

**ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE MAKING OF KENYAN POLITICAL HISTORY: A CASE
OF CHELAGAT MUTAI AMONG THE NANDI, 1949-2013**

BY

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**A Thesis submitted to the School Of Postgraduate Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Award of the Degree of Master of Arts in History, Faculty of Arts
And Social Sciences, Department of Humanities, Kisii University**

2016

DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATION

DECLARATION BY STUDENT

This Research thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in this or any other University

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ABSTRACT

Studies have revealed that women have played a very important role in history. They have represented many other women who played crucial roles in transforming political history of both men and women in different societies. Some women have stood the test of time by championing for the rights of the people in Kenya. The purpose of this study therefore, was to examine the role of women in Kenyan political history; a case of Chelagat Mutai among the Nandi, 1949-2013. Three objectives addressed in this study were; to explore a general survey of some selected women in Kenya, to establish Chelagat's early life and role in the University of Nairobi politics and its contribution to democratic change in the Kenyan political landscape, (1949 -1973) and to find out Chelagat's life and times during President Kenyatta and Moi's eras, (1973-2002). Subaltern and Great man theories guided this study. Chelagat Mutai was one of the great women in Kenya due to her bravery in political encounters. The study was carried out in Nandi County. Snowball and opportunistic sampling designs were used to collect data from twenty men and women who had knowledge about Chelagat Mutai through oral interviews. These people were identified through purposive sampling technique. Data was then collected orally and through information archiving by the use of sample questions and interview schedules administered across interviewees. Secondary sources were obtained from Moi University Library, Kisii University Library and Kenya National Archives. Data analysis was carried out by use of three analytical frames which included; theoretical reflection, documentary review analysis and content analysis. The study found out that women have played a role in politics in Kenya and that Chelagat's role in the University of Nairobi politics contributed to democratic changes in the Kenyan political landscape and that Chelagat faced challenges during President Kenyatta and Moi's eras. This study would be of great benefit to scholars, researchers, political activists and philosophers in Kenya and all over the world in trying to understand the woman's position in society as far as politics is concerned. This study recommends that important heroes and heroines in societies, who made significant contributions differently, should have their history written and documented because they made history according to great man's theory. Nandi county government in collaboration with the National Government should remember Chelagat Mutai by ensuring her social, political cum economic information is collected, written and documented in Kenya National Museums and Kenya National Archives for current and future generations to read. The government can also honour her directly or indirectly.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research work to my father, Mr. Charles Okemwa Orango

ABBREVIATIONS

EACE	- East Africa Certificate of Education
KANU	- Kenya African National Union
M.P	- Member of Parliament
MYWO	- Maendeleo Ya Wanawake organization
NACOSTI	- National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
NCWK	- National Council of Women of Kenya
O.I	- Oral interviews
ODM	- Orange Democratic Movement
UoN	- University of Nairobi

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Background Information to the Study

Globally, women rights have been violated. However, because of advancement in knowledge and advocacy for the girl child education and gender sensitivity, many women have come to the forefront to demand for their rights and defend their position in a male dominated society. A good example of a woman rights activist is the Pakistanian pupil and woman education activist Malala Yousafzai Mingora, the Swat District of North west Pakistan to a Sunni Muslim family. She was named Malala, which means 'grief stricken' after a famous female Pashun poet and warrior from Afghanistan. Her unwavering advocacy for women education annoyed the Taliban Militiamen who convened a meeting, in which a majority of them wanted to eliminate her. She was shot on the head, but miraculously survived the gunshot wound and thereafter became an active crusader for human rights, education and women's rights. She has received numerous national and international awards in recognition of her contribution to the general welfare of human kind in her country and worldwide. Of notable recognition is the Nobel Peace Prize award she received in 2014 along with an Indian children's rights activist, Kailash Satiyarhi. Malala is a fearless leader, right from her tender age as Chelagat Mutai who spoke her mind as a teenager.

Angela Dorothea Merkel is another international figure in the history of women in politics. She was a German stateswoman and former research scientists who has done a lot to her country and the world at large and has left a great legacy both in development and at forefront in fighting for woman space. She was the first woman and the first East German to hold this office, a protestant Christian by faith. Angela has been the Chancellor of Germany since 2005, and the leader of the Christian Democratic movement since the year 2000. She has been described as the De Facto leader of the European Union, or the 'decider' she even appeared on the Forbes Magazine's list of the World's most powerful people and as the world second most powerful person. From a feminist perspective, she's Deutschland's equivalent of Margaret Thatcher.¹

Over a long period of time, very important women have made significant marks in various fields like: Women are forefront in fighting women's rights, great activists, poets, musicians, humanitarians and scientists. For example Susan Brownell Anthony of the United States, who was a social reformer and feminist activists, she played a pivotal role in the

¹ K. Stefen. *The chancellor and Her World*. London: London Publisher, 2014.

Women's suffrage movements. She comes from Adams Massachusetts, United States of America and grew up in a politically active family. Biographies are important in history where they are used to remember those people who in one way changed the lives of others in society.

In Africa, women have not been left behind in the fight for the democracy and women rights. Winnie Mandela campaigned and critically criticized the white government of South Africa.² Through her continued agitation for change in the draconian law of the government of South Africa, she was arrested under the Suppression of Terrorism Act and spent more than a year in solitary confinement, where she was tortured. Upon her release, she continued her activism and was jailed several more times. Then after the Soweto 1976 uprisings where hundreds of students were killed, she was forced by the government to relocate to the border town of Brandfort in 1977, and placed under house arrest.³ This did not deter her from advocating for change. Like Chelagat who spoke of the oppressed landless people of her constituency, Winnie spoke her mind to a BBC platform in a 1981 statement on black South African economic might and its ability to overturn the system.

Although in Africa, women have always lagged behind, many changes have been witnessed in the 21st Century and many more are anticipated to follow. This is because Africa believed to be a dark continent is witnessing democratic space that is recognizing the role of women in governance. For example, currently there is one sitting President in one of the African countries: Liberia. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf who was born on 29 October 1938 and is the 24th and current President of Liberia. She served as Minister of Finance under President William Tolbert from 1979 until the 1980 coup d'état, after which she left Liberia and held senior positions at various financial institutions.

She was placed second in the 1997 presidential election won by Charles Taylor. She won the 2005 presidential election and took office on 16 January 2006, and she was a successful candidate for re-election in 2011. Sirleaf is the first elected female head of state in Africa. Sirleaf was awarded the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize, jointly with Leymah Gbowee of Liberia and Tawakel Karman of Yemen. The women were recognized "for their non-violent struggle for the safety of women and for women's rights to full participation in peace-building work."⁴

Sirleaf was also, conferred the Indira Gandhi Prize by President of India Pranab Mukherjee on 12 September 2013.⁵ As of 2014, and she is listed as the 70th most powerful woman in the

² H. Jennifer. *Winnie*. A film production by Bishop T.D. Jakes. 2011.

³ O. Sophie. *Mrs. Mandela*. TV movie. 2010.

⁴ "The Nobel Peace Prize 2011 – Press Release". Nobelprize.org. Retrieved 7 June 2015.

⁵ "Liberia President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to get Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace". Retrieved 7th June 2015.

world by Forbes.⁶ In Kenya, women have not been left behind. Following the successful attendance of Kenyan women in the famous Beijing Women Conference of 1995, much has been achieved by the Kenyan women in agitating for leadership space in the country.

However, before the Beijing conference, there were Kenyan women who had already made a name in the Kenyan leadership cycles. They include Wangari Maathai, Phoebe Asiyo, Rio Rogo Manduli just to mention a few. Wangari Maathai, an alumnus of Mount St. Scholastica (Benedictine College) and the University of Pittsburgh in Germany, was a Kenyan environmental and political activist. In the 1970s, she founded the Green Belt Movement, an environmental Non-Governmental Organization focused on the planting of trees, environmental conservation, and women's rights. In 1986, she was awarded the Right Livelihood Award, and in 2004, she became the first African woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize for "her contribution to sustainable development, democracy and peace".⁷ Maathai was an elected member of Parliament and served as assistant minister for Environment and Natural Resources in the government of President Mwai Kibaki between January 2003 and November 2005. She was an Honorary Councilor of the World Future Council.

Maathai served as an elected chairperson of the Maendeleo Ya Wanawake a post she secured after losing several times when she tried to run for the position of being the chairperson of National Council of Women of Kenya (NCWK) but, since MYW received a majority of the financial support for women's programs in the country from NCWK, it was left virtually bankrupt. Future funding was much more difficult to come by, but the NCWK survived by increasing its focus on the environment and making its presence and work known. Maathai continued to be re-elected to serve as chairperson of the organization every year until she retired from the position in 1987.⁸ Lack of support was as a result of her continued criticism of Moi government. She championed for the second liberation of this country.

Chelagat Mutai was born in 1949 at Terige village in Ol'Lessos, Nandi County in the vast great Rift Valley Region. She grew quietly in the village like any other ordinary rural girl. She enrolled in for her primary education before joining Moi Girls High School, Eldoret formerly Highlands Girls School. Through her active role in the literary circles and wide reading culture she developed an interest in the politics of championing for the rights of the less privileged in

⁶ "The World's 100 Most Powerful Women". *Forbes*. Forbes. Retrieved 7th June 2015.

⁷ Wangari M. *Unbowed: A Memoir*, Knopf, p. 3. 2006.

⁸ M. Wangari . *The Canopy of Hope: My Life Campaigning for Africa, Women, and the Environment*, 2002.

society. She contested an electoral seat in her rural home at 24 years of age, beating 12 other contestants to become the first Nandi and Kalenjin woman MP. Interestingly, as a student she became the editor of the University Platform, the university magazine that was sold on the streets of Nairobi.⁹ It is during this time that she edited an award-winning edition on the Kenyan police brutality and the way police were behaving at the time. She caused panic and fear among many people more especially when the local press picked up headlines from the issue. This created a lot of jittery in the university and all the University Platform (the officials of the magazine) were put into trouble.

Consequently, Chelagat and the likes of James Orenge ran for their dear lives and took cover in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania from where they monitored the situation back home. It is argued that The University Platform Magazine was a hot cake during that time selling for Sh100 in 1972 clandestinely. It was a political moment for the country and as students, Chelagat and her group clamored for change. However, because of her heavy responsibilities back home, Chelagat couldn't withstand staying put in Dar es Salaam for any longer. Although there is some information regarding Chelagat's life and her role in the development of the University of Nairobi on different spheres especially educational and democratic change. Chelagat's troubles with the then President of Kenya Mzee Jomo Kenyatta brew in 1974 when the High Court led by Chief Justice James Wicks nullified Paul Ngei's election and barred him from contesting for five years. Because Kenyatta was Ngei's comrade, he summoned Attorney General Charles Njonjo to find some way of amending the constitution through which Ngei could be pardoned and it is said that within two days Njonjo pushed the 15th amendment through the House and permitted the President to pardon election offenders.

Although all other legislators voted for the amendment, there were only two dissenting voices in Parliament namely Mutai Chelagat and George Anyona. Outspoken, fearless and fiery Chelagat stood out as the only female voice of dissent that stood on what she believed to be right. Chelagat as an MP elect continued to champion for the rights of the poor especially some of her constituents who she considered squatters in their own soil. She spearheaded other protesters in Ziwa including other KANU MPs from the region in calling for the uprooting of the sisal plantation to pave way for the resettlement of the Kalenjin squatters. This caused heat in the government and as a result on October 16, 1975 Kenyatta summoned all KANU MPs and all

⁹ Jacqueline M. Klopp, Janai R. Orina. University crisis, student's activism, and the contemporary struggle for democracy in Kenya. *African studies review*, Vol.445, No.1. (2002) Pp. 43-76.

dissenting MPs were warned to lie low or be crushed. But the defiant Chelagat and other MPs addressed the International Press, which published their remarks, and the threats of crushing dissidents by Kenyatta were circulated. This did not auger well with the president. The key suspect according to the State was Chelagat and she was hauled before the court of law and charged with trumped up charges of incitement to violence after calling for the uprooting of sisal plantations and detained. While in jail she was denied visits as was the norm then. She did her first term as MP and served a prison term too. The irony of it all however, was that in 1978 she got re-elected, reaffirming the faith her electorate had in her.

Having served two terms in both Kenyatta and Moi regimes, Chelagat continued to play a crucial role in fighting for the democratic space while teaming up with other opposition leaders such as Raila Odinga. She contributed a lot in the second liberation that saw Kenya change from a mono party state to a multiparty democracy in 1992. From this time until her demise on 7th July 2013, she led a quiet life after being involved in a road accident that rendered her immobile. At the time of her death, she was not married. She died a poor woman with little recognition from the government despite her crucial role in the fight for democracy. When she was elected Member of Parliament for Eldoret North at 24, Philomena Chelagat Mutai was a visionary woman. She was enthusiastic to work for her people who elected her to Parliament. But little did she know her dreams will be dashed by a political system opposed to democracy and emancipation of the poor. Her illustrious, yet controversial political career inspired many, including her fellow Kalenjin women, who have since overcome gender inferiority to scale up in political ladders. She remains a trail-blazer even in death. In 10th Parliament, Rift Valley, where Chelagat hailed, produced seven out of the 15 women MPs.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Historically, women worldwide have been marginalized in almost all spheres of life, from public participation in making societal decisions to leadership representations. The situation is not any better in Kenya where women's rights are violated day in day out. Women such as Wangari Maathai have made national marks in their quest for human security and harmony but her efforts have not been fully achieved. Chelagat Mutai fought for democracy and the weak in society. Her efforts were thwarted by President Kenyatta and Moi's administration by arresting her severally. She stood high despite the frequent arrests and even detention and her efforts to fight for the weak in society went unnoticed. Documentation of the contributions of Chelagat Mutai's role in the democratic space in Kenya will be very important to the current and future generations of scholars.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine role of women in Kenyan political history; a case of Chelagat Mutai among the Nandi, 1949-2013.

