. They introduced a new education system, which was modernised and more Eurocentric since it was informed by reading and writing using foreign languages like French and English, among others, as put by Kongolo (2001). Indigenous education is the process of transmitting acceptable values, skills and the accumulated knowledge of a particular society (Itibari, 2006). Thus, education is essentially a societal instrument for the expansion of human culture. Itibari (2006) further defines knowledge as a state of knowing or understanding gained or retained through experience or study. Sifuna and Otiende (1994) define education as a means of transmitting one's culture from generation to generation or a process by which people are prepared to live effectively and efficiently in their environment. It is a process of bringing about a permanent change in human behaviour. Warren (1991) stated that indigenous education prepared the youth to become useful members of society. From these two definitions, it is evident that education has two dimensions: content (what is taught) and process or method (how it is taught).

Sifuna (1990) stated that Indigenous education was not only concerned with the systematic socialisation of the young generation into norms, beliefs and collective opinions of the wider society, but also placed a very strong emphasis on learning practical skills and the acquisition of knowledge which was useful to the individual and society as a whole. It is therefore imperative to note that indigenous education was for survival and to help one solve the problems that may arise in the course of life, ranging from social, economic and political-related challenges. In support of this, former president of Tanzania, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, described indigenous education as an integral part of life, as stated by Hino and Camozzi (1996). This is contrary to the intellectual fallacy of the fatuous assertion that knowledge systems were introduced to Africa through colonialism. The incontrovertible fact is that colonialism introduced modern knowledge systems, as a particular form of knowledge, through imposition and a systematic attempt to destroy indigenous knowledge systems, as put by Lebakeng (2004).

Osokoya (2003) said that African Indigenous education was necessary for human survival hence it was a means in which desired wisdom, knowledge, experience and values were transmitted from one generation to another or within same generation for life's duties and pleasure. It entailed knowledge, skills and attitudes that were very unique to different cultures or societies in Africa as expounded by Warren (1991). It contained information for society, which enhanced communication and decision-making (Flavier, 1999). Indigenous education was meant for living by training youth for adulthood within society (Sifuna, 1990). It

was also defined as a sum total process by which one generation transmitted its culture to the succeeding generation to prepare them to live effectively and efficiently in their environment (Sifuna, 1990). Indigenous education prepared members of the society, especially the youth, to become useful members of the family, clan and society. It contributed to a relatively permanent change in human behaviour that was acceptable (Warren, 1991). Indigenous education was quite pragmatic in nature since it was based on the philosophy of productivity and functionalism, where every member of the society was a contributing member (Ocitti, 1973). It entailed a full range of subjects taught, it was based on various responsibilities in the society (Osokoya, 2003), rooted in socio-cultural and physical environment. The learners had to learn how to adapt to their environment and how to utilise it for survival. Most African societies offered two types of curricula: generalised and specialised curricula (Otiende et al., 1992)

African indigenous education had a specific curriculum which was offered to the selected members of the society who had to fulfil specific conditions offered, including payment of fees, whether in kind or in labour (Otiende et al, 1992). The content of African indigenous education was tied to the area of specialisation one intended to pursue, for example, in the Yoruba, who specialised as diviners, healers, religious practitioners (priests) and ritual specialists (Brown & Hiskett, 1975). It utilised the following methods: observation, imitation through the medium of work, play, oral literature, social ceremonies, games, apprenticeship, demonstration, direct instruction and inculcation of fear (Ocitti, 1993). All over the world, young people have that natural impulse to imitate adult life. For example, in the Abagusii community, Monyenye (1977) stated that boys became "little fathers" who build houses and herd cattle. Girls became "little mothers" carrying sticks as babies and cooking soil. While in Acholi, children were imagined as being involved as real fathers and mothers (Ocitti, 1973). By observing the behaviour of other members of the society, a child would gain the ability to imitate adult roles and activities (Otiende et al., 1992). The mother in the Abagusii setting taught their infants how to pronounce "ta-ta," meaning father, from a tender age (Monyenye, 1977).

The African indigenous education was administered by experts who determined what was good for current and future generations to come, since it was aimed at inculcating good morals that prepared young people for adult life in society (Mwanakatwe, 1974). Men would work, hunt or play, and boys would imitate, while women would do the house chores in the presence of their daughters and later tell them to do likewise. Ronoh (2005) identified pottery and basketry as some of the technical skills that girls were taught. The skills of spinning of yarn, weaving, plaiting, hair dressing, brewing, making cosmetics and extraction of palm oil were taught to girls (Brown & Hisket, 1975), while boys had a field master who trained them on blacksmithing, they made items like hoes, knives, wood work, leather work and curving (Brown et al, 1975). Social skills were also taught. Maasai, Luo, Abagusii, among other African communities, taught children to respect their parents, relatives, clan members and entire community (Otiende et al, 1992). Morality was taught, Bogonko (1992), morality entailed promotion of mutual welfare, growth, creativity and doing good over bad.

