Chapter 6

# Developing Knowledge Societies:
## A Case of Women in Kanungu District

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## ABSTRACT

*This chapter explores how the knowledge societies are being developed in different local, national, regional, and international societies and more in particular how the women and girls in Kanungu are developing their knowledge within the clans. The methodology followed to generate a set of questions: What are clans? and Does belonging to a clan group have an individual or group impact on their identity (as Bakiga/Banyankole/Bahororo/Bairu/Bahima) Ugandans? Why are women in Kanungu district organizing in paternal clans? How new is the trend? What is its origin? Are there women, girls who do not identify with clans? What are the basic socio-economic challenges confronting the girls and women of Kanungu? Has local government and development partners tried to deal with the challenges of women? With what results? Is organizing in Clan Groups matriarchy? Is it empowerment or cementing submissiveness? Is it increasing women work load? What is its effect on men-masculinity? In order to understand how the clan groups' learn, a feminist qualitative ethnographic approach was used. Women's personal stories were collected through focus group discussions and interviews to explore their experiences on the prospects and challenges of clan group activities. A sample of five women and five men randomly picked was used. Therefore, this chapter aims to stimulate sharing knowledge and learning about women's lives in rural areas; document women's narratives; show the economic development trends in Uganda; promote self-actualization, self-awareness, and pride among women as equal citizens of Uganda; and motivate reading and learning and contribute to creation of rural libraries.*

## INTRODUCTION

Uganda is a landlocked country in East Africa, with Sudan to the north, Kenya to the east, Lake Victoria Rwanda and Tanzania to the south, and Zaire (Congo) to the west. Her population was of diverse ethnic groups, who were organized either in kingdoms with hereditary kings (Buganda, Ankole, Toro, Bunyoro) or Chiefdoms (Kigezi, Teso, Acholi, Karamoja, Madi, West Nile, and other parts of Uganda). The indigenous communities were socially well organized because of systems where children were socialized to become active and useful members of society. Girls were trained to be good mothers and boys were trained to be heads of families.

Social economic developments in education, religious beliefs, health education and use of modern as opposed to traditional medicine, and, a transition from a subsistence to a cash economy, took place during the colonial period-(1895-1962) . The boys and girls had to learn skills that would make them fit into the changing environment that was being influenced by the Arab-European and African cultures and practices. One way to learn new practices was through women organizations and clubs, which were formed by women who had some western education. Christian based organizations like Mothers Union and Catholic Women taught girls and women sewing, knitting, child welfare, nutrition, house-keeping and cooking. The organizations were useful in development of knowledge, skills and learning of new cultural practices, but few seem to have taught women to challenge the unequal gender relations, have an identity of their own not dependent on male relatives (husband, father or brothers).

During the early colonial era, women and girls were mainly considered as home-makers and economic assets where families exchanged bride price. Few writers mentioned women and children, for example, *An Economic History of Ankole c.1895-c.1919* Master of Arts thesis by Peace Twine Kalekyezi. Men were trained and forced to grow cash crops-cotton or coffee and later on tea, to earn an income so that they could pay government tax. The economic trends greatly impacted on the political development. People who paid homage to local kings, started to be ruled by Chiefs of a central government that enforced its presence with tax collection.

Education[1] was introduced with religion and new beliefs were embraced changing some cultural practices, which continued to favour men against women. Education for women was introduced gradually as the British felt that the educated men needed educated women to influence society. The women that got some Western education were confined into care service jobs like teaching and nursing while majority of women stayed home to do unpaid work as wives and mothers while working on clan land cultivating or taking care of livestock and its products. Women continued to teach children customs and traditions concerned with family life revolve around assuring men's control of women's sexuality(in order to have offspring and lineage)

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