1.4 Objectives of the Study were

- i) To explore a general survey of some selected women in Kenya.
- ii) To establish Chelagat's early life and role in the University of Nairobi politics and its contribution to democratic change in the Kenyan political landscape, 1949 -1973.
- iii) To find out Chelagat's life and times during Kenyatta, Moi and Kibaki regimes, 1973-2013.

1.5 Research premises

This research operated under the following premises

- i) Women have played a role in Kenyan politics.
- ii) Chelagat's role in the University of Nairobi politics contributed to democratic changes in the Kenyan political landscape.
- iii) Chelagat faced challenges during President Jomo Kenyatta and Moi's government.

1.6 Significance of the Study

It is hoped that this study would be of great benefit to scholars and political activists in Kenya and all over the world in trying to understand the woman's position in society as far as the political arena is concerned. In particular, it would be of great help to those female leaders who would wish to participate in political process but fear due their stereotypical cultural beliefs.

The research findings can be used by historians to understand better the role women have played in shaping the political landscape of their countries. Various governments may use findings from this study to recognize outstanding women and honour them with standing orations for their contribution in shaping social, political and economic spheres of their countries.

1.7 Literature Review

This section reviewed works on women who have made history in various parts of the world. It presents political contributions of women over the world. It is generally accepted that the role of women in political history had been dormant in the globe until the beginning of 20th century. A general survey of some selected women, Chelagat's early life in the University of Nairobi and her contribution to democratic change in political landscape, Chelagat's life during Kenyatta, Moi, and Kibaki's regimes will be covered.

In recent years, historians have begun to explore role of women in making history in various parts of the world. This will give understanding on how some selected women from various parts of the world were able to participate, negotiate, exploit, and overcome all the ideological and legal challenges to make political history. Sara Richardson's work, *The Political Worlds of Women*, is very important. It focuses historians interested in female political activity in 19th century. As well it shows how women have been excluded from local and national politics. The majority of the women explored in Richardson were part of the developing middle class, whose political ideology was at its acme for the chronological period of 16th and 17th century.¹⁰ However, this does not mask geographical diversity and background of these women but covers life experiences, wealth and ages of individuals. From his work, Richardson has explored many sources such as political papers, recipe books, pool books, but all these have shown the evidence of woman's participation in political activities. Richardson highlights home life, local and national politics of women. Further, community politics, especially parish politics is covered in his work. Female writers such as Harriet Martineau, Harriet Grote, Margracia and Jane Marcet were active in intellectual debates on political economy.¹¹ Both of the women were from well-known and lesser known class respectively. Community politics is covered in the argument and it becomes a source of increased political participation experienced in the century. However, it does not address political participation of women from local societies who have hauled and emerged to make political history like Chelagat Mutai from Nandi region.

Some selected women from various parts of the world have made political contributions and made histories of their respective countries. Joaquin shows more political role played by women in Philippines. Corazon Aquino also played a political role among the other leaders. She became the first woman to be elected the president of Philippines on February the 25th 1986 and served until 30th June 1992. She became the first female president in Asia, though not the first female head of state. She was the most prominent figure of the 1986 People Power Revolution which toppled the 20 year authoritarian rule of President Ferdinand E. Marcos. It is during her tenure that a new constitution was promulgated that saw the powers of the president limited and she re-established the bicameral Congress.¹² She brought sound democratic rights for the people of Philippines and she restored the economy by focusing on a market-oriented and socially responsible society. Chelagat is a figure from Nandi community who has influenced the

¹⁰ Sarah Richardson. *The Political Worlds of Women: Gender and Politics in 19th- Century Britain* Routledge. 2013.

¹² B Sandra "[Time 100: Corazon Aquino](#)". Time Magazine. Retrieved 2015-06-10.1999.

economic, social, and political life of many women in Kenya. Her biography will be very crucial in appreciating roles women have played in political history but has not previously been studied historically, and given in the attention she deserves in her role as a heroine in Nandi politics.

In Douglas Gichuki's work, *Leadership in Africa; the role of youths in the leadership milieu*, shows that the role of women of representation on the political stage was ignored. The number of women participation only continued to grow after African countries received their independence in 1960s. During the struggle in Africa, the position of women participation was emphasized.¹³ Gichuki highlights that African women in leadership has gained revival relevance. Some women from Africa, such as: Ellen Sir leaf Johnson of Liberia, Joyce Banda of Malawi and Catherine Samba-Panza of the Central African Republic have helped to break barriers and help women visualize themselves as heads of states. Therefore, since the dawn of 21st century, role of women in political arena have been influenced especially in governance. Gachuki brings out Africa's elected woman In Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sir leaf woman setting as 24th president of Liberia. She won the 2005 presidential election and took office on 16 January 2006, and she was successfully re-elected. The women were recognized for their non-violent struggle for the safety of women and for women's rights to full participation in peace-building work. Around 2014, sir leaf was listed as the 70th most powerful woman in the world by Forbes.¹⁴ Gachuki brings out the role of women in helping other women visualize themselves as leaders of their nation but has not recognized the role women from marginalized societies and humble backgrounds play in the making of political history. Jane Parpart, an Assistant Professor of History at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Canada has done good work on women and the state in Africa. She argues that, while women in certain classes and ethnic groups may have had greater access to the state, in general women have been under represented in African state affairs. Parpart concord that, women have been active and important role in the nationalist struggles, the transfer of power from one man to another is common. Meanwhile, many women have reacted to this inequity.¹⁵ Chelagat Mutai is a woman who most historians have not explored her background and contribution she made in history yet she plays a role in mentoring other women in leadership and political participation. Rebecca A. Kadaga in her work, *women's political leadership in east Africa* has highlighted that women in East Africa have played role in political activities with specific reference of Uganda. Kadaga shows that, in the 8th parliament of Uganda, 99 members

¹³ Gichuki, Douglas. *Leadership in Africa And The Role Of Youth In The Leadership Milieu*. 2014.

¹⁴ "The World's 100 Most Powerful Women". *Forbes*. Forbes. Retrieved 7th June 2015.

¹⁵ Jane L.Parpart. *Women and the state in Africa*. 1986.

of parliament were women, 79 of whom were District Women representatives, 14 directly elected women parliamentarians and 6 special interest representatives.¹⁶

Rosalia Wanja Ngugi, in the book, *The Kenyan woman her historical relationship with the state*, argues that Kenyan women have participated in their history as they have played various roles. More especially the role of activism in Kenya that occurred in three stages is discussed. Also, Ngugi states that Kenyan women were involved in various forms of organizing that adapted to the changing nature of Kenyan life and the colonial state during the 20th century.¹⁷ They as well protested for release of leaders such as Harry Thuku, an activist who rallied alongside women. Further, Kenyan women actively participated in changing the lives of other women despite the negative effects they experienced. Ngugi continues to talk about Kenyan woman and the participation in Mau Mau.

Maria Nzomo in the work, *Women in political leadership in Kenya: access, agenda setting & accountability* tries to present the role of Kenya women in the presence and political participation in leadership and governance. This happened from the period pre-colonial through colonial to post colonial.¹⁸ Nzomo argues that many heroines accomplished roles that first woman chief, Wangu Wa Makeri played including participation in the country's struggle for liberation. Women have been at the forefront to participate along men in all aspects of public life in Kenya.¹⁹ However, Nzomo does not address political participation of women from the marginalized communities. Chelagat is among those women who have played a big role and participated in the struggle for independency and liberation of Kenya yet, she is established. Her humble background has not prevented Chelagat from ascertaining role of women in the political history of Kenya. But, Chelagat hails from marginalized area and makes history that people will live to tell. Philemon Chelagat Mutai was born to Antony Chemu'it in 1949 at Terige village in Lessos, Nandi County in the vast great Rift Valley Region. Chelagat grew quietly in the village like any other ordinary rural girl. This study will play a big role in throwing some light to historians concerning role of women in politics especially Chelagat Mutai.

The early life of Chelagat Mutai in University of Nairobi, demonstrates her political contribution in the development and advancement of university politics and democratic change in Kenya political landscape. Kass Weekly in Philomena "Chemtai" Chelagat the first Kalenjji

¹⁶ Rebecca A. Kadaga. *Women's Political Leadership In East Africa With Specific Reference to Uganda*. Common wealth secretariat. 2013.

¹⁷ Rosalia Wanja Ngugi. *The Kenyan Woman: Her Historical Relationship with the State*. 2009.

¹⁸ Nzomo, Maria. "Women and Political Governance in Africa: A Feminist Perspective." *Pathways to African Feminism and Development, Journal of African Women's Studies Centre* 1, no. 1. 2015.

¹⁹ Maria Nzomo. *Women in Political Leadership in Kenya: Access, Agenda Setting & Accountability*. 2015.

female legislator reports that, Chelagat was admitted to the University of Nairobi to study political science. Her role in the university politics is developed as she started editing “the platform” student magazine. The forum provided by Chelagat made all the wishes and whims on myriads issues of university students known. This affected Chelagat’s stay in University as she was on expulsion before completing. According to Kass Weekly, it was in the University of Nairobi that Chelagat’s activism career was developed and refined. She demonstrated leadership qualities and change of democracy in then Kenya political landscape after joining politics, becoming Kalenjin female legislator who was critical to the KANU leadership.²⁰ Further, the Kass Weekly continues to show Chelagat as a source of inspiration to fellow Kalenjin women who have overcome their inferiority to heights of political hierarchy. The source shows that Chelagat was among the uncompromising politicians called “bearded sisters” in Kenya who contributed to keep the government on toes so as to improve her systems. Chelagat was the only woman in this radical group and they played a role in the struggle to remove ills of the Kenya government. Chelagat was ready to die so long as the political systems were refined and democratic change made. Some information about Chelagat Mutai is captured showing her social-economic and political life but they have not explored the humble background of Nandi that prepared her to play a role in making women’s political history with strong agendas. Titus Too’s contribution in Standard Kenya magazine “Chelagat Mutai: Second Liberation heroine that government loved to hate” it shows that, Chelagat is hailing from Nandi but because she had a strong agenda, electorates of Eldoret North overwhelmingly voted for her.²¹

The work of Titus too shows the life of Chelagat Mutai and her political role during Kenyatta, Moi and Kibaki regimes. The time of Kenyatta is a period when she joins in university in 1970 and when she is elected in 1974 by- election. She became the first elected female legislator from the larger Rift Valley region. From Kass Weekly sources, she fearlessly condemned corruption, land grabbing and political assassinations with the strongest terms possible. In 1975, Chelagat met with the locals and informed them of their rights on the Sisal Farm. It is indicated that the government of Kenyatta arrested and jailed her in Lang’ata women prison for six months over incitement. Titus too wrote that first impression of Chelagat brought out nothing close to her ability to be a headache to Jomo Kenyatta and Moi’s regimes. But, it has not covered Chelagat’s life during Kibaki’s regime. However, Chelagat’s strong agenda on commitment in championing land rights for her constituents that landed her in jail and her

²⁰ Kass Weekly. Date: 20.01.2015. P, 21.

²¹ The Standard Kenya at 50 magazines. Date: 20.10.2013. P,9.

criticism of the government is not recognized. During the Kibaki government, Chelagat remained alone in a ghetto and developed strong personal values that more women from Nandi and rift valley were admiring. Although there is some information in regard to her life as depicted above, little is known of her lifestyle more so after active politics up to the time of her death in 2013. The crucial role she has staged in making history of Kenya and Nandi women in political arena should be explored to present clear information to historians.

The earliest life of Chelagat Mutai prepared her adequately for the role she played in the political history of Kenya. Psychologists Martin and Csikszentmihalyi argue that the earliest experiences of a person from childhood later affect the behaviors of people even in their entire life.²² She was born and related with political figures such as Hon. William Marogo Arap Saina a member of parliament of Eldoret North constituency, who was convicted over allegation of theft of certain items in a firm where he was a manager. Also Chelagat was influenced by undisputed Nandi leader, friend and her mentor Jean Seroney. She was expelled from high school twice for inciting other students to go for an outing that was not recognized by school administration on the other hand she wanted to fight the school matron. Her radical streak developed during her university days at the Nairobi campus. Dorothy Kweyu describes Chelagat as a girl who fought men's wars at varsity against Kenyatta rule.²³ She was once sent away having allegedly led student demonstration against the government.²⁴ This early life events that surrounded Chelagat prepared her stamina for political agendas in Kenya later in her life.