Every system of education has a way of assessing and evaluating the learners in order to find out whether the appropriate knowledge, skills, values and attitudes taught were acquired by the learners. Maila (2001) asserts that every learner was to demonstrate all aspects gained, and the assessment of learners was continuous. Osokoya (2009) added that practical tests that were relevant to the learners' experiences and level of development formed the final examination. For instance, girls were to show competence in how to do their domestic responsibilities, like cooking, weaving, and keeping houses clean, among others, for

them to be circumcised. Girls who were hard working were honoured and respected, thus more pride price was paid (Manyaka, 2006), while boys were given tests to strengthen their ability to endure hardships (Monyenye, 1977). During initiation, both boys and girls among the Kipsigis were examined by the selected and experienced elders who gave instructions and tests. Before the actual rite took place, the boys underwent severe tests of endurance, and on the day of circumcision, they were stung with thistles as a test of their courage (Ronoh, 2000). After the initiation, the assessment of learners still continued in order to ensure individuals were ready to serve society. Ronoh (2000) stated that men took turns in testing the boy initiates by asking questions which were carefully, systematically and correctly answered. The African indigenous education exhibited boisterous play, for example, wrestling (*ogokinaa or emeni*), which was done for fun when they had nothing to do or to occupy themselves with (Monyenye, 1977). Boys among the Yoruba joined wrestling, gymnastics, and other sports that strengthen their physical endurance (Osokoya, 2009). Organised plays that were used were planned when to occur, and the participants were well-known. For example, among the Abagusii, they included archery (okorenga), bull fighting, and hide and seek. Play helped the youth to have a retentive memory, mental exercise and encouraged language development (Monyenye, 1977). Otiende et al. (1992) stated that play enabled the youth to display considerable creativity and imagination.

Initiation rituals are defined as events that are performed in a community in order to mark the passage into a new stage in the life of an individual, as put by Davies (1972). He further points out that the process of initiation ritual accompanies the movement of people from one social status to another. Such a movement could involve a change from being a boy to a man or from being a married woman to a mother. In addition, Ronoh (2000) points out that rites of passage are done to mark the transition from one stage of life to another, and such rites signify changes in individuals' lives, while confirming their identity and status in the community. At adolescence, children learnt tribal conformity through avoidance and prohibition, especially in relationships between the sexes, which were regulated by strict rules and backed by severe sanctions. Children learnt oral literature which reflected people's way of life (Ocitti, 1973). The work that children were given was increased in amount and complexity as they grew up. No child was assigned a task which was beyond his or her physical fitness.

Wandira (1973) in his documentation stated that during childhood, a child was encouraged to sit, crawl and walk by giving him or her opportunities in order to overcome these developmental tasks. To inculcate good habits and characters in their young children, incentives were used by parents, including encouragement, rewards, and approval, praise and deterrent methods such as punishments. During the development from birth to six years, a child was educated in the family by the mother or the father, on whom he or she largely depended both physiologically and materially. The father was a complement to the mother. At the age of six or seven, games and storytelling became an integral part of learning. Between ten and fifteen years old, a child associates closely with social life, both actively in productive work, social relationships and public affairs, among others. It's at this time that she or he would start his or her apprenticeship in some occupations. At around fifteen years old, a child undergoes puberty and becomes an adolescent. This was the period for initiation, where physical exercise, sexual education, awareness of responsibilities, among other aspects, were emphasised. After initiation, the adolescent was prepared for life and completed training with elders. African indigenous education embraced character building and the development of physical aptitudes. The children learned everywhere all the time, but sometimes learning circumstances determined the place and time of learning (Scalam, 1964).

The children were brought up or prepared to become useful members of the *Kokwet* and their age group. Girls were brought up as future wives who would do domestic duties. At the same time, boys were trained to become future fathers and agro-pastoralists as articulated by Chang'ach (2013). Training began from early childhood; at the age of four to five years, a child's lower incisors were removed, and he or she was charged with the responsibility of looking after the lambs and young calves around *Kokwet*. The next stage started at the age of six to seven years, when the top of the right ear lobe was pierced. The child looked after older calves and accompanied older persons in herding cattle. In the evening, they chased each other around their home enclosure, played games with charcoal, learn stories, riddles, proverbs and sayings. At a later age, children were entrusted with the responsibility of looking after cattle, and holes were then made in the lower lobes of both ears. When boys were mature, they were given the responsibility of moving sheep or cattle to new pastures. Girls helped mothers in domestic responsibilities like building huts, making milk containers, leather costumes and fetching water. The uncircumcised boys (*Ng'eteet*) were not allowed to put on ornaments in their pierced ear lobes and not to carry a spear according to Taita (1992). He puts plants in his ears to keep lobes distended while girls did not decorate their ears or wear loin clothes; this distinguished them from married women.

Circumcision among the Keiyo marks the entrance into the age set system; a boy "*ng'eteet*" was treated as a person without status with few rights, but circumcision lifts a boy above his age category by giving him structural status and social prestige. He was now noticed and acknowledged as 'manly'. The circumcision ceremony "*kamuratanet*" Kibny'aanko (2009) inculcated qualities like individual reliance, Group Corporation and ritual support. It is an important individual's rite of passage (Chang'ach, 2013). After circumcision, boys graduated and joined "warriorhood" (*murenik*), who had defined roles like defending tribal territory from external pressure and would raid neighbouring tribes for cattle (Chang'ach, 2013). The training of young people for specialised occupations during initiation ceremonies lasted for varying periods since it was meant to offer specified instructions in the following areas: family, weaving, fishing, among others. Female initiates underwent physiological, social and moral education to become mothers and wives. While male children were trained to become defenders of their villages and providers of their families. Initiation marked the transition of initiates from childhood to adulthood. Teaching was done by parents and other adults in society. Sex education formed part of social education, for instance, in the Abagusii community during the initiation stage, boys were taught how to handle their wives, and girls were taught how to handle their future husbands (Monyenye, 1977).

While concurring with the above authors, Ronoh (2000) adds that initiation practice is a rite of passage with a strong educational role that does not exist in isolation but benefits all social structures. This is a crucial stage in the initiation ritual among the Kipsigis youth. Ronoh (2000) states that at this stage an initiate is presented to society with a new status, new names, new clothes, new rights and duties. According to Ronoh (2000), these individuals are assumed to be adults and are expected to behave according to certain customary norms and ethical standards.

