



## STEREOTYPICAL PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN KIPSIGIS SECULAR SONGS

Judy, C. Koskei<sup>1</sup>,

Margaret Barasa<sup>2</sup>,

Beatrice Manyasi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Languages and Linguistics,  
Kisii University, Kenya

<sup>2</sup>PhD, Department of Languages and Linguistics,  
Kisii University, Kenya

<sup>2</sup>PhD, Department of Curriculum, Instruction and  
Education Management,  
Maasai Mara University, Kenya

### Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to investigate how Kipsigis secular songs portrayed women in Chepalungu Sub County, Kenya. In spite of all the efforts that have been made to promote gender equality, gender bias is still a very big issue in Chepalungu constituency. This study adopted qualitative research paradigm. The study selected 15 Kipsigis secular songs as the unit of analysis. Analysis of data was made through use of content analysis method. Data from women was presented together with extracts from songs as per the objectives of the study. The study established that Kipsigis secular songs communicated stereotypical messages relating to women in Chepalungu Sub County. Research findings showed that songs by female composers mainly advocated for gender subversion. The study recommends that there is need for male and female artists to collaborate and compose songs that promote gender equality in the society.

**Keywords:** stereotypical, portrayal, women, secular, songs

### 1. Introduction

Songs have been there since immemorial and have been part of people's culture over centuries with genesis from oral literature (Campbell, 2011). Oral literature is the verbal heritage of humankind that is delivered from generation to generation by word of mouth (Melakneh, 2005); it comprises of songs, short folk tales, legends, myths, proverbs and riddles (Chancer & Beverly, 2006). According to Sheleme (2010), oral literature like other forms of popular culture is not simply folksy, domestic entertainment but a domain in which individuals in a variety of social roles are free to comment on power relations in society. One of the socio cultural instruments of patriarchy in modern times is oral literature (Sheleme, 2010). That is the reason why gender inequality constructions in socio-cultural activities are

found in oral literature (Sheleme, 2010). Songs are also seen as statements of a society in which they are formulated (Lima, 2010). This research investigates the interplay between secular songs and gender power.

Gender is constructed from many different places such as society, family, culture, media among others (Talbot, 2014). Songs play a part in how we perceive and construct gender (Fairclough, 2015). Thus being able to understand how different types of songs affect us is very important because secular songs have become a major source of information in the contemporary society. A few linguistic studies have analysed gender and secular songs together (Monk-Turner & Sylvertooth, 2008). Further, songs can measure a particular community's values, language and norms (Richards, 2012). While there is a considerable body of knowledge concerning the representation of women and men in secular songs, the Kipsigis secular songs, so far, have not been investigated as a source of data. This study therefore explores the stereotypical portrayal of women in Kipsigis secular songs in Kenya.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

Every song that is produced contains a certain message that is advanced through its lyrics. This has made gender and language research to be of great interest in linguistic research with scholars focusing on inequality, power, ideology, discrimination and subordination in different contexts. Analysis of research studies reviewed shows that research studies have been conducted in different contexts on how secular songs influence gender identity in developed and developing countries. Most studies have been conducted in developing world and inadequate research has looked at how secular songs in Kipsigis language influence gender stereotypes towards women, a focus of this paper.

### **1.2 Literature Review**

Secular songs do, in some ways, also promote some of the very feminine ideologies they are trying to combat. This is particularly true in the lyrics of "Before He Cheats". While it's seen how Underwood's character challenges the myth of what it means to be a southern lady, the portrayal of the "other woman" in the song is rather stereotypical. Underwood refers to this woman as a "bleach-blonde tramp", which conjures up a both a vivid mental picture of what the woman may look like and some negative feminine stereotypes. Underwood is insinuating that the woman whom her boyfriend is cheating with must be a tacky, fake blonde and automatically categorizes her as promiscuous. This is problematic for two reasons; the first of which is this lyrical discourse projects that all blond women are "tramps" or seductresses. The second reason is that Underwood is assuming this other woman is actually aware that she is flirting with an attached man. Underwood again reinforces the gendered ideology that women are the fairer, more dainty sex by singing that the other woman is probably drinking "some fruity little drink" and needs the man to show her how to play pool (Kear & Tompkins, 2005). These examples, minor as they seem, do dilute the overall effectiveness of the song's abilities to challenge hegemonic thought. Interestingly enough, while the majority of the discourse analysis of the previous texts illustrates women in country music challenging dominant feminine ideology, they are simultaneously reinforcing masculine hegemony through this very same discourse. In the media, women are