1.8 The Theoretical Framework of the Study

In postcolonial theory, the term subaltern is used to describe the lower classes and the social groups who are sidelined in society. Subaltern is a person rendered without any connection to the sitting government due to his or her social status.²⁵ In the context of social power relations, subaltern social groups can be defined as oppressed, racial minorities whose social presence is crucial to the self-definition of the majority group; as such, subaltern social groups, nonetheless, also are in a position to subvert the authority of the social groups who hold hegemonic power.²⁶

This study, therefore, was guided by the subaltern theory which was advanced by the Italian Marxist intellectual Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937). Gramsci came up with this theory

²² Seligman, Martin EP, and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. *Positive psychology: An introduction*. Springer Netherlands, 2014.

²³ Dorothy Kweyu .Daily nation. Tuesday July 9, 2013.

²⁴ The weekly review, June 1st, 1975.

²⁵ R.J.C.Young, *Post colonialism: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

²⁶ L.G.Morena, and P.C Pfeiffer. "Unsatisfied: Notes on Vernacular Cosmopolitanism", *Text and Nation: Cross-Disciplinary Essays on Cultural and National Identities*. Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1996. pp. 191–207.

while in prison and in order for it to be published he used the word "subaltern" as a synonym for the proletariat to deceive the prison censor to allow his manuscripts out of prison.²⁷ However, this has been resisted and other schools of thought postulates that it was a novel concept in Gramsci's political theory.²⁸

Many scholars have used this theory the modern society to depict situations as they are. For example the term subaltern cosmopolitanism can be used to describe the counter-hegemonic practice, social movement, resistance, and struggle against neoliberal globalization, especially the struggle against social exclusion.²⁹ It can also be used interchangeably with the term cosmopolitan legality, to describe the diverse normative framework for an equality of differences, in which the term subaltern specifically denotes the oppressed peoples at the margins of a society who are struggling against hegemonic globalization.³⁰

For the purposes of this study, therefore, the term subaltern would be used to refer to those people who are sidelined in matters pertaining to the sharing of the national 'cake' because of their social status. In this case the social status may come as a result of their stand with the oppressed in society in regard to political opinion. After independence, those who had hegemonic power shared the national cake amongst themselves and those who were well connected with the central government in Nairobi with little regard of the suffering masses down in the grassroots. Land and government jobs were shared among the politically connected class. Neocolonialism took the centre stage.

Poor men and women, the landless and those who may have championed the rights of those under oppression in Kenya qualify to be called subalterns. In this case, Chelagat may be described as a subaltern because she was oppressed and sidelined from the governments of the day for standing for the people against those who had the hegemonic power. She never saw a government job apart from being an elected MP, she was detained without trial, she was forced to go into exile and she died a poor woman after suffering a stroke for a long period of time.

Great man theory is another theory in history that is very important. A historian Thomas Carlyle's theory of great men was significantly used in this study. The idea that dominated the 19th century was that, history of the world was shaped from great men's or heroes biography. There are people in the society whose leadership, intelligence, their personal charisma, wisdom, political skill, and inspiration bring a historical impact in various parts of the world. In this case,

²⁷ S.Morton. "The Subaltern: Genealogy of a Concept", in *Gayatri Spivak: Ethics, Subalternity and the Critique of Postcolonial Reason*. Malden, MA: Polity, pp. 96-97.

²⁸ Concept", in *Gayatri Spivak: Ethics, Subalternity and the Critique of Postcolonial Reason*. Malden, MA: Polity.2007. pp. 96-97.

²⁹ E.M.Green. "Rethinking the Subaltern and the Question of Censorship in Gramsci's Prison Notebooks," *Postcolonial Studies*, Volume 14, Number 4: 2011. Pp .385-402

³⁰ S.B . Sousa, S. *Toward a New Legal Common Sense*. 2002.

Chelagat is described as “a great man” because she underscores all the qualities of a hero and makes history of women in politics in the world.³¹

1.9 Research Methodology

This section presented the research methodology, description of the study area, sampling procedure and sample size, research instruments, data collection procedures, methods of data analysis and ethical issues and considerations.

1.9.1 Research design

Research designs are descriptive and qualitative. This study used qualitative research design which was achieved through a critical examination of both primary and secondary sources.³² Primary source were sought through oral narratives, in form of field oral interviews and eye witnesses accounts or observations³³ of Chelagat Mutai during her social and political life. The population sampling method included men and women from all Nandi County using snowball technique.

The informants and respondents were sampled on the basis of the non probability or purposive technique at the discretion of the researcher-the criteria being relation with Mutai, age, former and current politicians and those mentioned in the archival and documentary sources .However the list of informants increased as other information was introduced in the field to the researcher. Equally past and retired teachers on where Chelagat schooled were interviewed.

The snowball sampling technique was used where after identifying the informants using the above, he or she was asked to identify those with knowledge of similar experience. By use of a sample question guidelines, informants were allowed to talk freely after introduction of the topic about role of women in Kenyan political history especially of Chelagat Mutai among the Nandi people. The researcher and his assistants were only a guide to the informants on sub topics and recording of information using a video recorder was done as informants gave their oral testimonies about Philemon Chelagat Mutai.

³¹ Robert L. Carneiro, *the Muse of History and the Science of Culture*. Springer Science & Business Media, 2000.

³²J.W. Creswell. *Educational Research: Planning and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research*. Upper Saddle River. N.J: Pearson Education, Inc. 2005

³³ Observations is a method of data collection in which the researcher and his assistants record information as they get it from the witnesses of events and situations about the study. C.f.C. Lin, *Foundation of Social Research* New York. 1976.

To supplement this, archival sources were sought from the Kenya National Archives in Nairobi and Kisumu between 5th -14th of August 2015. Secondary sources included books, journals, magazines, articles, unpublished thesis, seminar papers and periodicals from Kisii University Main Campus library.

1.9.2 Geographical Study Location

The study was carried out in Nandi region mainly made up of two counties namely Nandi and Uasin Gishu in the expansive Great Rift Valley Region of Kenya. It is in this region that great leaders such as the late Koitalel Arap Samoei who played a crucial role in the Nandi resistance to the British colonization of Kenya were born. To a larger extent, this region is cosmopolitan. The locals are predominantly Christians, with a few Muslims, and other religions including traditionalists. Almost half of the population living here depends on small scale tea, maize and dairy farming with a few large scale farmers and multi-national companies specializing in tea farming.

Nandi County is bordered by Uasin Gishu County to the North while to the south it is bordered by Kisumu County. Kakamega County is found to the West whereas Kericho is situated towards the East. Nandi County is where the Chelagat hailed from. She was chosen for this study because of her unique contribution to this country in her struggle for the second liberation.

1.9.3 Sampling Procedures and Sample Size

Depending on the population that may present itself for interview, the study employed mixed research design or purposive and snowball sampling, whichever case arose. In a situation where the population was not willing to offer information, the researcher was forced to apply mixed research design where different designs were employed to cater for the arising situation of the respondent. In this case, opportunistic, convenience or extreme case research designs were used (see explanation above).

However, where the population was cooperative and presented themselves in large numbers, then random sampling design, purposive and snowball sampling designs were employed. Purposive sampling was used in selecting the head teachers of both primary and secondary schools where Chelagat studied, a brother and/or sister to Chelagat because presumably they were few. Snowball sampling was used to get respondents as they introduced one another depending on their level of understanding the questions and the willingness for each respondent to introduce the researcher to other groups of people who wished to respond to particular questions they were aware of. On the other hand, however, random sampling design

was used to select the sample size whereby 20% of the population was used as a sample size,³⁴ i.e. in situations where the population was willing to participate in the study then one thousand respondents were used. This translated to a sample size of 200 respondents (20% of 1000).

1.9.4 Instruments of data collection.

In this study the following research instruments were used: A detailed sample of questions for the respondents drawn from objectives was provided and guided interview schedule was carried out on interviews based on the objectives. Video recording was done while the oral interviews were on and were transcribed.

1.9.5 Data Collection Procedures

The researcher sought permission from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) after approval by the Kisii University's Research and Extension Department. The researcher self administered the sample questions to the respondents. The respondents read and filled in the sample questions the same day and they were collected. This system ensured that every respondent supplied with a sample questions returned it for coding and final analysis. The respondents were assured that whatever information they provided was treated with a lot of confidence and nobody could access it apart from the researcher and his assistants.

1.9.6 Methods of Data Analysis.

Three analytical frames were used in this study. These included; theoretical reflection, documentary review and content analysis³⁵. Theoretical reflection involved parading of the facts against the theory that was used which was the subaltern theory. Content analysis involved itemizing collected data against the objectives set and chapters of the work, while documents review analysis involved the identification of relevant documents then extracting the relevant information. Direct quotations were also used in document review analysis to reinforce the argument. Video-recorded information was transcribed then analyzed.

1.9.7 Ethical Issues and Consideration

Permission was sought from Kisii University Administration to carry out the research. A research permit was acquired from National Commission for Science, Technology and

³⁴O.M. Mugenda, and A.G Mugenda, *Research Methods; Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*. Nairobi. 2003.

³⁵ R. Sapsford and V. Juppr .*Data Collection and Analysis*. Sage. 2006

innovation (NACOSTI) to carry out this research through an introductory letter by the Registrar Research and Extension, Kisii University. The principle of voluntary participation requires that people should not be coerced into participating in research. Prospective research participants were fully informed about the procedures and the purpose of the study and gave their consent to participate. The research ensured confidentiality by strictly adhering to the principle of anonymity. The participants were not required to write their names or of their institution anywhere in the questionnaire. The participants were assured that the information they gave was not going to be made available to anyone who was not directly involved in the study. The age of respondents was taken into account. Interviewees were asked to give all the information they knew about Chelagat freely and willingly.

1.9.8 Organization of Work

Chapter One

This chapter dealt with the introduction to the study, literature review and research methodology.

Chapter two

The chapter explored the general survey of some selected women in Kenya.

Chapter three

This chapter looked at the earlier life of Chelegat Mutai and her life in the University of Nairobi.

Chapter four

The chapter brings out the challenges Chelagat faced during the Kenyatta and Moi administration.

Chapter five

This chapter concludes the study by giving the summary, conclusion and recommendations

CHAPTER TWO

A GENERAL SURVEY OF SELECTED WOMEN IN KENYA

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a survey of women's contribution in the making of Kenyan history. The following themes were accessed. This chapter focus on Women's participation in political leadership and roles they played in pre-colonial Kenya, Kenyan women in the struggle for independence, Women's participation in elections and elected posts, and Women in socio-economic development in Kenya.

2.1 Women's participation in elections and elective posts

Participation in electoral processes involves much more than just voting. Political participation derives from the freedom to speak out, assemble and associate; the ability to take part in the conduct of public affairs; and the opportunity to register as a candidate, to campaign, to be elected and to hold office at all levels of government.³⁶In Kenya, women have constantly faced numerous electoral crises such as biases in party nomination and socio-cultural attitude when seeking political positions. Nonetheless, women are increasingly entering into electoral politics. They have organized themselves into coalitions that play a role of encouraging them to participate in elections and elective posts. However, Kenya's independence history during the earliest time was experiencing absence of women from elections and elective posts. This remained a reality until the second parliament in 1969 when Grace Onyango was the first woman to be elected a Member of Parliament for Kisumu town Constituency. Grace Onyango was the first African Iron Lady of Kenyan politics. Born in Sakwa, Bondo in Siaya County, and married in Gem to a teacher and journalist Onyango Baridi, she became the first woman to be elected mayor of Kisumu Town in 1967 and MP in 1969. She then capped it all by being elected first woman Secretary-General of Luo Union (East Africa). The high profile offices were the exclusive preserve of men. She thus played a big role in breaking the glass ceiling and opening the way for women in leadership in Kenya.³⁷

The number of woman participating in elections and elected positions increased and in 1974, elected women MPs rose to four and 2 more were nominated. Those who successfully fought

³⁶ United Nations. *Women and elections guide to promoting the participation of women in elections*. 2015.

³⁷ Musandu. *Daughter of odoro: Grace Onyango and African women's history*. 2006.

their way into the August House included Chelagat Mutai (Eldoret North), Grace Onyango (Kisumu Town), Nyiva Mwendwa (Kitui West) and Julia Ojiambo (Busia Central). Also the nominated women included Dr. Eddah Gachukia, Rose Waruhiu. Julia Ojiambo is described as one of the Kenyan who beyond all odds rose to gain respect for women in a male dominated society.³⁸ In 1965-1968 she became the first African woman warder of University women's Halls of residence. Julia Ojiambo was first female Member of Parliament from Western Province in Kenya after winning Busia Central seat in 1980 which is Funyula.³⁹ She successfully negotiated for the establishment of Kenya Institute of Special Education with the support of Danish Government. In 1987, she led the Kenyan delegation in the United Nations Conference on women held in Nairobi. Women in elected positions dropped to five after Chelagat Mutai went into exile in 1976.

After the introduction of multi-party politics in 1992, today there are more than 60 registered parties and two are headed by women. Those involved in party activities and nominations have had opportunity to participate in parliamentary elections. From the 2002 elections onwards, more declared their candidacy and sought nomination for both civic and parliamentary seats on various party tickets. The composition of the current Parliament indicates how many women candidates made it through election and those that are nominated.