Each of the ethnic groups in Kenya has family traditions handed down from one generation to the next through oral methods. Such traditions, which were used for indigenous education in communities, especially in children, and for the inculcation of the morals of the various groups, include Proverbs, Tongue Twisters (Wordplay), Riddles, Word Game, Rhyme and Folktales. Oral literature includes the following: folk songs, folk tales, riddles, myths, legends and proverbs (Sifuna, 1990). Folk songs had a variety of aspects to pass to youths. They were sung during occasions like those of marriage, calamity, parties and initiation. For

example, in some communities, songs covered all aspects of human life: social, economic, political and moral. They reinforced the customs, beliefs and values of the society in which the individual lived. For instance, in the Abagusii community, if a person committed a serious crime, people made a song to ridicule the act. Among the Kipsigis, before initiation, candidates gathered in the evenings to practice songs to be sung the night before the operation. In these songs, boys were reminded to heed the advice and instructions given by their seniors (Daniels, 1970).

Proverbs were used amongst the African ethnic groups and featured mainly in virtually all traditional African cultures, and played significant communicative and educational functions. Raum (1965) highlighted the role of proverbs; thus, the proverb has built-in power, giving it a didactic tendency. It would not be surprising that in an authoritative culture, such as that of Nigeria, there would be a tendency to use proverbs as tools for imparting education (Raum, 1965). The proverb was used as an instrument for aiding recall of moral lessons; it was colourful, full of imagery and illustrations and enabled the hearers to visualise its message, thus creating a life-lasting impact on their minds. Proverbs' contents were real, practical and situationally appropriate, thus they create no illusion in the mind of the audience.

This study investigated various aspects of indigenous education among the Endorois of Baringo, Kenya, in the pre-colonial period to 1895. These aspects included the people who conducted indigenous education among Endorois, where it was conducted, at what age or when and specific skills offered by Endorois indigenous education.

Theoretical Framework

Structural-Functionalism Theory

This theory states that every entity has a function or a contribution it makes to the existing society's social structures. The premise of the Structural-Functionalism theory explains how society is maintained in a state of consensus due to every structure working well, hence avoiding conflict or instability. Auguster Comte, as proponent of this theory, believed in social integration, and he emphasised the interrelatedness of various structures of society. Herbert Spencer, a biologist, stated that society is like a living organism whose parts or structures must work together to sustain it. Kratz (1986) also stated that a society is held together by values of consensus, that is, the agreement regarding the goals of a system and the appropriate means of achieving these goals. He identified major structures of the society as economics, politics, religion, education and family, these formed social systems in terms of activities and functions of the society. Therefore, for stability in the system to be realised, each structure had to function accordingly.

This theory was relevant to this theory in that the Endorois ethnic group was like a society with social structures. Hence, any malfunction of these structures could have led to social instabilities, which are related to the influence of indigenous education on the Agro-Pastoral economy of the Endorois. The Indigenous education system functioned well within the society, which is why it helped communities live a good lifestyle.

Since every education system must have content, pedagogy, and modes of validation, the Endorois indigenous education must have had well-designed content, good teaching and training methods, as well as good evaluation structures. All these elements must have functioned successfully to enable indigenous education to solve instabilities in the society. Hence, this theory was utilised in this study in that all the underpinning substructures, like content, pedagogy, and validation that were embedded within the

Endorois indigenous education, might have had a part as well, and therefore it was investigated individually and how each might have contributed to the stability of the system through its functioning and consequently the stability of the whole society.

The major weakness of structural functionalism theory is that it does not consider ways in which functions may be performed by other institutions, such as the education system, as a component rather than by the family, as stated by Kratz (1986), and it cannot adequately explain social change. The researcher uses articulation of the mode of production theory in order to supplement the weakness of the first theory.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

This study employed an ex-post-facto research design to examine aspects of indigenous education among the Endorois in the pre-colonial period to 1895, analysing historical relationships that had already occurred and could not be manipulated (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2002). The research was conducted in Baringo, where Endorois residents preserved elements of indigenous education, ensuring data reliability. The target population was 60,000 Endorois (KNBS, 2010), with an accessible population of 40,000. Purposive and snowball sampling selected 60 informants: 40 specialists (herbalists, blacksmiths, basket makers, midwives, initiators, ritual experts, beekeepers, hunters; 5 each) and 20 non-specialists (Council of elders, other elderly persons, men, women; 5 each), stratified by geographical divisions (Creswell, 2012; Crouch & McKenzie, 2006).

Primary data were gathered using two open-structured interview schedules (one for specialists, one for non-specialists) and focus group discussions with women and warriors. Secondary data were obtained from published books, journals, government reports, and the Kenya National Archives. Validity was achieved through expert review and alignment with the objective; reliability was confirmed via a pilot study with 10 respondents in Laikipia. Oral interviews in the Endorois language were recorded, translated, transcribed, and thematically analysed with archival sources to identify patterns and gaps (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Ethical considerations included securing NACOSTI and local permits, obtaining informed consent, ensuring confidentiality, and guaranteeing voluntary participation.

4.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Aspects of Indigenous Education among the Endorois in the Pre-Colonial Period To 1895

Indigenous education is the art and science of acquiring and transmitting desirable knowledge, skills, values and attitudes from one generation to another or within the same generation. Education for the Endorois happened from cradle to death. The first teacher for both boys and girls was the mother, but as they grew up, the boys imitated their father. The father taught boys mainly duties and responsibilities through observation, participation in work, songs, proverbs and riddles, while girls learnt homemaking. Boys learnt animal keeping, hunting and fighting tactics. They were expected to know how to count animals, recognise them by features, clan tattoos and ear notches or marks. They also learnt how to recognise most plants and animals of the wild. The most formal education for boys and girls happened during initiation, and it also happened from childhood to adulthood. They were educated on the history, culture and values of the society. The boys were taught by carefully selected men who were one age set below their fathers; they were called *Motirenik* (teachers) (Muge, O.I., 13/09/2019). It was after initiation that men were allowed to specialise in trades like herbal medicine, iron working and beekeeping. Most of these trades were hereditary. The young learnt good morals and values from parents, trainers and elders who were their role models. Moral values promoted peace and unity in society, encouraged people to work

hard in order to create wealth, and encouraged members of society to behave well and be responsible (Ronoh et al., 2012).