portrayed as significantly passive, dependent on men. Dibben (2000) believes that patriarchal construction of feminists which abounds in popular music produces an image in women are portrayed as simultaneously submissive, innocent and childlike yet sexually available. This goes hand in hand with most of the music being played on the radio today where women are portrayed as sexual objects and unable to function without the help of a man.

In the paper, *Feminism for stupid girls*, a feminist Rhetorical critique of a popular song by Pink, the author Leonardi and Elizabeth talk about how patriarchy is established in many popular songs today. They also discuss how gender is being portrayed in the song when they say females are constructed and portrayed through negative strategies to passive, shallow, unengaged and disempowered. According to Amy (2003), many western societies have believed that women are more nurturing than men are. Hence, the traditional view of the feminine gender role prescribes that women should nurture her family by working full-time within the home rather than taking employment outside of the home. Men on the other hand are presumed by traditional views of gender roles to be leaders. The traditional view of the masculine gender role therefore suggests that men should be the head of their household by providing financially for the family and making important decisions. The feminist perspective points out that gender role are not simply ideas about appropriate behaviours for males and females but are also linked to the different level of power that males and females hold in society e.g. maintaining economic control over themselves and their families is one way that men experience greater power in society than women.

In United States, Neff (2014) analyzed top ten songs of 2013 from six genres looking for five themes of sexism. The six genres used are rap, hip - hop, country, rock, alternative, and dance. The five themes used are portrayal of women in traditional gender roles, portrayal of women as inferior to men, portrayal of women as objects, portrayal of women as stereotypes, and portrayal of violence against women. Each instance of sexism is also classified as benevolent, ambivalent, or hostile sexism. This shows that the above categories of songs portray women as inferior. This research will determine whether Kipsigis secular songs portray women in that angle. Watts (2015) study analyzes the performance of classic blues songs by the American singer, songwriter, and actress Ruth Brown; she sang about topics that were often neglected in the discourse of that time period - sexual freedom, domestic abuse, and the right to travel and move independently. Changes in Ruth Brown performances are also analyzed with the appearance of subsequent performances by various modern artists like Charlie Daniels, Bonnie Raitt, and Susan Tedeschi. Analyzing the varied embodiment and content of feminist blues songs leads to a better understanding of the blues' contribution to the feminist experience of women in the United States.

Glantz (2013) investigated the validity of two leading radical feminist theoretical perspectives about the acceptability of popular media's hyper - sexualized representation of women. The research utilised a combined method of survey response and content analysis. Research findings indicate varied beliefs among women about the nature of popular music media, though most women indicate beliefs consistent with the radical culturalist perspective stressing the oppressive nature of popular media. Abrahamsson (2011) analysed images of female in pop lyrics. The result of analysis is a deeper understanding of the images Lady Gaga conveys of women in her lyrics. Lady Gaga demonstrates her quest for freedom and

power both sexually and personally. Gaga's girls were armed with sexuality. They break with gender roles. They seek to exercise power in being active as opposed to passive. They are often sexual subjects rather than objects. Despite all this, they also exhibited feelings of low self-esteem and admit to a certain dependency on boys / men, while the reclaiming of power over their own lives is the goal. They found strength in female companionship and were no strangers to auto-eroticism.

Rogers (2013) aimed to show that sexism exists in all facets of society by exposing its existence in the widely unexpected area of country music. The research use a perspective developed from sociological perspectives on culture, gender, and music, and look at popular country songs for sexist lyrics. Using a series of indicators for sexism in music lyrics, Rogers analyzed popular country songs in the Billboard Hot 100 chart. The research found out that that many sexist themes existed, including depicting women in traditional gender roles, describing relationships with women in unrealistic ways, and attributing a woman's worth strictly on the basis of her physical appearance.