More women who have participated in election and elected post include: Sally Kosgey, Joyce Laboso, and Wangari Maathai.⁴⁰ Wangari Maathai is another Kenyan woman figure in women politics who did enormous works, known well Nationally and Internationally. She was a Kenyan environmentalist and political activist. In 1970, Wangari Maathai founded the Green Belt Movement, an environmental non-governmental organization focused on the planting of trees, environmental conservation and, women's rights. Wangari Maathai in 2004 became the first African woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize for her contribution to sustainable development, democracy and peace. Maathai Wangari was elected Member of Parliament and served as an assistant Minister for environment and natural resources between January 2003 and November 2005, in the government of Mwai Kibaki.⁴¹ She was an honorary council. On the other hand,

³⁸ Daily nation, May 3, 2012

³⁹ Luo, Encyclopedia Britanica. Retried 19 March 2015

⁴⁰ Odhiambo orlale. Kenya woman. 2013

⁴¹ Maathai, Wangari. *The Green Belt Movement: Sharing the approach and the experience*. Lantern Books, 2004.

Sally Kosgey arguably was one of the most influential women politicians and public servants in the country. She was elected Member of Parliament for Aldai Constituency 2007-2013, under Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) ticket. During this period she first served as Minister for Higher Education and later as Agriculture minister. Sally Kosgey was one of the influential persons during the Daniel Moi's government, she and wielded a lot of power. She had the President's ears more than other senior officers. Sally Kosgey's role at the mediation talks after the 2007 bungled General election in Kenya, introduced a new side of the former head of civil service, she played a key role in the talks using her international contacts to help resolve the standoff that almost sent Kenyans to the dogs, she is also credited for introducing a sober approach to the resolution of the post election crisis by the then warring parties.⁴²

Joyce Laboso, the deputy speaker of the 11th National Assembly also comes in, in the makers of Kenya; she first had to overcome the hurdle placed on her way to parliament, since she was married off. She was first elected to parliament of Kenya to represent the Sotik Constituency in September 2008, after beating other twelve contestants Joyce Laboso, a distinguished scholar can be described as assertive confident, political green horn, but a quick rise to political leadership made her one of the most influential women politicians from Rift valley.⁴³ Joyce Laboso in political performance has been on an upward trend since described by her constituents as a refined leader and scholar. Elections present the electorate with an opportunity every five years in Kenya to elect people they want to govern them. The women have also played a role in election and elected positions in the country of Kenya from 1969 to the current government.

2.2 Women participation in political leadership roles in pre-colonial Kenya

Women have played various roles in the struggle for leadership positions in pre-colonial Kenya. Women's participation in political leadership during the pre-colonial Kenya is characterized by the activities that they performed in resisting and struggling against colonial rule in Kenya.⁴⁴ In 1920 for instance, women led by Mary Nyanjiru, directly confronted the

⁴² C. Wanjala. *Grace Ogot chronicles her life in new autobiography*. 2003.

⁴³ Rotich, Jerono P. and Kipchumba Byron. "Kenyan Women: Milestones and Challenges." In *Kenya After 50*, pp. 197-226. Palgrave Macmillan US, 2016.

⁴⁴ Frederiksen, Bodil Folke. "Mungiki, vernacular organization and political society in Kenya." *Development and Change* 41, no. 6. 2010.

colonial government in demanding for the release of Harry Thuku. In many communities in Kenya, there are examples of women organizing themselves and taking leadership through women movements. The Women's Movement in Kenya has its roots in self help groups which existed long in pre-colonial societies. For instance, Maendeleo Ya Wanawake Organisation (MYWO) is one group that comprised of a national grass root women's organization and was founded in 1952.

In order to understand the position of Kenyan women leadership in pre-colonial Kenya, it is easier by looking at structures they operated on before the colonial period. In the pre-colonial era, although women were to some extent subordinate to men under the African Customary Law, in many aspects the roles of men and women were complementary in nature.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, Kenyan women had certain powers in the pre-colonial times. Kenya had different traditional cultures but most of it was characterized by patriarchal community. This is a community where male dominated over women.

The coming of the colonialist did not change this culture but instead emphasized it by trusting men with land ownership rights. On the other hand, women would be denied access to land against the usual culture on Kenyan women. Before the coming of the colonialist to Kenya, the women status was not valued and their gender roles disvalued. This made women to remain behind in rural areas and denied education, employment only to be mere producers of subsistence food without formal education. During this period, women's contribution to the economy was not recognized and their work considered unfit to the colonial economic system.

The wave of rural to urban migration and prevention of women to urban areas by colonial policy, made the women to remain in rural areas and there after taking up family head responsibilities. This is because the urban authorities and migrant men considered this as the disruption of traditional values. With the effort of the colonial government, the women were restricted from urban areas to play a role of ensuring men returned to rural balancing rural – urban labor.⁴⁶ This made the women to be dependent on their men as breadwinners, hence

⁴⁵ Shadle, Brett L. "Changing Traditions to Meet Current Altering Conditions': Customary Law, African Courts and the Rejection of Codification in Kenya, 1930–60." *The Journal of African History* 40, no. 03. 1999.

⁴⁶ Lonsdale, John. "Town life in colonial Kenya." *AZANIA: Journal of the British Institute in Eastern Africa* 36, no. 1. 2001.

making women powerless, while attempting to participate in politics and public administration. The education system in Kenya before the colonial administration prepared the girl child for roles as wives and mothers. Whiles, the colonial education was viewed by tribal elders as one that could spoil the village girls and distort their cultural roles and make them prostitutes. Pre-independence shows a Kenyan woman not mixing the traditional roles with public roles and career. Women took part in activities such as embroidery, hygiene training, cooking, child welfare, civics and gardening. A good example of a woman who participated in leadership roles during pre-colonial Kenya was, Mekatili wa Menza from the Giriama community. She hailed from a poor family of only five children. Mekatilili was one of the first women in Kenya to rise up against the British in 1913. Her bravery, oratorical power and charisma earned her a huge following and saw her mobilize the Giriama community to take oaths and offer sacrifices to restore their sovereignty. Despite the challenges she faced especially being a widow and losing a brother to Arab slavery, gave here stamina to be a woman leader in Giriama community in Kenya.

She was a woman leader in the pre-colonial era, who managed to lead the Giriama people against the policies and governance of colonial masters between 1913 to 1914. She was against the forced labor in British owned sisal and rubber plantations, hut tax imposed by the colony, land evictions and restrictions. The woman had a style as a leader that attracted people to her meeting. The '*kifudu*' dance really attracted many women who were also joined with their men. She was instrumental in the most important meeting held in Kaya Fungo, the ritual centre of the Giriama. Here, she led the discussions and complained about labor demands and the jurisdiction of the traditional elders being undermined. Further, she complained about the low wages that headmen received. However, she was arrested with Wanje wa Mwadorikola in 1913 and sentenced to five years detention. The British defeated Mekatili wa Menza but she changed the relationship between the local and colonial government.⁴⁷

2.3 Kenyan women in the struggle for independence

For almost seven decades, Kenya was enslaved in colonization under Britain. The struggle for independence was the only fruit that the Kenyans were yearning for. Both men and women played significant role in the attainment of freedom from colonial masters. We shall see the

⁴⁷ Mugi-Ndua, Elizabeth. *Mekatilili Wa Menza, Woman Warrior*. 2000.

Kenyan women in the making of independence history of Kenya. Mostly, to understand the roles women scored in this period of hide and seek we can assess their contribution. In Mau Mau movement, a group of women radicals who were against the colonial government played various supportive and leadership roles.⁴⁸

Women played significant roles such as; rebelling colonial administration, taking on military, civilian and activism. One woman, Muthoni wa Kirima, even rose to the position of field-marshal. Kirima has appeared in many international news outlets.⁴⁹ She remains steadfast in her commitment to Mau Mau veterans, symbolized by her long dreadlocks that she refuses to cut until compensation has been given to her. Kirima is adamant that the Mau Mau veterans have been unfairly treated by the colonial government. Women played even more important role on the civilian front; they were as well involved in intelligence team that supplied the Mau Mau fighters with the crucial information, they were also members of the Mau Mau Councils, which helped to make important decisions about the rebelling high court orders to punish Mau Mau rulers. There were some women who were really underscored by British government. Therefore, feminine tropes were also applied to those women considered the most deviant women who resisted British.

Women played an important role in the fight to achieve justice for former Mau Mau members, many of whom have dealt with poverty, stigma and physical and emotional trauma since the end of the State of Emergency Period. Women were also prisoners and detainees locked behind bars for long durations. The nature of women's incarceration was shaped by British preconceptions about gender, as the rehabilitation programs designed for women in the camps sought to make them into better wives and mothers.

2.4 Women in socio- economic development in Kenya

Women have different socio-economic profiles within the economy of Kenya in terms of the positions they occupy, the activities they participate in and their overall economic status. The role of women in economic developments in various parts of the world can be examined by

⁴⁸ Santoru, Marina E. "The colonial idea of women and direct intervention: The Mau Mau case." *African Affairs* 95, No. 379 .1996.

⁴⁹ Alam, S. *Rethinking the Mau Mau in Colonial Kenya*. Springer, 2007.

looking at their tasks in various activities such as agricultural production.⁵⁰ The level of production has been changing from period to another due to change in division of labor and also farming methods. Women's high rate of participation in agricultural work and more hours of work show that Kenyan women contributed a lot in the development of Kenya's socio-economic spectrum.

The social aspects of development are varied and include access to safe drinking water, environmentally friendly, energy sources as well as decent housing and corruption. The ability to control corruption is also an important feature of social development as it provides the right climate for investment in a country. During dry seasons, women collected water from catchment areas such as boreholes and rivers. They also performed other workloads of caring for the family. The housing of the women was characterized with poor amenities in terms of sources of light and heat for cooking. With the modern woman they have cooking facilities that have saved the environment and time they wasted collecting firewood. Their households now use electricity for lighting and cooking purposes. Time saved due this social development can be used to plan for other productive activities improving the country's socio-economic development.

Women have different backgrounds and those who stay in local areas depend on firewood as a source of energy while those in urban areas depend on paraffin, charcoal, gas, and electricity.⁵¹ Nevertheless, there some who have lacked the social benefit of housing and yet they stay in urban areas. Kenya has provided better housing for some of these women making their life health and productive. Corruption has appeared as a killer in all the spheres of political, social, and economic developments in Kenya. Women have participated in the war to ensure that all the mines of corruption are exhausted. In reference to the rule of law principle, people are corrupt and they affect human rights and basic needs of Kenyan women from various societies. However, in Kenya women have contributed to the development of the economy through their participation in self-employed sectors, agriculture and small micro-enterprise investments.

The last time Chelagat Mutai prominently featured in the news was in June 2011 when the then Prime Minister Raila Odinga responded to her Nairobi spinal injury hospital, following an earlier road accident leading her to immobility. Her departure marks the end of an era of an inspirational women leader, whose fall has been attributed first and foremost to the single – party

⁵⁰ Boserup, Ester, and Nazneen Kanji. *Woman's role in economic development*. Earthscan, 2007.

⁵¹ Berry, Sara. "Social institutions and access to resources." *Africa* 59, No. 01.1989. Pp. 41-55.

intolerance of the Kenyatta and Moi regimes. Although she kept a low profile after her stint in politics where she represented Eldoret North Constituency she was regarded as an extraordinary woman who broke with tradition at a time when a woman was only supposed to be seen, not heard.⁵²

When news broke to the nation about the death of former fiery Member of Parliament Chelagat Mutai, many were saddened; several leaders recounted with nostalgia the contribution of former Member of Parliament in the fight for democratic space in the Jomo Kenyatta and Daniel Moi regimes. Among those who eulogized the fallen hero was former Prime Minister Raila Odinga, who described her as the greatest Kenyan hero who fought fiercely for the great democratic gains. The current Deputy President William Ruto who then was Eldoret North Member of Parliament, described her as a charismatic and firebrand leader. Also James Orengo joined Kenyans to mourn the passing of Chelagat Mutai who was one of Kenya's greatest heroes who fought fiercely for the democracy we now enjoy. She was a loved in particular by the landless and poor of the Rift Valley, for whom she struggled to bring justice.⁵³ It is evident from above discussion that various women in Kenya played roles that contributed immensely especially in Kenyan political history and among the Nandi and Kenyan women at large.

⁵² O. I with Januaries Mutai at Terige village on 26th August 2015

⁵³ O. I with Philip Keino at Terige village, on 29th 2015

CHAPTER THREE

CHELAGAT MUTAI 'S EARLY LIFE AND CAREER, 1949-1973

3.0 Introduction

This chapter highlighted Chelagat's early life, role in the University of Nairobi politics and its contribution to democratic change in the Kenyan political landscape between 1949 and 1973. It captured her life in Terige village in Nandi, where she was born and schooled primary education, she then proceeded to Moi girls High School in Eldoret and later to the University of Nairobi.