African indigenous education was a lifelong process of learning that began from cradle to grave, whereby one had to progress through predetermined stages of life. It was continuous throughout the lifetime from childhood to old age. It was a process of passing on inherited knowledge, skills, cultural traditions, norms and values from one generation to another or within the same generation of an ethnic group. It emphasised learning by doing, which is encouraged by modern education, and learners' participation in learning was highly encouraged, like in modern education, and it prepared its recipients for life duties, which is not exceptional in modern education, since it prepared the learners to enter the world of work. It also managed to provide education to all members of the community, although it was different from one ethnic group to another. Learning was encouraged by doing through apprenticeship in skilful training (Ronoh, 2012; Waseges, O.I., 23/09/2019).

Indigenous education was geared towards solving problems of the community. The instructional activities were directed towards the social life of the community, and it was taught in relation to "concrete" situations. The young people learnt about trees that were good for firewood and the ones that were prohibited. The learning experiences were made orally in the form of stories, legends, riddles and songs by adults and elders (Lekem, O.I., 18/09/2019). It also emphasised practical learning, the young adults learnt by watching, participating and executing what they learnt, it had no paper-and-pencil testing and certification, but learners graduated ceremoniously. African indigenous education was confined to a particular clan or society and covered aspects considered to be of immediate relevance to them, and it did not go beyond the borders of the society. The trainers, who were mostly elders, did not face any challenge from the learners. Traditional education had a specific body of knowledge to be learnt, which never changed, but concentrated on the transmission of cultural heritage, for example, traditions, values and norms amongst the members of an ethnic group from childhood to adulthood (Ronoh, 2012).

The Endorois child in the pre-colonial period learnt what they lived because they acquired informal education, which was a lifelong process whereby every individual acquired knowledge, attitudes, values and skills from daily experiences in the immediate environment for their survival. In African indigenous education, administration was mainly done by elders who determined what was best for their generation and those generations to come (Rendile, O.I., 17/09/2019). Before the introduction of modern education, which was brought by missionaries to Africa, there was a form of education that was aimed at preparing people for a better life in society, which began from childhood to adulthood. The Europeans came with modern education to replace African indigenous education without making a comparison on the merits and demerits of both, but they finally classified Africans as uneducated.

The Endorois indigenous education emphasised on knowledge on the following areas; culture, taboos, norms, how to look for wealth (*ke-yuch-kei*), raiding skills, secrets of family and clans, social ceremonies, how to respect family and other members of the society, how to respect uncles (*kap-mamae*) and in-laws (*kap-ikoi*), honest- not to hide livestock of other (*ketup-lowik*) it makes families extinct and finally how to name a child among other aspects, no one was allowed to name his children after his brothers, after a person who was a barren, how to change names and what to do to a child who was born after the death of several children who were born before her or him (*taker-riion*) who was cut on the ear and given very unique names which were not family names (K. Chesire, O.I, 16/09/2019). Individuals were given knowledge

on how to look at animal intestines, read and interpret them, especially those of livestock. It was taught by elders for a short time of approximately five days; there was no payment made for this training. The learners were taught how to look at rains, wars, honey, drought, diseases of livestock and human beings and predict death. If the intestines passed bad information, then a ceremony was done to stop it from happening (*ki-kitise*), but if it was ignored, it happened. The main skills that were emphasised were: hunting, beekeeping, building, carving, weaving and basketry, herbal medicine, iron working, how to make guards and skin clothes. Skills among the Endorois were based on gender, age and clans. Learning was at home, secluded places, *barrazas* and clans- there were trades that were done by specific clans, for example, blacksmithing, which was not done by all clans (Chemakoi, O.I, 17/09/2019).

The indigenous education was characterised by teaching and learning of predetermined materials in a specified physical setting where there was a clear distinction between the learners and the teachers. For example, in the Endorois community, initiation schooling was done in a specified place (*kap-torus*), and there was a clear difference between learners (*torusiek*) and trainers (*motirenik*). Initiation took place in a secluded place. After seclusion, the person is brought back to the community and is given full rights in his/her new status (Kimetto, O.I., 16/09/2019). The female initiates underwent physiological, social and moral education in order to become wives and mothers. While male initiates were trained to become defenders of their villages and good providers of their families. It was marked by circumcision of boys and clitoridectomy for girls, which marked the transition from childhood to adulthood (Kairo, O.I., 21/09/2019). Learning was by initiation, observation and repetition of what parents and other adults did in order to learn about the history of their tribes and enhance mental development. They also learned perseverance, self-control, courage and endurance. The parents were predominantly responsible for teaching their children. They inculcated good manners, norms and values into their offspring using their households as their schools. It covered practical skills, and it continued as long as the child lived with his or her parents. Other adults in society supplemented the education offered by parents. All elders in the society were expected to play the role of the mother and father in teaching, scolding, advising, rewarding and punishing children in the society (Blakemore & Cooksey, 1980). The task of bringing up children in pre-colonial communities was a collective responsibility.