In Nigeria, Ifeoma and Obinna (2015) sought to determine what the increasingly hyper-sexualised portrayals of women in popular music portend to the young Nigerian women through a critical analysis of Flavour's musical lyrics. The research survey and focus group discussion as methodological procedures. The result of the study showed the disparity and ambivalence in women's perceptions of gender representations in popular culture. Their perceptions were diametrically polarized along the divides of healthy sexualized self-expression resulting in empowerment and co-optation to perform resulting in exploitation and debasement. Ogochukwu (2016) investigated how university undergraduates perceived the portrayal of women in music videos. A structured questionnaire was designed for collecting data from 400 respondents selected as the study sample. It was discovered that the portrayal of women in skimpy clothes and erotic dance moves in some Nigerian musical videos evokes in the minds of university undergraduates highly sexualised images of women.

In Ethiopia, Yohannes (2007) study explored the content of 653 Amharic songs produced in cassettes in 1997 E.C. in order to assess women's portrayal and existing gender issues in the lyrics. The songs were analyzed based on a coding sheet that was developed using 16 physical traits, 19 personality traits and 3 variables on division of labour related to women. The result also revealed that the most frequent value in regards to personality traits is portrayal of the woman as dependent. This was found in 84 songs or 12.9% of the whole. Women were presented with both positive and negative connotations. Women are more portrayed as untrustworthy, dependent, irrational, incompetent, cruel, careless, haughty, jealous and as quitters than as trustworthy, independent, assertive, and fulfilling. Concerning division of labour, women were also portrayed as engaging mainly in domestic responsibilities than in the public sphere. In Kenya, Ndugo (2006) investigated the image of women as portrayed through oral literature in the Gikuyu society. The research was carried out in Central Province of Kenya, the homeland of the Gikuyu people. The images created through the Gikuyu proverbs as discussed so far clearly depict women as inferior to men, especially in their physical and intellectual capacity. From the proverbs studied, the only positive image of women is that of a mother. Women were depicted positively only as

mothers; otherwise, they are seen as dangerous, stubborn and unreliable to name but just a few of the negative attributes associated with their personality. They are also portrayed as incapable of keeping secrets.

## 2. Materials and Methods

The study was guided by qualitative research design methodology. The chosen research design for this study was the implementation of critical discourse analysis (CDA). Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008) define critical discourse analysis as a research methodology within qualitative studies, which focus on the cultural meanings attached to people, artefacts, events, and experiences. CDA, therefore, is concerned with evaluating how discourse – including written texts and artefacts – contributes to power and dominance struggles found within different groups. The study was conducted in Chepalungu sub-county, Bomet County, Kenya where Kipsigis community members reside. The community strongly upholds its cultural beliefs and practices such as initiations are highly valued. The sub county has a rural setting with a number of renowned secular musicians and songs that have been sung by departed musicians but still being sung even today. Fifteen songs were used in the study to determine how they contributed to gender stereotyping among women in Chepalungu Sub County. Literal translation of the secular songs was carried out because the data was collected in Kipsigis language. From the literal translation, an actual or free translation was undertaken. The songs were divided into groups according to the themes and sub-themes through thematic content analysis method. After this, coding procedure followed. After identifying recurring ideas, codes were developed by the researcher. A list of behaviour portrayal of women was used in the coding sheet in order to assess the image of gender stereotypes from the secular songs.

## 3. Results and Discussions

The following sub-sections present the findings of analysis on the portrayal of women in Kipsigis secular songs.

### 3.1 Portrayal of Women in Kipsigis Secular Songs

Various texts and phrases have been used to portray women through the secular songs in different ways.

#### 3.1.1 Female as Gossipers

Females have been portrayed as gossipers.

In the song Bitinet by Kipkirui Ng'eny (a male song composer), the term “chepitinaiyat” refers to a female gossip the prefix ‘che’ denotes female.

*“Alenen aeb it agas kogi bitinet che kimwa akobo ane ak inye utien kabisa Chepitinaiyat”*

(When I listened carefully, I heard it was a gossip about me and you (wife) never gossip about me [female gossip]).