3.1 Early Life

Chelagat Mutai, whose official names are Philemon Chelagat Mutai, was born on 6th February 1949, in Nandi County, Kesses Sub County, Terige Village. She was the last child born daughter to Mzee Antony Kimtai Arap Kogo and Mama Paulina Tapkurgoi Kogo. Both parents were large scale farmers practiced mixed farming.⁵⁴ She went to Terige primary school from 1956-1960 before proceeding to Chepterit primary for her intermediate studies from the year 1961-1962. She did her primary examinations and proceeded to St. Josephs' Girls Secondary school in Nandi for her East Africa Certificate of Education (EACE). She then proceeded to Highlands Girls High school in Eldoret, which today is known as Moi Girls Eldoret. She passed well and was admitted to the University of Nairobi.⁵⁵ At home, she performed her daily chores like any other girl but she was described as a 'no nonsense' girl who did not hesitate to point out something unpleasant to her at the family level.⁵⁶ She was obedient, hard working, and intelligent and liked reading books especially biographies and articles.⁵⁷ While in Moi girls Eldoret, she became an active member of debating and drama clubs developing her argumentative character. It is stated that Chelagat was a no non-sense student who could tell off both her peers and teachers alike if something did not appeal to her taste. In many occasions when students had a grievance, the first person they could rush to for a piece of advice was

⁵⁴ O.I with G. Kirui on, 10/08/2015 at Kesses centre.

⁵⁵ O.I with F. Lelei on 10/08/2015 at Kesses centre.

⁵⁶ O.I with C. Chepchiriri on 13/08/2015 at Terige village.

⁵⁷ O I with J. Mutai on 27/08/2015 at Terige village.

Chelagat Mutai, who without any waste of time could relay the problem to the administration. She became a students' voice by championing their rights.⁵⁸

While in high school, for example, she was labeled “a ring leader” when she led her fellow students in a strike that saw her being expelled, but to a surprise of many both enemies and friends she did her ‘A’ level examinations from outside the school and passed well.⁵⁹ This enabled her secure a place in the University of Nairobi where she enrolled for a Bachelor of Arts degree to study political science. Despite the fact that little information is known about Chelagat’s earlier life, there is much information about her upbringing in the rural village in Nandi County that is still known. For example, she did not grow in isolation taking into account the lifestyle of girls in the 1950s in the Kenyan rural set-up. Most definitely she must have lived in a group of other young girls who in one way or another influenced her character or vice versa. Hence this study endeavors to explore women in the making of Kenyan political history with a special reference to Chelagat Mutai.

While in Moi Girls high school, she was suspended or otherwise expelled.⁶⁰ First, was when she wanted to fight a school Matron, whom they had disagreed with. Second, was an expulsion which forced her to sit for final examination from outside school, but passed well to join university, she was not simple or a fearful girl, she always spoke her mind regardless of the aftermath consequences, she associated little with teachers and fellow students, because of her perceived radical character. Her unwavering stand on matters at an earlier stage in life prepared her well for the political career later in life because her character never changed much but was strengthened instead.⁶¹

3.2 University Education

Chelagat Mutai, became one of the first Kalenjin girl to be admitted to the newly established University of Nairobi in 1970 to study Bachelors of Arts in political science. However, in spite of her then minority background, her presence was quite imposing as she had a natural gift of public speaking. While in the University, Chelagat was very active in literary circles alongside famous authors Taban Lo Lyong and Okot P’Bitek. She was described as a very

⁵⁸ O.I With M.Lelei on , 13/08/2015at Lessos village

⁵⁹ O.I with E. Rotich on 22/08/2015 at Nandi Center.

⁶⁰ O.I with A.lelei on 08/08/2015 at kesses village

⁶¹ O. I with E.Lelei on, 26/08/ 2015 at Terige village.

voracious reader throughout her life in the University, she would not leave a book and most of the time stayed in her house to read books and all kinds of history biographies.⁶²

In 1972, she was actively and deeply involved in student politics and became the first female editor of the student magazine, “The Anvil”. In 1973, she was expelled from the University of Nairobi after she published reports that partly sparked riots at the University. However, her American lectures having recognized her enormous potential, organized for full scholarship to Harvard University in the United States where she was to report on 9th September 1973, and all she needed was a Kenyan passport. Since the government was aware of her activism, she was denied a passport and that how she lost that golden opportunity. In 1974, she petitioned the then minister for Education, Taaita Toweet who reversed her expulsion and so she was re- admitted back to the University in 1974 to complete her studies.⁶³

As a student in Nairobi University, she got acquainted with the late Hon. Jean Marie Seroney who was also a radical to the then government of Kenyatta. During that time, her uncle the late Hon. Morogo Saina, a great friend of Seroney was jailed for what would be trumped up charges of theft of farming implements. Chelagat Mutai barely out of university was asked to run for the Eldoret North seat of parliament by-elections by Seroney who had become her political protégé and mentor. Her active participation in University of Nairobi student’s politics helped her to cultivate political activism in the country that saw the rise of government critics on poor governance.⁶⁴

3.3 Entry into politics

After graduating from University, she highly criticized of the Government of President Kenyatta and used the institutions student magazine, the Platform to air her misgivings against the state. This did not go down well with the government, which had then started cracking down on people it considered dissidents. Chelagat Mutai was not spared and hers was an on and off period of study of the university. By the time of her graduation, Eldoret North Constituency seat was vacant after then Member of Parliament, the late Honorable William Saina, had been imprisoned. She contested an electoral seat in her rural home at 24 years of age, beating 12 other contestants to become the first Nandi and Kalenjin woman Member of Parliament, which had to

⁶²T.To (2013). Curtain falls on former Eldoret North Member of Parliament Chelagat Mutai, a trailblazer until her last breath. The Standard Wednesday, July 10th 2013

⁶³ O.I with M. Chemtai On, 20/08/2015 at Tarbo Village

⁶⁴ The Weekly Review, July 26, 1976

contend with criticism, harassment and cultural prejudices to clinch the seat. In those early post independence days, when passivity was second nature to women.⁶⁵

Chelagat Mutai, though did not thought of running for the seat, she ended up being the area Member of Parliament for Eldoret North Constituency. Her intention was to contest for the Eldoret South seat, which was neighboring her home but when she consulted the late Jean Marie Seroney, who was her political mentor, he advised her to seek the Eldoret North seat. Chelagat expressed her fears to Seroney, that she was not known well in the area but Seroney promised to introduce her to the people and which he did. Seroney introduced her to the constituents and this bolstered her chances of winning although more challenges layed ahead.⁶⁶

Chelagat Mutai, was still young girl and her feminine voice was not loud enough for crowds that turned up for rallies. Crowds suggested that she uses a public address system that was not readily available at the time, Chelagat narrated how little money was required to launch political campaigns. Chelagat did not have to dish out handouts, Instead, people who turned up for her rallies donated money towards her campaigns.⁶⁷ After being elected, Chelagat embarked on a drive to resettle her many landless constituents. On September 12, 1975 she held her first meeting with squatters and even invited Seroney as the chief guest.⁶⁸ Shortly after the meeting, the squatters invaded the Ziwa farm and apportioned themselves to it and this did not go down well with the authority, these eventually landed her in jail. After serving for only two years, the state arrested and jailed her for inciting squatters in Ziwa, Uasin Gishu County to invade a private land owned by an Asian. By then she was only 26 years old when she was jailed for two and half years, at Langat a women's prison.

There was an Asian who owned land at the Ziwa sisal plantation, the mistake she did was to urge the people of the area to raise money to buy the land she. The Asian refused to hand over the land to squatters after getting the money. Her efforts to have him compelled to surrender the land did not bear fruit. She raised the issue in parliament, sent a delegation to President Kenyatta, but nothing happened. It was at this point that forced the people to take over the land and settle there. The Asian sued her and she was Jailed till was released in September 1978. The political

⁶⁵ O.I.E. Cheruyot at Terige village,13/08/2015

⁶⁶ Weekly Review, August 28, 1976

⁶⁷ Center for multiparty democracy; politics and parliamentarians in Kenya. 1944-2007

⁶⁸ O.I.P.Kirui at kesses village on 12/08/2015

bug was still biting her. She offered herself for re-election and contested against Nican or Sirma, who had captured the seat in a by – election occasioned by her imprisonment. She ousted incumbent Sirma and returned to parliament, but the then KANU government was still not comfortable with straight shorting woman. Despite her being jailed for fighting for her people, this did not cowardice her. Again she ran into trouble after blasting the government over famine, the Country had short of maize, which forced the government to import yellow maize, she recalled.⁶⁹ Her problems started when in parliament she asked what Government is this that the minister cannot explain to the Country what it is doing over the famine. After she came out of parliament buildings some of her friends informed her that a plot had been hatched to arrest and haul her over falsification of mileage claims.

Chelagat was the most precocious political figure, man or woman, that independent Kenya ever produced who mentored many Kalenjin women.⁷⁰ There was a direct link between her path- breaking achievement and the astonishing fact that that our last parliament, seven of the 15 women Members of parliament were Kalenjins, four of them with PhDs. She was a true trail-blazer without question and the only one in Kenya’s entire history who had become the first person in independent Kenya to be forced to flee into self –imposed exile in Tanzania. She knew that, those behind the plot were determined to have her jailed. She consulted with friends who advised her to flee instead of waiting to be jailed as her life would be in danger this time round. Chelegat fled to Tanzania through the Namanga border leaving behind her mother and her sister in her house in Bururburu Nairobi. She returned from exile in April 1984 to attend to her mother who was sick, her mother died five days after she arrived.⁷¹ One of the razor-sharp captions in *The Anvil* is still etched on my mind. As they protested the police unleashed teargas. That was in February 1974, and what followed was the indefinite closure of the university. Kenyans were not surprised when two years later, Miss Mutai became the youngest Member of Parliament and first woman Nandi Member of Parliament to become a member of Kenya’s Third Parliament on September 8, 1974 with her was Mrs. Grace Akinyi Onyango, the first woman Member of Parliament in post independence Kenya.

Chelagat Mutai, Joining parliament at the tender age of 24, captured the nations imagination, and Kenya women especially, for whom she was an inspiration of what an educated

⁶⁹ The Weekly Review, June 1 ,1979

⁷⁰ O.I with A.Ruto on 16/08/2015. At Eldoret town

⁷¹ The Weekly Review, June 30,1979

girl is capable of women can be forgiven for reading patriarchal mischief in the spread with which she fell from top legislator to a hounded jail bird. Firebrand to the core Miss, Mutai was among the seven bearded sisters. So nicknamed by the then Attorney General Charles Njonjo, who included her contemporary at the University of Nairobi and current Siaya Senator James Orengo. For one so young and with the whole future laying a head of her, Miss Mutai's political life and tenure in Parliament was, to say the least, short-lived. Her first brush with the law was in September 1975-just a year into the Third Parliament when she was accused of inciting people to violence at Ziwa farm in Eldoret. She lost her seat in June 1976 following her commitment to jail on March 10 of the same year. Although, she made a come-back in fourth Parliament after serving her jail terms, she was to flee the Country in October, 1981 into self-imposed exile in Tanzania, this after jumping bail on charges of forged mileage claims. It's clear from this chapter that University education and environment shaped her well into future the political life.

3.4 Chelagat Mutai's life after active politics

After she returned from self-imposed exile in Tanzania in 1984, this was after a warrant of arrest for her was issued by a Nairobi court when she failed to appear to answer charges of making false mileage claims, totaling shillings 69,345, from the National Assembly.⁷² Following her return to Kenya to see her sick mother the then Attorney General, Mr. Justice Mathew Muli, assured Mutai that she was free person until proved guilty in a court of law. Since then, she has been at home and they (Government) did not bother pursuing her. Chelagat Mutai did not regret what happened to her since simply she was serving the people, this had to come with consequences. However, she did hold any grudge with either Kenyatta or Moi. Since her return from Tanzania, Chelagat Mutai reportedly made statements to the security forces and, unlike James Aggrey Orengo the current Siaya senator, who had repatriated from Tanzania and put into police custody.⁷³

Chelagat opted to remain in quiet watching political situation from a distance, she shortly worked in Kenya Commercial Bank, and later worked at Human Rights till she was fired through a radio bulletin. Poverty clawed her at her heart, and the torture of life in exile to avoid the grim walls of Kamiti Maximum prison haunted her spirit. Our neglect for our legendary heroes and heroine broke her spirit at the end. The awesome phenomenon who signed off her phone messages as Chelagat retreated to life of separation from family members, seclusion and

⁷² O.I with J. Langat on 16/08/2015 at Eldoret town

⁷³ The Weekly Review, May 4, 1984

drinking. Drinking she did, probably to soothe her broken spirit and drown her frustrations. Those who saw her final years will tell you, she was no more the ebullient and unshakable spirit we knew in the 1970s, when she kept Jomo Kenyatta and later the government of Daniel Moi on toes after joining parliament at the age of 24 years. Clearly, her life lost the handle during the three year exile in Tanzania alongside the current Siaya senator James Orengo. Yes, in many years Chelagat Mutai was responsible for the slides in her profile, the jump into a life of seclusion, poverty, and loss of self esteem and luckless with the vicissitudes of life. She could have been responsible hardy and resilient, she could have gone ahead to raise a family that would later prop her up. Slowly she slid into oblivion, an object of pity and probably even fun in her rural home. Even her University education was not of much help given her troubled spirit, however she did not talk about it.