The Endorois children would learn through imitation. Men would work, hunt or play, as boys would imitate, while women would do the house chores in the presence of their daughters and later tell them to do likewise. Children would learn through oral literature as elders told them educational stories while seated around the fire in the evening or at night. This was actually the time when fear and punishment were used as motivators for learning so that the children would adhere to the instructions out of fear. People worked and lived together in well-knit social networks, where every individual assumed specific roles and responsibilities in society. Everyday activities, which included eating, cooking, sowing, harvesting or hunting, were done in groups, and things were communally owned (Cherutich, O.I., 24/09/2019). The children not only belonged to the family, but they also belonged to the community, and everyone had a stake in their upbringing.

Both uncircumcised and circumcised girls were taught at the shrine (*kipng'och*) after conducting prayers to *Asis* (God) *kere-ap beek* ceremony by elder women in various issues of life, young girls were taught at home by their mothers (Kochil, O.I, 27/09/2019). Young boys were taught by their fathers at home, while young and senior men sat under a given tree to receive teachings from elders. Only circumcised men attended *ikoorto* (a meat-eating ceremony beside a river but under a big tree), which lasted for three

weeks (Kipng'ok, O.I., 30/09/2019; Kangogo, O.I., 28/09/2019). During this ceremony quite a number of issues especially the secrets of the society were taught by elders, men were taught how slaughter *kipkaa* and shown which parts belonged to who for example elders, owner, men, women and children were given specific parts of slaughtered animal, also taught men about good behaviour, respect, what was acceptable and what was unacceptable in the society. All attendants were given soup with herbal medicine that supported manhood. The senior boys who were at puberty went for circumcision (*tumdo*), where they received instructions from their trainers and elders. The elders only asked other elders on technical issues. A small gathering (*kap-kokwo/ Baraza*) was convened if there was someone who had done wrong in the society so that he or she could be corrected, rebuked and fined. The age set participated in disciplining and sometimes witnessed the process of disciplining by elders. Any member of the society who did well was given thanks and blessings (Chesang, O.I., 25/09/2019).

The young boys and girls participated in activities that were organised by elderly people. They participated in the traditional dances (*kap-tien*), which were meant for relaxation and to train young people on how to excel in life. This provided an opportunity for young people to court, as stated by Chebii (O.I., 18/09/2019). If a boy or a girl was a good dancer, he or she received many admirers. Other activities of young boys and girls included storytelling, riddles, tongue twisters and simple games. Young boys imitate their fathers in building houses, giving instructions to girls who act as their wives and children. They fenced *bomas* for cows, calves, goats and kids. They used fruits (*lopootik*- Sodom apple). The big fruits represented cows and goats, while small fruits and stones represented calves and kids. The young boys made small bows and arrows for shooting grasshoppers, insects and lizards (Yator, O.I., 28/09/2019). Boys imitated grandfathers by walking like them with walking sticks and taking on their mannerisms. Boys acted like bulls by yelling and using their heads to fight, imitating the bullfighting game.

Young girls imitated their mothers by making stones and wood their babies, they put at their back, they breastfed them, they put stones in their chest as their breasts for breastfeeding, and they sang a lullaby to them (Chepsergon, O.I., 18/09/2019). They washed them using soil as water and stone as soap. They fed using small stones as guards. Young girls prepared food using soil and urine for their families, used leaves as vegetables, and stones as guards for milk. They instructed those acting as young children to go and sleep while those who acted as grandmothers told stories at night- in the course of playing, imitating adults (Tarkok, O.I, 16/09/2019; Konyae, O.I, 27/09/2019).

Indigenous education focuses on the teaching of indigenous knowledge, models, methods and content within the formal or non-formal educational system. The growing recognition and use of indigenous education methods can be a response to the erosion and loss of indigenous knowledge through the process of colonisation, globalisation and modernity. The indigenous communities and societies are able to reclaim and revalue their languages and traditions, leading to improved educational success of indigenous students, thus ensuring the survival of cultures. There has been a global shift in recognising and understanding indigenous education as a viable and legitimate form of education. Kiptoon (O.I., 21/09/2019) and Kipchumba (O.I., 16/09/2019) stated that members of indigenous communities, including Endorois, celebrate diversity in learning and see this global support for teaching traditional forms of knowledge as a success. Learning in indigenous societies is a process that involves all members of the community. Indigenous education has been viewed by a number of post-modern scholars as crucial in ensuring that various experts, whether indigenous or non- indigenous, benefit from education in a culturally sensitive manner that enhances awareness of indigenous traditions beyond modern education.

The learning styles that were used in enhancing Endorois indigenous education were the same as the ones that occurred in their community context, which included observation, imitation, and the use of narratives, storytelling, collaboration and cooperation. The learning through inclusion made learners feel they were important members of society since they were encouraged to participate in a meaningful way by community members. Learning is encouraged from infancy within their families and communities because indigenous people cannot be separated from their culture, and it is the key to development and a better future for the children and youths in the society (Bowen, O.I., 14/09/2019).

The Rite of Passage and Indigenous Education among the Endorois up to 1895

Among the Endorois, indigenous education was an all-encompassing process that began at birth and continued throughout life. It was not confined to formal classrooms but was integrated into daily living, transmitted through observation, participation, oral traditions, and rites of passage. The rite of passage formed a vital pillar in the transmission of cultural knowledge, values, and community responsibilities.

During pregnancy, expectant mothers were accorded special respect and care. They observed various taboos, such as avoiding iron tools, refraining from sexual relations, and communicating with their husbands through intermediaries to maintain ritual purity (Kipkochil, O.I., 19/09/2019). Birth was attended by midwives while men were kept away from the delivery site, and purification rituals followed delivery to protect the mother and child from evil spirits and misfortune. These practices embodied early moral and spiritual education centred on respect for life and community well-being.