This implies that that women are seen as persons who pass rumours, make decisions based on hearsay, they are nosy parkers and appears not to remain silent (big mouth). When this song is sung and repeated, members of the community will not believe that a woman can keep secrets to her own. This is said considering that the writer of the song is a male and this explains why they refer to them as 'chepitinaiyat'. This implies that the society believes that women are gossipers and may spread wrong information easily compared to other gender members in the society.

Further analysis of lyrics shows that female members have been likened to a 'crow' that can get to its destination at the shortest time possible. Just as crow, a woman can spread gossip on the shortest time possible; it is only that it does not have wings to fly. Here is one of the excerpts:

*"ii sireret kabisa kiwechin kurerek chemetinye  
Ndo imii Zaire imwaitoton"*

(You are just like a crow, it is only that you do not have wings to fly otherwise you would be in Zaire spreading gossip about me).

Crows are extremely intelligent and adaptable to different conditions. The personality of crows is that they are; intelligent, aggressive, playful (sometimes) and quarrelsome. The personality of quarrelsome is what the singer wanted to pass the message concerning women. For instance, a song sung by Kipchamba 'Obot mini' (a male songwriter) portrayed women as quarrelsome:

*"Okobo inye obut mini ak boiyondengung"*  
(Because of your quarrels between you and your husband)

This song portrayed women as individuals who often had squabbles with their husbands and therefore making the home not to be peaceful. Considering that it was sung by a male composer portray the way male gender perceives women to be in the society.

In some scenarios, the crows may even try to imitate one's speech. This depicts women as people who will walk from one village to the other (flying) spreading gossip about other people (not specifically men). These findings are in agreement with Cape Verde, Lima (2014) who analysed two Cape Verdean traditional music genres (*Morna* and *Koladera*). According to Lima, women can be portrayed as lovely mothers and beloved lovers "*Kretxeu*" (as long as she is obedient to her father and/or husband), as gossipers, poisonous among others. In addition, Masuku (2005) in a research conducted in Zimbabwe found out that female are acknowledged as individuals who have courage and who can manage to outwit their adversaries. They were also portrayed as the great givers of life and it is acknowledged that the whole community existence is depends on them.

### **3.1.2 Women Practicing Witchcraft**

Through analysis of music lyrics women have been openly told to stop bewitching other people's children. The following is an illustration:

*“Yaach busurek oo chepyosocho matobanwech lagok”*

(Woman witchcraft is bad, do not bewitch our children)

In Kipsigis language, the term *“chepusuriot”* means women who are practicing witchcraft whereas *Chep* is a prefix in Kipsigis language denoting a female. *Chepusuriot* is therefore a female witch. The association of women with witchcraft is a negative portrayal of females in the society and this dehumanises them. The findings is supported by Masuku (2005) who established that women practiced witchcraft through use of magic powers to transform them so that they can escape from being dominated by males. Men are also warned not to fall into the trap of marrying a witch daughter as she may end up destroying the family from Zimbabwe proverbs. This act condemns women as witches but celebrate masculinity. In addition, Rogers (2013) established that country songs portrayed women as a group with negative stereotypes (for instance, *“All women are conniving”*).

### 3.1.3 Women as Dependent

The analyses of various songs in the study have portrayed females as being dependent on men for their survival. Women have been portrayed as dependents. They wait for men to buy all household requirements (shopping). Somehow, the men have used the shopping to bribe the women. When a man comes home late and finds the wife having locked the door, he shakes a paper bag full of shopping, when the wife hears that the sound of the paper, she will definitely open the door. Here is an excerpt from *Selele* song:

*“iwendi yon koimenchin itite kiy en selele ak ibeitwaitwai kogetakujige, ikose kongele ak koyat koot”*

(When you go home late, carry some shopping in a paper bag move near the door and shake it, you will hear her waking up to open the door).

*“Oebit amwowok, remote nekiyoten kout ko selele”*

(Listen carefully; a paper bag full of shopping is the remote control for opening the house)

The shopping is thus the surest way of hoodwinking women into opening doors for late-coming husbands. This import on the other hand portrays men as very calculating and free to come home any time they feel like.