Chelagat just slumped into the life of an ordinary Kenyan woman. If not at her father's home in Terige, she was housed by her former secretary at little -known Santon estate in Nairobi's Kasarani area. She retreated into life of squatter and solitude and death took advantage of her poverty, lifestyle and broken spirit. Perhaps, if Kenyan embraced her, warmth would have taken her far and far. Chelagat Mutai maintained a low profile, kept off from politics. While at her father's home, she could harass and intimidate farm workers because of her frustrations and despair in life. She could drink local brews, associate with low class locals. She distanced herself from other family members including her own blood brother Januarys Mutai. She remained unmarried through her life, she however adopted three daughters: Josephine Kalondu, Esther Ngina and Fina Mbula.⁷⁴

Chelagat was first involved in a road accident in 2006 and suffered multiple injuries including fractures. She was also diagnosed with a spinal problem which she nursed but kept recurring. In June 2011, she was admitted to the spinal injury hospital-Nairobi where she was taken following courtesy of former prime Minister Honorable Raila Odinga. former brand politician, Mutai flashed a smile of hope as nurses waited her into a ward at The National injury hospital, a pale shadow of a vibrant figure that kept the KANU governments on its toes for close to a decade, Chelagat Mutai at 62 years struggled to maintain her dignity as the first woman Member of Parliament from the Kalenjin community.

All along, She has been leaving in a friend's one roomed house near Kasarani in Nairobi .From where she quietly boldly battled for survival ever since she fell from grace in 1981 "It

⁷⁴ O.I with G. Chemtai on 8/8/2015. At Terige village.

has not been easy but I don't want to Appear as if am too sick. I am still the Chelagat whom you used to know" she told journalist "am very happy you listened to my plight and come to my assistance; she told the former prime minister who was emotionally moved by her medical condition. Orengo recalled Mutai's ferocious debates in parliament, when people speak of seven bearded sister, they forgot that Chelagat Mutai was the first one in that group who took the then KANU Government head on, long before the others come to scene. She helped to change political landscape so that people can face state ⁷⁵, she is where is today because she had refused to be compromised other leaders who visited her included; Hon Moses Wetangula and Hon Fred Gumo who are both politicians. She continued recuperating in her flat at Ng'ong' Road, and later she could be admitted to hospital following a case of acute pneumonia. She was discharged for a week and returned home. A few days later however, she was returned to Hospital when her condition began to deteriorate. On July 6th she passed on at Kenyatta National Hospital.

3.5 Challenges That Surrounded Chelagat Mutai's Life

Chelagat's life was always a hard nut to crack. During all her days of study at school and university she could be suspended or otherwise expelled. For instance, when Chelagat was in secondary school, she was expelled twice; first, she was expelled for organizing a tour without involving school administration which was a sign of indiscipline to school authority. Second, she was expelled from school prompting her to do examinations from outside because she wanted to fight a school Matron. Of course when examinations results were out, this surprised many as she passed with flying colors joining the University of Nairobi to do a Bachelors degree in Political science.

At the University her troubles again resurfaced, being among the first Kalenjin girl to be admitted to the newly established University of Nairobi. However, in spite of her then minority background, her presence was quite imposing as she had a natural gift of public speaking especially during Kamukunjis. By 1972 she was deeply involved in student Magazine the Anvil which made her get expelled from University in 1973 after she published reports that partly sparked riots in the University. Again it did not end there, after her American Lecturers, recognized her enormous potential, they organized for a full scholarship to Harvard University where she was meant to report in September 1973. All she needed was a Kenyan passport since

⁷⁵ Daily Nation, July, 07 2013

the authorities had already recognized her activism. They denied her the passport she desperately needed hence suffered another blow and for that she lost her chance to study at Harvard.⁷⁶

After graduating from University of Nairobi, she ventured into politics which was not a bed of roses for Chelagat. Her trouble again regenerated in a high notch now, in the 1974 elections she won Eldoret North constituency against other male contestants. While in Parliament, she could debate fiercely on Parliamentary debates. In 1970s when she voted against a Constitution amendments designed to give more powers to the President and a few days later, January 25, 1976, she was arrested and charged with incitement when squatters in her constituency invaded a sisal farm. Chelagat appealed but she lost, hence she was committed to the Langata women's prison, she subsequently lost her Eldoret North seat suffering a double tragedy.

In October 1981, she received some confidential information that she was going to be arrested following mileage claims from parliament which they said had inflated. She presented herself to the police who took statements from her and bonded her to appear in court. She however knew full well that she was going to be jailed, whether the claims were true or not. Remembering the harrowing experience she had in her stint in last jail, she opted for a self-imposed exile in Tanzania in 1981 running away her own home country. In Tanzania, she was summoned by the authorities and questioned as to why she had defected. They were warm enough kind to her and warmly received her. She was even taken to meet President Nyerere himself and described to him what was happening to her. This was how Chelagat started her life in exile for three years which tormented her psychologically because of the lonely life of far from home. Back home, her family members and fellow parliamentarians first thought she was killed. She remained in self-imposed exile till April 1984.⁷⁷

In 1984, Chelagat also faced another challenge of losing her mother, who died only five days after she had arrived from Tanzania where she was in self-imposed exile. Because of that tragedy Chelagat Mutai opted to remain in quietude watching the unfolding political situation. She remained unmarried through her life which again was a social setback. This situation forced her to adopt three children; Josephine Kalondu, Esther Ngina and Fina Mbula. After mending fences with KANU government of President Moi, she was offered a chance to work with Kenya

⁷⁶ The Weekly Review ,May 26 1975

⁷⁷ The Weekly Review ,May 4,1984

Commercial bank where she worked shortly. The former Eldoret North Member of Parliament suffered a spinal injury in a 2006 road accident and she was confined to a wheel chair ever since. She was also diagnosed with a spinal problem which she nursed but kept on recurring. Lack of resources made it impossible to get quality treatment, when Raila Odinga came to her aid admitting her to the spiral injury hospital. Raila said that the nation should honor her in a manner befitting the immense contributions she made against huge odds to make this country a much better place. Miss Chelagat was then the youngest Member of Parliament elect in Eldoret North constituency who criticized the government of the day without fear or favor.

Her funeral service was not given much media coverage and attention, and her burial was skipped by many top government officials. Despite all her efforts, selflessness and bravery, we refused to celebrate her. We rejected an icon, where were all the woman empowerment Non Governmental Organizations and their sister “hood” from grace to grass she fell with a might third but there was no one to help her pick her pieces. She lived in solitude, suffering and poverty.⁷⁸ Her later life and her former life were like reading from two different scripts she had nothing to show off her vibrant days. Those who saw her final years will tell you she was no more ebullient and unshakable spirit they knew in 1970s when she kept Jomo Kenyatta and later Moi governments on toes after joining parliament at a younger age. Clearly, her life lost the handle during her three year exile in Tanzania alongside Senator James Orengo. Tragically, Chelagat died in absolute need and poverty neglected by the same Kenya she fought so hard for. The death of Chelagat Mutai marked the fall of one the seven “bearded sisters”.

⁷⁸ T.To. Curtains falls on former Eldoret North Member of Parliament Chelagat Mutai, a trailblazer until her last breath. The Standard Wednesday July 10th 2013.

CHAPTER FOUR

CHELAGAT MUTAI'S POLITICAL LIFE 1973-2013

4.0 Introduction;

This chapter mainly studied Chelagat's political life during Kenyatta, Moi and Kibaki government between 1973-2013; from the time when she was elected at a tender age of 24 years, to her life in prison and her life in exile in Tanzania.

4.1 Political Activism

Chelagat Mutai began her political journey to an activist long time ago in high school. She became more radical in the university environment where she pursued her Bachelor of Arts Degree in Political science. She joined elective politics vying for the Eldoret North constituency seat in 1974 at the age of 24 years. During this election, she was supported by her political mentor and a great friend, Mr. Jean Marie Seroney who was a great leader of the Nandi people. However, the journey into politics was not a bed of roses because Seroney was also involved in his own campaigns and Saina her former ally was in an opposing camp. When she went for a campaign trail in Ziwa accompanied by Seroney, there were many people who were waiting to be addressed by their Member of Parliament to be. Chelagat Mutai was left on her own and had to learn the ropes the hard way now that there were eleven male contestants in the race. To their disappointment, she miraculously beat all of them to emerge the winner with over 40.2% of the casted valid votes becoming the youngest woman ever elected in the Kenyan history at the age of just 24 years.⁷⁹

In March, 1975 Chelagat made strong remarks in regard to J.M. Kariuki's sudden disappearance. Earlier on the government had issued a press statement by claiming that Kariuki had gone to Zambia on official matters but his whereabouts were not known only the truth to resurface when his body was found dumped in a forest. She agitated for the resignation of the government for failing to provide security for its own citizens and by lying to the people of Kenya. It is during this time that she opened up old wounds. She wanted the government to explain the sudden deaths of the likes of Tom Mboya and Pinto. Her criticism didn't stop there; she even went ahead to pin point a powerful minister in the government who had warned her of dire consequences if she could not stop criticizing the government. Her constituents were to

⁷⁹ The Weekly Review, July 10, 1976

remain behind in terms of development.⁸⁰ During the parliament of 1975, Chelagat Mutai was an activist of the government of the day. She never feared to say out the illi ssues that affectected the common people; such as corruption, foreign policy, land squatters, unemployment, and she opposed then vice chancellor of Nairobi University, Dr. Karanja because of his incompetence. She equated Dr. Karanja to a local primary school headmaster.⁸¹

In 1975 October, 15th Seroney was arrested with Shikuku. Chelagat Mutai was by their side and had earlier on that day notified the house of the ‘strangers’ of in parliament precincts. These were plain-clothed policed officers sent to arrest Seroney and Martin Shikuku. After the arrest, it is argued that Chelagat Mutai was the only Member of Parliament who constantly championed for their freedom and eventually managed to secure their family’s access to them. Having been vocal over this matter, Chelagat’s tribulations were now about to begin.

In January 1976, she voted against an amendment to the constitution that was designed by the government to grant more powers to President Kenyatta. Hell broke here: She was arrested on 25th January 1976 and charged in court with incitement when squatters in her constituency invaded a sisal farm that the owner had actually sold to them.⁸² On September 12, 1975 she held a rally in Ziwa with the squatters and invited Seroney as the chief guest. She spoke against the government and criticized it for being insensitive to the plight of its own citizens being squatters in their own homeland. Immediately after the meeting, the squatters invaded the farm and immediately apportioned themselves to it according to their shareholding. This did not go well with the authorities and instead of being arrested immediately; they waited for four months after the event. This explains then that her arrest was politically instigated coming just three months after Seroney was detained and after opposing a government bill.

Interestingly, although Seroney was a political detainee at that time, he would be produced in court as a defense witness for her. Her defense team was made of legal giants Lee Muthoga and S. M. Otieno who put up a spirited fight for her release but she was imprisoned anyway – sentenced to a good two and a half years imprisonment by a Nakuru Senior Resident Magistrate V.S. Dhir. She however made an appeal but lost it before Justices Allan Hancox and James Wicks ending up in Langata Women’s Prison on March 10, 1976. She also served for a little while at the Nakuru Prison. While in prison, Hon. George Moseki Anyona fought for her

⁸⁰ O. I with Josephine Kolondu at Terige on 25th August 2015

⁸¹ The Weekly review, February 13, 1975

⁸² The Weekly Review ,May 26, 1975

welfare by agitating for her release but in vain. Subsequently, she lost her parliamentary seat of Eldoret North Constituency.

She was released in 1979 after serving a two and half year jail term and ran for her parliamentary seat and won, Government was not happy. In October 1981 she received confidential information that she was to be arrested following mileage claims totaling Ksh. 69,345.00 from parliament which they said she had inflated. She therefore opted for self-imposed exile in Tanzania. As a result, there was tension in the country where parliamentarians thought she had been assassinated.

However, on Oct 19th 1981, then Minister for Internal Security Mr. G.G. Kariuki issued a statement in parliament that Mutai had fled the country to Tanzania in self- imposed exile. Speaker Fred Mati declared her seat vacant after being absent for eight consecutive sittings. In Tanzania she was handed over to the authorities. Nyerere ordered that she be given a job and she chose to work as a journalist. She was assigned to one of the best papers in the country. Her duties were mainly editorial. The Kenyan government demanded from the government of Tanzania that she be handed over to the Kenyan authority. Tanzanian authorities, however, refused extradition demands by the Kenyan government.⁸³

Apart from being tribe- blind, she also led campaigns against corruption and land grabbing from the poor. It was in fact land that shot her into national prominence soon after she become Eldoret North Member of Parliament, when her supporters invaded two grabbed farms. Chelagat was also one of the best and sharpest journalistic writers Kenya produced. A path-breaking article on corruption that she wrote for the December 1978 issue of Viva Magazine highlighted its depilating social impact in stifling the drive for legitimate initiative amongst our best minds, replacing enterprise with a get rich – quick mentality. It's worth quoting a few lines to show her prescience 35 years ago. "Sooner or later thieves will become the models to be emulated" she wrote. "Corruption becomes an argument against honest living, and demoralizes those who work honestly at their farms, desks and factories, creating the kind of society where the only real means of improvement is looting. Chelagat with her meager resources and challenging the ethnic barons could not possibly be elected in Kenya today.