Naming ceremonies also played an educational role, connecting individuals to family history, environment, and communal events. Names reflected time, weather, or significant occurrences, Kibet for one born during the day, Kipkemoi at night, and Kiprop during the rainy season. Girls' names often began with "J", such as Jepkoech and Jepkemei (Kipkwony, O.I., 28/09/2019). In cases of repeated infant deaths, the next child was named after an object or animal to protect them from the spirit of death, and markings (*ki-kitekeri*) were made on their ears for identification (Chirchir, O.I., 19/09/2019). The naming ceremony, known as *Kisoochi Kerich*, was presided over by grandparents who pronounced names until the child sneezed, signifying acceptance. Lullabies like *ru-lakwe* were used by mothers to teach values of obedience, peace, and calmness (Bowen, O.I., 27/09/2019).

As children grew, education continued through daily socialisation and observation. Mothers taught infants to walk and talk using simple commands such as *Tendo-Tanda* (walk slowly) and *Kunoktoi* (come). Weaning foods such as cow milk, porridge (*uji/musarek*), and wild fruits like *Cheparnyule* and *Nyakan* were used not just for nourishment but also as lessons in care, hygiene, and local resource use (Kochil, O.I., 27/09/2019). Mothers encouraged early speech and interaction by naming familiar objects like *Te-ta* (cow) or *Aa-m* (eat). Child spacing was culturally managed through abstinence to safeguard both the child's growth and the mother's well-being.

For boys, indigenous education involved practical training in survival, responsibility, and discipline. Between five and six years, mothers made toy bows and arrows while fathers crafted real ones for older boys (Konyae, O.I., 27/09/2019). Boys learned to hunt small animals, herd livestock, and recognise weather patterns and animal behaviours (Muge, O.I., 13/09/2019). Counting livestock was done by colour and lineage rather than arithmetic numbers (Rendile, O.I., 17/09/2019). Tooth extraction (*keyot*) around age

twelve symbolised endurance and was used to prepare boys for pain and courage; those who cried were given a dog, while the brave ones received a goat (Yator, O.I., 28/09/2019).

Circumcision marked the most significant stage of indigenous education. It signified the transition from boyhood to adulthood and served as a platform for moral and social instruction. Boys, circumcised between seventeen and twenty years, were secluded under the guidance of elders (*Motirenik*), where they were taught leadership, discipline, personal hygiene, and cultural laws (Kurere, O.I., 13/09/2019; B. Kenei, O.I., 29/09/2019). Girls also underwent initiation after maturity (*ku-lulyo kitik*), during which elder women instructed them on domestic duties, respect, hygiene, and marital responsibilities (Songol, O.I., 22/09/2019). The teachings were conveyed through songs, proverbs, and storytelling to reinforce moral and ethical values (Ronoh et al., 2012).

After initiation, the initiates (*kikichere*) were integrated into society as adults (*Kipkelelinik*), receiving new names and gaining privileges such as marriage, property ownership, and participation in communal affairs (Chebet, O.I., 29/09/2019). This transition represented both educational and social recognition of maturity and responsibility. Elders (*Boisiek* and *Kukoiesiek*) played an essential role in sustaining indigenous education. They were custodians of cultural knowledge, teaching history, clan relationships, sexual ethics, inheritance, and religious values through storytelling and arbitration (Kosgei, O.I., 11/09/2019; J. Waseges, O.I., 23/09/2019). Women contributed by training girls in home management, pottery, and weaving through imitation and repetition (Chemuchuk, O.I., 30/09/2019).

Therefore, the rite of passage among the Endorois community up to 1895 was not merely a series of rituals but an organised educational system. It integrated moral, spiritual, and practical training aimed at shaping disciplined, respectful, and responsible members of society. Through these processes, indigenous education preserved communal identity, ensured social order, and transmitted cultural heritage across generations.

Apprenticeship among the Endorois

Traditional industry-made items needed to be made using locally available materials. They learnt how to make items through observation, observing others and through practice. The items were made by hand or by the use of simple tools. The traditional industries included pottery, weaving, ironworking, woodworking, leather working and gourd making (Rotich et al., 2012). The Endorois community made gourds from certain plants (*Silangwet*) which were used for storing animal products such as milk, butter and blood (J. Kimosop, O.I, 16/09/2019). Leather working was done by processing animals' skin to leather, which involved drying and oiling to make it soft. Hides and skins processed to leather were used to make sleeping mats (*Moito*), headgears, shields, clothes, drums and sandals (Kipkurwo, O.I, 28/09/2019). Woodwork made items from wood by woodcarvers, which included stools, pestles, mortars, beehives, boats, carving of people and animals and also furniture, which included chains, beads and tables (Kiptoon, O.I., 13/09/2019). Pottery involved pot making by use of clay, which was used for cooking, fetching and storing water and grains.

Herbalists trained their own children to take up their responsibilities when they become old in age. Most practices of herbal medicine are hereditary; the herbalist starts by sending his or her children to bring certain herbs, be it roots, stems or leaves of a certain plant, to test the sharpness of that particular child (Cheburet, O.I., 13/09/2019). The sharpest child was assisted to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and

attitudes towards herbal medicine or on herbal practices. After teaching his or her child or kin, the kin made some brews for his or her parent and invited elders for the blessing ceremony (*ke-oyep-chi*) (Lomerimoyo, O.I., 11/09/2019). Herbal medicine knowledge was a private affair; hence, it was not made public. Sometimes, herbalists died without telling others about what he or she knew about/on herbal medicines and practices. At some point of giving medication to a patient, he or she learns about certain herbs, and after recovering, he or she asks the expert to allow him or her to use that herb to treat others with the same conditions as the one she or he had previously. If the expert accepts and grants permission, then that individual prepares local brews and invites the expert and elders to bless her or him.

Midwifery was an area that was done by women. Midwives monitored expectant mothers during pregnancy and carried out the delivery process using their hands since there was no modern equipment or tools. They assisted mothers during labour pains. They gave herbs to expectant mothers during pregnancy and after giving birth to the newborn. They use *Teremet* (a sharp tool) to carry out an episiotomy, but no stitching was done, and to cut the umbilical cord for the baby. The young women were called to see the process of delivery free of charge- there was no payment for the training. Delivering woman-made local brews to midwives who assisted her. Midwives organise *Sosowet* ceremony - *Kesochi-kerich* for naming the newborn (Kipkochil, O.I, 19/09/2019; Kipkwony, O.I, 28/09/2019). Midwives carried out a destructive abortion in the event of an unsuccessful breech birth. The newborns that were born with abnormalities or disabilities were not killed, but they were left to survive until they died alone. Midwives informed the elders of a ritual to be done in order to stop the same from recurring (Konyae, O.I., 27/09/2019).

Blacksmithing was a hereditary entity since it was carried out by specific families (*kitongik*). It was only done by men who had finished raising children (*ye-ka-ko-tewonu*); they only taught their sons. It was inherited by selected sons with special orders, instructions and terms. The old men taught their selected sons for a given period, not all sons. The selected son makes local brews made of honey (*kipketinik*) as payment only; there was no payment of training in the form of money or livestock, and no woman was allowed to train in blacksmithing (Lekem, O.I., 18/09/2019). No one was allowed to go to the venue where blacksmiths carried out their work except for selected sons who were chosen for the training because it was prohibited, and livestock were kept away from the venue. The families of blacksmiths were believed to be bitter (*ng'wonen*) with a bad luck hence other families were discouraged from marrying them because they were poor and had few livestock (*matinyei- kiak*) approximately five to ten in number, blacksmiths never went for war or raiding since they had bad luck- most warriors were killed in the process and they did not settle disputes in the society (Chemakoi, O.I, 17/09/2019).

Hunting among the Endorois of Baringo was a male-dominated affair. The young boys started with shooting small animals like lizards, rats and grasshoppers until they grew up. They carried arrows which had no poison (*eririk*) and had no metal at the head; the mother made arrows for young boys. The kind of arrows a boy had determined the permission to go hunting with men. The young girls were not allowed to take arrows, but they were only allowed to carry sticks. Men were not allowed to go hunting with men. When the boy had grown enough, his father made arrows and a bow for him. He taught his son how to use arrows during hunting and gave instructions, for example, on checking on livestock and people before shooting. Men went hunting with good arrows, quivers full of arrows, bows with strings made of *Maishe* from cattle; they hunted carefully because not all animals were hunted. They used arrows to take care of animals, protect their families and territories (Muge, O.I., 13/09/2019).

The diviners (*Orkoik*) only taught their children because their trade was hereditary; they only had three to four children, hence their population was small. The parent gives the divining role to his or her sharp child, and the diviner teaches the child who has been identified as sharp. After a given period of time, elders were invited for the blessing ceremony (*ku-oyep-chi*) (Kirko, O.I., 21/09/2019). The diviner, when he or she gets old, refers clients to that specific, identified and trained child. Nobody was allowed to buy this trade because it was only inherited by children from their parents, but one can marry into the family of diviners and get a son-uncle who can have and practice it, but it ended there since he was not allowed to hand it over to his children. Other families were not trained in the same field, and diviners trained their children for free with no payment. The family of *Kap-Yerakwany* in Endorois, who was the first son of *Kaarya*, who belonged to *the Kimooi* clan of *Kap-Cherono* Sub-clan, was the main family that was custodians of divinership in the Endorois community, and the family of *Cheseng'eny*, who was made a chief by colonialists to aid in establishing and enhancing colonial administration/rule, had divinership in their family. He remained as a chief after independence. The family *Okap-Sarakiki* has diviners who have the power to bring order and calm to Lake Bogoria when abnormality is detected by the elders and the community. The family of *Kap-Sarakil/ Kap-Sokomo* is the family that remained from the destruction of *Asis* (God) because of the pride and evils that the community was exhibiting (Chebet, O.I, 29/09/2019). The families that lived in the Bogoria were in a state of disarray, but *Saraki's* family was redeemed because of their goodness and generosity. Most families of the diviners had only one son.

The rainmakers trained their own children because their children were the only ones who were allowed to inherit this trade from them. There was no training of an outsider or non-family member because this trade was confidential. The rainmaker chooses his or her child, who is very sharp. The child was only allowed to practice it after the death of his or her parent, who had handed it over to him or her after training for a given period of time. The trainee was given clear terms and conditions of this trade, and finally, he or she was expected to make local brews for their parent (trainer) as payment, who invited carefully chosen elders to bless (*ku-oyep-chi*) the trainee (Kenei, O.I., 29/09/2019). When the rainmaker was about to die, he or she handed over his or her role to his or her trained child. The rainmakers led the community during *the Ndasume* ceremony, which was meant to pray to *Asis* for the rains in the presence of elders and men. *Korosiek* from palm tree was used, the local brews was made by an elder of rainmakers' family, then elders blesses and called *Asis*, after *Ndasume* ceremony, each member took *korosiontet* to his family and he was not allowed to have sex for three days, after three days members took bath using *sokoror- rek* (urine of cows) and water during fourth day this was called *ka- kiramta- korosek*, During this period you boys and girls were told it was a taboo to do sex, anybody who practiced sex during this period was cursed to death. The elders officially declared the end of that period; hence, members could be allowed to practice sex. The looking of intestines of livestock (*ke- toon- moet*) was another area of specialisation which was done by only men. This depended on the sharpness of individuals. Training was done by elders for free. The intestines showed so many aspects in the society, for example, rains, droughts, wars, impending death and diseases (Kipchumba, O.I., 16/09/2019).