4.2 Life after exile.

After returning from Tanzania, Chelagat briefly reconciled with Kenyan government and was given a senior job at Kenya Commercial Bank. She also worked briefly at the KANU head quarters and for standing committee on Human Rights. The soft spoken but confident, Chelagat

⁸³ Center for multiparty democracy; politics and parliamentarians in Kenya, 1944-2007

Mutai quietly quit politics and settled at her father his farm in Terige, Lessos Township in present's day Nandi County, where she was a farmer before her health started deteriorating. She chose to remain single and childless. It was never her intention not to get married. After all, she would not have ever broken any record by getting married. Several other women have been married and bore children and the trend continues. Chelagat told the standard in an interview at the farm in 2009. The standard established that Chelagat's compound had two houses and a store, which looked deserted, revealing a life of solitude that marked her sunset.

Chelagat Mutai is regarded a heroine because when Kenya called upon patriots to protect her against one party dictatorship, Chelagat did not hesitate to take up a spear and shield, and jump into the battlefield question to KANU dictatorship. It was called a suicidal courage and sacrifice. Chelagat fought for Kenya as a nationalist, a champion of the small man and a patriot and not a woman.⁸⁴ At her time of battling one party dictatorship of former Presidents Jomo Kenyatta and Daniel Moi, no other woman in Parliament fought as she did. While other women Members of Parliaments like Edda Gacukia, Phoebe Asinyo and Grace Onyango seemed cautious for fear of rubbing the government the wrong way, Chelagat seemed happy to take on dictatorship irrespective of consequences. Indeed, Chelagat was only female Member of Parliament in the group of the so-called "seven -Bearded sisters."⁸⁵ That were neither seven, Beared nor sisters. The only thing they were was rebels against dictatorship" At any time the number may have varied but names remained constant; Abuya Abuya, Mwashengu wa Mwachofi , Koigi wa Wamwere, Wasike Ndombi, Lawrence Sifuna, James Orenge, Chibule wa Tsuma, Chelagat Mutai and Onyango Midika. Under Kenyatta Chelagat fought closely with George Anyona and Jean Marie seroney for defending the land rights of common people in her constituency.

A compliant magistrate would then send her to Langata Prison where she served her sentence. As she served the sentence, Anyona was carted away to detention in Manyani and Shimo la Tewa Maximum Prisons. Seroney would be detained in 1975 and stayed until 1978 when Kenyatta died. The purpose of jailing Chelagat was not that she was a criminal; Chelagat was jailed to break her indomitable spirit. But as the government would learn, when Chelagat Mutai was re-elected in 1979, she joined the group of seven "beaded sisters" and continued the

⁸⁴ T.Too. Curtains falls on former North Member of Parliament Chelatgat Mutai, a trailblazer until her last breath. The Standard Wednesday ,July 10th 2013

⁸⁵ Weekly Review July 7, 2013

fight for democracy from where she left off. Chelagat fought corruption with enormous courage. She particularly championed a debate on maize that had gone missing under Jeremiah Nyaga then the minister for Agriculture.

On 13th February 1975 Chelagat moved the motion- corruption in public sectors to the deputy speaker and she had this to say

“Mr. Deputy Speaker sir, we must ask ourselves if government policies do allow corruption to take centre stage. To my opinion, in Kenya corruption is allowed 100 percent, nowadays to get a driving license its only 300 shillings, and that is allowed completely .Also for one to get a job in a government he or she must pass through back door, you don’t just send your application. I cannot fear saying the bitter truth because I don’t need anybody is favor.”⁸⁶

Chelagat’s fight for democracy was heroic because, as a graduate of the University of Nairobi she really didn’t have to risk her comfort fighting for democracy and the downtrodden of Kenya. She could have gotten a good job with a good salary and lead a comfortable life thereafter. But she was one of the few selfless souls in Kenya that fought for all to live better. Even in Parliament, she could have chosen to side with government instead; she chose to fight for others at great cost to herself. Another measure of the timeless legacy she leaves behind was the number of leaders who attended the quickly organized mass at the Holy Family Cathedral, even though she had not been in limelight once she fled to Tanzania thirty two years. The large gathering at Cathedral was even stunned to see former Attorney General Charles Mugane Njonjo, the once all powerful Attorney General who prosecuted Chelagat Mutai, join them in mourning and celebrating her. Charles Njonjo described her as incontestably brilliant and fearless women who were capable of mobilizing people and leaders for causes which were then taken controversial-the landless in particular. Chelagat’s contribution after jail was also spectacular because she knew while her community may have applauded her struggle with George Anyona against the government of Kenyatta, criticizing the KANU government isolated her from the people.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ The Weekly Review, February 13, 1975.

⁸⁷ The Weekly Review ,October 24,1975

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

Philomena Chelagat Mutai remains to be one of the important women personalities in Kenya and should not just be forgotten like any other ordinary Kenyan. Both early life and school environment influenced her political life later. She played a vital role in fighting for the disadvantaged in society. Chelagat was critical to both Jomo Kenyatta and Daniel Moi regimes. Before going into self-imposed exile in Tanzania, She returned from exile only five days and her mother died. She later led a quiet destitute life before she passed on in July 2013.

Chelagat Mutai is among the Kenyan women, who in critical sense have played a pivotal role in Kenyan political history.

Her home background, school, university, and friends she had interacted with like Jean Seroney Marie, relatives like William Marogo Saina shaped her political career. Chelagat Mutai was among the first Kalenjin girls to be admitted to the then, newly established university of Nairobi where she studied political science. At the university, her trouble worsened, as she was expelled from university for radical activities, but she was later readmitted back to the university under the courtesy of Taita Towett who was the then minister for education.

She graduated from the University of Nairobi in April 1974, and was elected Eldoret North Member of Parliament in October the same year. Chelagat had to content with criticism harassment and cultural practices to clinch to power at 25 years old. Nevertheless, during this election she was supported by her political mentor and friend Mr. Jean Maries Seroney, a great leader of the Nandi people. Later, Chelagat was jailed for allegations of inciting her constituents to invade the Ziwa plantation farm belonging to an Asian. Moreover, this was after her appeal was rejected by justice James Wicks ending up in Langata women's prisons on March 10, 1976. She also served for a little while at the Nakuru Maximum prison.

In October 1981, the then Minister for internal security Mr. G .G Kariuki issued a statement in parliament that Mutai had fled for Tanzania. Thereafter, Speaker Fred Mati declared her seat Vacant after being absent for eight consecutive sittings. In Tanzania, she was handed over to the authorities. Nyerere ordered her to be given a job and she chose to work as a Journalist. After self imposed-exile for 3 years in Tanzania, she returned back home in 1974 to nurse her sick mother who only died five days after her arrival.

Chelagat shaped the political history of women and their participation in public affairs more so from her Rift Valley back yard. A good number of women joined politics a cross Kenya because of her influence. They included; Annarita Njeru, Julia Ojiambo, Nyiva Mwendwa. Today, women from Rift Valley are the leading as far as politics is concerned including, Lina Chebii Kilimo, Sally Kosgey, Joyce Laboso and many more. They are following the path of their political mentor, Chelagat Mutai who loved freedom and liberty, abhorred corruption, illegal amassing of wealth, abuse of power and political assassinations. She stood for social justice, defended democracy powerfully, fought for women's rights and paid for it with her life term in jail and exile. She was a hero who died in penury unable to benefit from her many years of social activism but remained true to the course to the very end. Her death is an indictment of how society treats her heroes. Therefore, something must be done to salvage this situation. In many years Chelagat was responsible for the slide in her profile, the jump into a life of seclusion in poverty and loss of esteem and luckless, battle with Vicissitudes of life. Tragically, Chelagat Mutai died in absolute need and Poverty, rejected by the same Kenyans she fought for. The death of Chelagat Mutai is epochal as it marks the fall of one of the seven bearded sisters.

5.2 Conclusion

In conclusion, Chelagat Mutai remains to be one of the earliest and youngest women to enter into politics and consequently parliament; who at her tender age boldly criticized the wrongs of the then governments of Kenyatta and Moi's publicly. This always put her into trouble. She has remained as a mentor of many women today who are now politicians.

Chelagat played a crucial role in fighting for the rights of the weak in society and needs to be recognized for her tremendous job well done, in Parliament, with the likes of James Orengo the current Siaya senator. She faced the KANU Governments of Kenyatta and Moi in pointing out ills. As well she was in forefront in fighting out corruption and the careless assassinations of KANU political perceived hard cores. This case study may not have examined all the roles played by women in political history of Kenya specifically Chelagat Mutai of Nandi, because not all respondents reached had all the information about Chelagat.

5.3. Recommendations.

This study recommends that important heroes and heroines in societies, who made significant contributions differently, should have their history written and documented, because they made history according to great man's theory. Nandi county government in collaboration with National Government should remember Chelagat by ensuring her social, political, cum economic information is collected, written and documented in Kenya National Museums and Archives for current and future generations to read. The government can also honour her directly or indirectly through compensatory scheme.

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Field Interviews

The following information provides a list of informants who were interviewed during the field research. The information was tabulated in terms of name, age, sex, occupation of informant, place and date of interview.

Name	age	sex	Occupation	Place	date
Shadrack Moimmet	68	Male	Famer	Kapsabet town	27/08/2015
Jan Mutai	64	Male	Engineer	Terige	26/08/2015
Philip Mutai	72	Male	Farm manager	Terige	29/08/2015
Geofrey Kirui	58	Male	Famer	Eldoret	10/08/2015
Florence Lelei	67	Female	Retired teacher	Kesses	10/08/2015
Melen Lelei	63	Female	Retired teacher	Kesses	13/08/2015
Edward Lelei	61	Male	Retired farm manager	Tarbo	26/06/2015
Elizabeth Cheruyot	66	Female	Retired clerk	Terige	13/08/2015
Josphine Kolondu	32	Female	Maid	Terige	25/08/2015
George Chemtai	70	Male	Farmer	Uasin Gishu	08/08/2015
Ester Ngina	28	Female	Maid	Terige	08/08/2015
Fina Mbula	30	Female	Maid	Terige	09/08/2015
Peter Kirui	74	Male	Farmer	Terige	12/08/2015
Callen Chepchiriri	68	Female	Retired teacher	Kesses	13/08/2015
Amos Ruto	74	Male	Business man	Eldoret	16/08/2015
Joshua Langat	68	Male	Business man	Eldoret	16/08/2015
Martha Chemtai	70	Female	Retired teacher	Nandi	20/08/2015
Elijah Rotich	74	Male	Retired sch watch man	Nandi	22/08/2015
Alice Lelei	68	Female	Retired teacher	Kesses	08/08/2015

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I; INTRODUCTORY LETTER

OKEMWA OGETO JOSHUA

P.O. BOX 94-40500,

NYAMIRA.

10TH JULY 2015.

THE ACADEMIC REGISTRAR

RESEARCH AND EXTENSION,

KISII UNIVERSITY,

P.O. BOX 408-40200,

KISII.

Dear Sir/Madam,

REF: RESEARCH PERMIT.

I Okemwa Ogeto Joshua Reg. No. MAS/11/60003/14 being a student of Kisii University hereby writes to seek permission through your office to undertake a research study of Women On the making of Kenyan History: A study of Chelagat Mutai among the Nandi, 1949-2013.

By extension I wish to have an introductory letter to National Council for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) confirming my being a student in your institution to enable me get a research permit. Thanks in advance for your consideration.

Yours faithfully,

Joshua Okemwa.



KISII UNIVERSITY

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Facsimile: +254 020 2491131
Email: research@kisiiversity.ac.ke

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OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR RESEARCH AND EXTENSION

KSU/R&E/ 03/5/vol.1/18

DATE: 13th August, 2015

**The Head, Research Coordination
National Council for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI)
Utalii House, 8th Floor, Uhuru Highway
P. O. Box 30623 – 00100
NAIROBI - KENYA.**


Dear Sir/Madam

RE: OGETO JOSHUA OKEMWA REG. NO. MAS11/60003/14

The above mentioned is a student of Kisii University currently pursuing Master Degree of Arts and Social science in History. The topic of his research is "*Women in the making of Kenyan History: A study of Chelegat Muta among the Nandi, 1949 – 2013*".

We are kindly requesting for assistance in acquiring a research permit to enable him carry out the research.

Thank you.


Prof. Anakalo Shitandi, PhD
Registrar, Research and Extension

Cc: DVC (ASA)
Registrar (ASA)
Director SPGS

AS/mm



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TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION**

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Website: www.nacosti.go.ke
When replying please quote

9th Floor, Utalii House
Uhuru Highway
P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref: No.

Date:

2nd October, 2015

NACOSTI/P/15/1792/7773

Joshua Ogeto Okemwa
Kisii University
P.O. Box 402-40800
KISII.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on *“Women in the making of Kenyan history: A study of Chelegat Mutai among the Nandi, 1949-2013,”* I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Nandi and Uasin-Gishu, Counties** for a period ending **2nd October, 2016.**

You are advised to report to **the County Commissioners and the County Directors of Education, Nandi and Uasin-Gishu Counties** before embarking on the research project.

On completion of the research, you are expected to submit **two hard copies and one soft copy in pdf** of the research report/thesis to our office.