Special people in the community were responsible for bringing rain (either a man or a woman). To be a rainmaker, one had to understand the weather patterns and be able to interpret them, which involves observation of changes in the sky both at night and during the day, the movement of certain birds and animals which mark weather changes. Rainmakers do not make rain, but they pray for it. They spend long hours praying to God to provide rain to the people, and they perform certain rituals when asking for rain. They are able to tell people when the rain will fall, they plead with God to stop the rain when the rains are

too much, causing floods and damaging crops and animals, and also during very important functions in society, which could be disrupted by too much rain (Bowen, O.I., 14/09/2019). This specialised skill was inherited from parents, a daughter or a son could take up the profession/ trade from parents, rainmakers were highly respected and were friendly to people in the society, they played multiple roles in the society which included rulers and priests, most of them were trained for long time so as to master the art of "making" rain (Ronoh et al, 2012, Rutto, O.I, 22/09/2019). The role of rainmakers has been overtaken by modern science and technology, and meteorology, which carries out weather forecasting.

The Endorois community had few prophets (*maotik*) (meaning one who is sent) or seers who possessed special powers to predict what was going to happen in future. They foresee things or events before they take place through visions and dreams, for example, incoming droughts, wars or raids and advise the community correctly on interventions. They are known to communicate with God and spirits; they act as mediators between *Asis* and the people. They derived their powers from *Asis* (God) and spirits, and they do not require any formal training (Rendile, O.I., 17/09/2019)

Oral Literature among the Endorois

Proverbs are simple, concrete, traditional sayings that express truth based on common sense or experience. It is often metaphorical and uses formulaic language. Proverbs were wise sayings with hidden meaning. It was used to give advice. Proverbs (*kalewenoik*) were used among the Endorois to educate and warn members of the community on several issues pertaining to life. It was used mainly by elders and adults. Proverbs used signs while others used words. Example of proverbs include; *Ngo samis murian kobo kot nebo* (a smelling rat belonged to a particular house), *anyiny kobo tiony kongwan kobo chi* (it is bitter for human beings but sweet for animals), *Makiminei sunet cherakan*, *Ependap kipkinta mook ak kiptororo mook* (young age reaching adolescent early) and *Lomta ng'ot eng kieny* which meant that the man being undermined (*ne-kimene*) hit the ground with spear at the homestead of the man undermining him in his presence and confirmed that his spear would kill him if he continues undermining him (*oko* *ku-amin ngoti*) after hitting the ground the spear was removed. This was a sign of oath and warning on very serious issues, which was done when the owner of the house was present (Rutto, O.I., 22/09/2009; Kosgei, O.I., 11/09/2019). Folktales were meant for entertainment and educational purposes. It was utilised most by adults and grandparents to teach young children. Folklore is a body of culture shared by a particular group of people. It entailed oral traditions such as tales, proverbs and jokes, customary lore, folklore artefacts, traditional dances and rites of passage.

Tongue twisters are phrases that are designed to be difficult to articulate properly and can be used as a type of spoken word game. Tongue twisters (*kawelwelet-ap-ngeliepta*) were used to promote language development and for entertainment. The grandparents taught young children, for example, tongue twisters among the Endorois include: *kirat rotin rootik konai rotik alak kole rotin rotindet noto*. While legends educated members of the society on prominent individuals in the society and encouraged them to respect leaders, and also mentored the young to take up leadership in the society. Legends were a genre of folklore that consisted of a narrative featuring human actions perceived or believed by both the teller and listener to have taken place within human history (Kimosop, O.I., 16/09/2019).

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion: Endorois indigenous education has contributed a lot to the well-being of the society. It began from birth to death or from childhood to adulthood, making it a lifelong process which brought about a relatively permanent change of behaviour. The content of indigenous education among the Endorois entailed desirable knowledge, skills, values and attitudes which were based on Endorois culture and daily experiences in the environment in terms of socio-political, economic and religious aspects in the society. It dwelt on proper utilisation of the environment without destruction of Agro-pastoralism, social ceremonies, farming, apprenticeship and herbal medicine. Indigenous education brought harmony and smooth harmony in the society.

The indigenous education among the Endorois ethnic group used formal methods which included initiation and apprenticeship which included hunting, bee keeping, blacksmithing, fishing, herbal medicine, weaving and basketry, house building, and informal methods which included the use of storytelling, proverbs, riddles, sayings, legends, word game, folktales, tongue twisters, songs, work and inculcation of fear through taboos and norms. Through its content and methodology it taught its members of the society on maintaining of wellness through physical activities and medium of work while the use of herbal medicine promoted good health in the society. This study looked at the meaning of indigenous education, indigenous curriculum and rites of passage among the Endorois, the training of specialists and the use of play. This study examined all aspects of indigenous education from pre-colonial to 1895, as stated by objective one.

Recommendations: The study recommends integrating valuable aspects of Endorois indigenous education into Kenya's modern education system to enhance cultural relevance and practicality. It urges government protection and revival of indigenous languages through constitutional recognition, multilingual education, and culturally sensitive curricula. Harmful practices such as female genital modification (FGM) should be replaced with acceptable alternative rites. Traditional knowledge, especially in health, herbal medicine, and midwifery, should be researched, preserved, and incorporated into national health programs. Indigenous skills like pottery, weaving, and blacksmithing should be promoted through vocational training to foster job creation and cultural preservation. The study further advocates for recognition of indigenous land and cultural rights, inclusion of traditional foods and physical training in education to promote wellness, and the establishment of cultural centres and a national culture day to celebrate African heritage. It emphasises harmonising indigenous and modern education to build a holistic, skill-based, and value-driven system. Future research should explore indigenous education's role in safety and security, its influence on health practices, the evolution of herbal medicine, and the biochemical study of traditional remedies.

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