Said Hussein
SAID HUSSEIN
FOR: DIRECTOR GENERAL/CEO

Copy to:

The County Commissioner
Nandi County.

The County Director of Education
Nandi County.





NAKURU PRISONS

Photo by: John Mugo

Chelagat Mutai under arrest after allegations of incitement

PLATE II



Photo by: Robert Mwangi

CHELAGAT MUTAI UNDER TAKEN TO JAIL

PLATE III

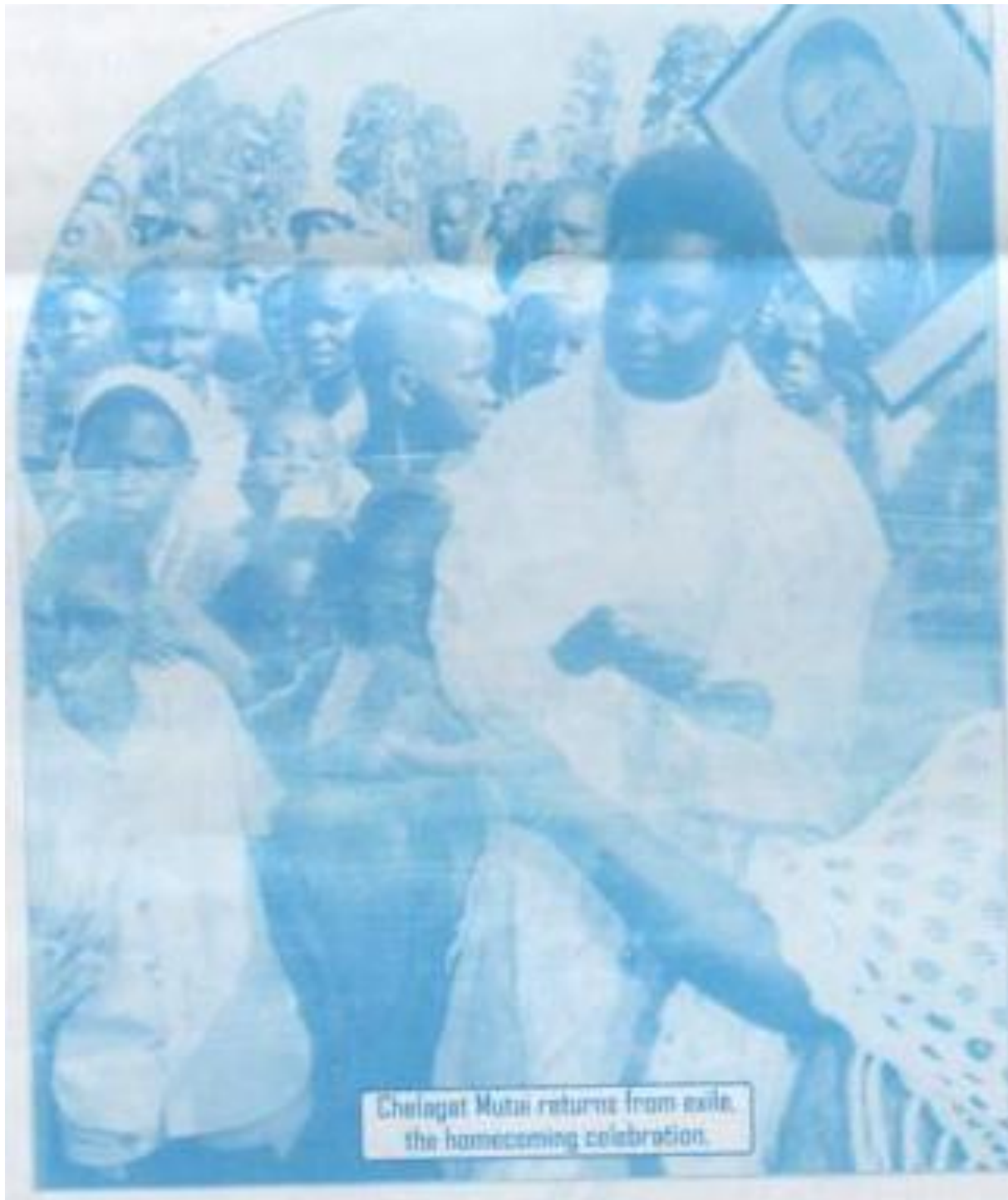


Photo by: James Ndwiga

Celebrations after Chelagat Mutai return from exile in Tanzania

PLATE IV



Photo by: Doroth kweyu.

Chelagat being escorted to Hospital by Colleague politicians Raila Odinga (right) accompanied by Mr James Orengo and the rest.

Map of Nandi County showing various locations

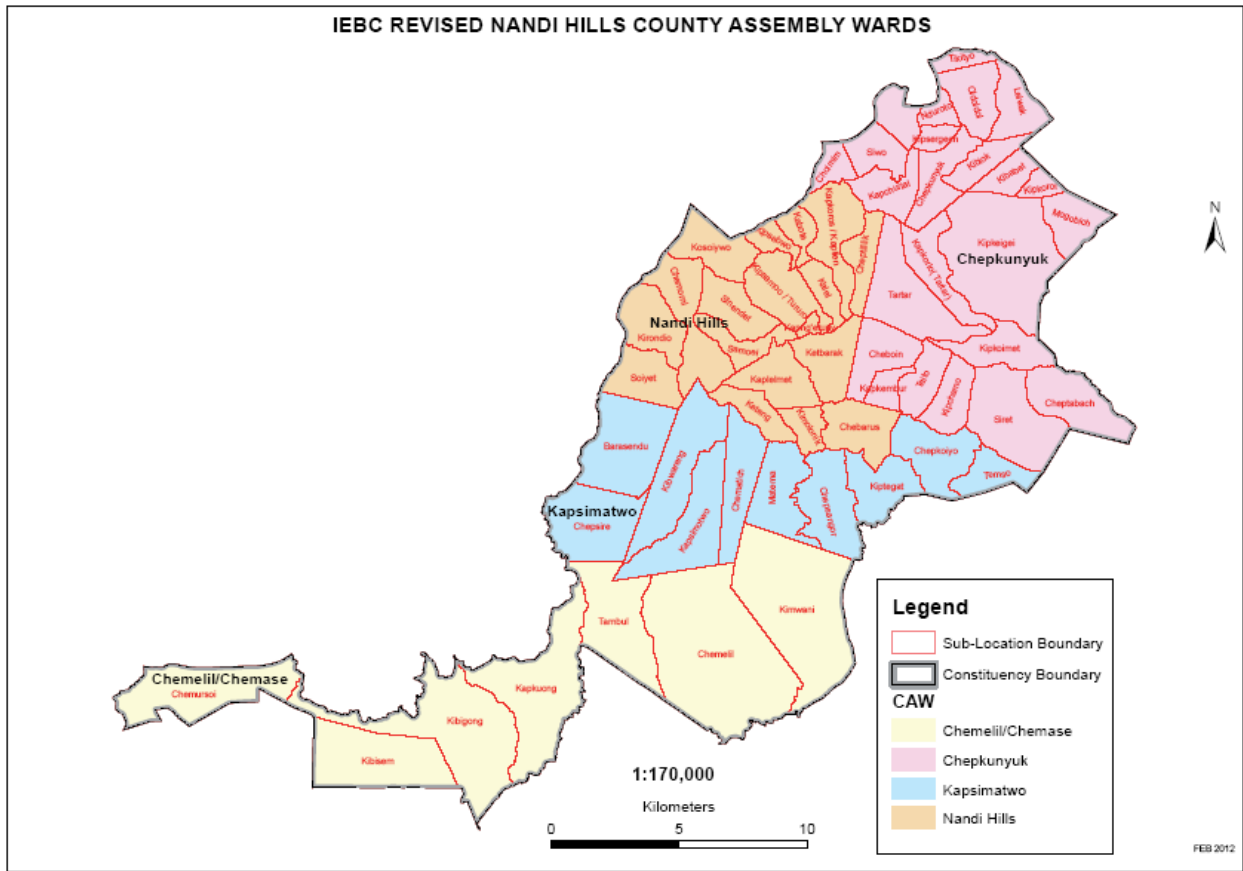


Photo from Nandi Hills Constituency Map

Appendix II Sample questions for the Respondents

The research is meant for academic purpose only in honoring Chelagat Mutai as the greatest contributors to Kenyan political history. It will explore the life and times of Chelagat Mutai from 1949 to 2013. In a sincere way, you are requested to provide answers to these questions as honestly and clear as possible. Responses to these questions will be treated as confidential. Please do not write your name in the sample question forms

Instructions

- 1 Please tick [] in the box text for right responses.
- 2 Fill in the form with relevant information as asked.

SECTION A:

Personal information

1. Gender: Male [] female []
2. Age bracket: below 25 [] 25--34 [] 35--44 [] 45--54 [] over 55 []
3. What is your occupation?
.....

4 What's your gender?

male () Female()

SECTION B: Childhood information of chelagat mutai and life during her studies in the UoN

1. What was the name of the primary school that Chelagat enrolled in?.....
2. What club did Chelagat participate actively in while in primary school?.....
3. How did your answer above (Qtn 2) shape her future career?
.....
.....
4. How best can you describe Chelagat in terms of character while in primary school?.....
.....

5. How would you describe her in terms of intelligence while in primary?.....
.....
6. How did she associate herself with her fellow village girls while at home?.....
.....
7. Did she participate actively in church events?
8. How did your answer above (Qtn 8) influence her later character
.....
.....
9. How did Chelagat behave while in school with her fellow colleagues and school at large?.....
.....
10. Was Chelagat involved in university politics?.....
11. Was Chelagat elected as leader?

SECTION C: Chelagat’s life during Kenyatta and Moi regime

1. How did Chelagat’s entry into politics at an earlier age shape democracy during Kenyatta and Moi’s regime?
.....
.....
.....
2. What role did Chelagat play during Moi regime that you think changed the political landscape in Kenya?
.....
.....
.....
3. Was Chelagat married?.....
4. If your answer in Qtn. 3 above is 'Yes' did she ever divorce and when?
.....
5. A part from politics what other activity did she engage herself in and more especially after abandoning active politics?

.....
.....
6. Do you think that her involvement in politics early in life affect her social life more so marriage?
.....
.....

7. Did Kenyatta and Moi governments honour Chelagat for her role in the second liberation of this country?
.....

8. What are your personal opinions about Chelagat's treatment by Kenyatta and Moi government?
.....
.....
.....
.....

SECTION D: Chelagat's contribution to women politics in kenya

1. Did Chelagat's involvement in politics at an earlier motivate women into political expediency in her home area and the country at large?.....
.....

2. It is argued that her involvement in politics at an early life was a sign of disrespect to the Kalenjin culture and men. Whats is your reaction to that statement?.....
.....

APPENDIX II

Interview Schedule for the primary school headteacher where Chelagat schooled

1. What is the name of your school?
2. Which year did Chelagat join this school and which year did she leave?
3. Which activities did she participate in most and which one was her favorite according to the school records?
4. Did she have any disciplinary case in the school?
5. How did she relate with other pupils while in school?
6. How did she relate with teachers?
8. How was she rated in terms of academics according to the records?
9. What is the general rating of her according to the records?

Appendix III

Interview Schedule for the Secondary school head teacher where Chelagat schooled

1. What is the name of your school?
2. Which year did Chelagat join this school and which year did she leave?
3. Which activities did she participate in most and which one was her favorite according to the school records?
4. Did she have any disciplinary case in the school?
5. It is said that she led a strike in this school that saw her expelled. What was the cause of the strike?
6. In your own considered opinion, was the cause justified?
7. How did such behaviour in your own wisdom influence her later character in life?
8. How did she relate with other students while in school?
9. How did she relate with the teachers?
10. How was she rated in terms of academics according to the records?
11. Did she hold any leadership position in the school during her time and if your answer is yes, how did this prepare her for her future political life?
12. What is the general rating of her according to the records?

APPENDIX IV

Interview Schedule for the brother and/or sister to Chelagat

1. Between you and your late sister, who is older?
2. Which year was Chelagat born?
3. How did you relate with her?
4. How did she relate with other members of the family?
5. Chelagat as a young girl, did she perform household chores like with the rest of the sisters?
6. How best can you describe your late sister?
7. How did she relate with the parents?
8. What did she like most?
9. It is said that she led her fellow students in a strike during her high school days that led to her expulsion, what do you think made her do this?
10. In relation to the above question, do you think the reason for the strike if at all there was any was justified and if so, do you think Chelagat's involvement was justified?
11. How did this influence her political activities later in life?
12. Did Chelagat ever get married and if so who was the husband?
13. If your answer above is 'No' how did her earlier involvement in politics influence her social life?
14. Did she have children?
15. How did her detention affect her and you as a family?
16. Which year did Chelagat return to Kenya after her life in exile and which countries did she seek asylum?
17. How did this affect her life and you as a family?
18. Did she ever work for the government and if 'No' why?
19. When she returned to the country from exile what did she do for a living?
20. What can you say of her leadership?
21. Do you think she made a serious contribution in the Kenyan politics?
22. What do you think was her role in shaping women politics in Kenya?
23. What can you comment about the government on Chelagat's life?