In another song titled *“meus kwondo”* by Chelele, females have also been portrayed as dependants. Men are advised to take good care of their wives to make them look presentable:

*“konyalu irib kotililit simesubote chebo biik che kikerib”*

(Take good care of her, make her presentable so that you do not go after other people’s wives who have been taken care of)

*“olchin tuguk chemoche mama toto / ingoryet*

*Rotyin metit akine kou chebo biik*

*Kolaach ingoryet negoit mama toto*  
*Ak imutate kosaita mama toto .....by chelele"*  
(Buy her what she wants like clothes  
Giver her money to plait her hair like other people's wives  
Make sure she wears the latest fashion  
Take her out for outings)

Another song titled "Bomorisiek" by Kosium also depicts women as being dependent.

*"Ak inye sandanin irib lagukuk*  
*Ma niitu lang'at ten matanda*  
*Sandanin ooh riib lagukuk komie."*  
(Young man take care of your children (wife included))  
*"Ma niitu lang'at ten matanda*  
*Sandanin ooh riib lagukuk komie"*  
(Young man take care of your children (wife included)  
(Provide for them everything they need  
Do not come in the evening when angry  
Young men take care of your children well.)

In the songs, the man is advised to take care of the family and to provide everything needed in the family. The woman will therefore know it is the duty of the man to provide everything hence she will solely rely on the man to provide everything. The text shows that according to Kipsigis culture, women are subordinate to men and their duty is to look beautiful for their husbands and their work is to pamper their husbands. The female body is for eyes of the man. It also portrays that women are dependent on some things that require skills and force. Females appear to lack these skills (of working) and abilities that are restricted to male gender. They are assumed idle people who may not be relied upon to provide for their families. These findings are in agreement with Barasa and Opande (2017), and Dibben (2000) who observed that community creation of females generate a picture of females seen as being innocent, naive yet sexually available and obedient. In addition, Kudzai and Bhatasara (2015) found out that in most African societies the only thing women can do is to love a man who in turn will provide all their material needs. The idea of men being providers is based on patriarchal views of male as breadwinners. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the men to provide for their children and wives. In relation to a study conducted in Kenya, Wambura (2016) found out that females were also constructed as timid and dependent on men for protection and provision. This dependence attribute places them below and subordinate to men to an extent that if men do not provide then women do not have anything to live on or to adorn themselves with. This legitimates unequal gender and power relations between men and women by positioning men above women.



### 3.1.4 A Woman has been portrayed as Quarrelsome and Trouble Maker

A woman is seen to be quarrelsome. She is always blamed when there is a quarrel between a man and wife according to the music lyrics analysed. For instance, a song 'Obot mini' by Kipchamba (a male songwriter) communicates this message:

*"Obot mini kigonyalivyo bikap kokwet*

*Okobo nye oh but mini ak boyondengung."*

(Mother of mini the villages have suffered a lot because of your quarrels between you and your husband.)

Further, through the same song by Kipchamba, husband is seen to have the final say in the family as seen in the extracts below:

*"obot mini kilyan inye sioboldosi abokora*

*Ak boiyondengung bongo ng'atutik."*

(Mother of mini, why do you always quarrel with your husband who should be the head of the family? Who should have the final say?)

*"Obot mini kikitun anon en inye ak chitungung*

*Bane bolet kipchuiyo ne makimunye"*

(Mother of mini who married who between you and your wife, why do you always quarrel without ceasing.)

The texts shows that culturally, women tend to be blamed where conflict or quarrels arise. It seems that the society has believed that women are not peace makers but they come to bring enmity and divisions among other members of the community. The information also shows that women cannot be trusted to mediate between warring factions in the community. The texts also shows that women tend to quarrel with their husbands on frequent cases hence increasing occurrence of domestic violence incidents. The import of the texts is that that women bring in the family are due to their desire to take over the headship of the family. In this case, women may use quarrels as a way of subverting male power in the society. Therefore, it is the duty of a female to keep quiet when decisions on family matters are made and they are not supposed to quarrel or speak. The women are also depicted that their character of quarrelling is endless. According to the lyrics, communities have suffered a lot due to quarrels brought about by women and therefore the song advocates for women to limit behaviour and character of speaking. These findings confirm studies done which portray women as tough headed and quarrelsome as reported by Wanjiru et al. (2015) research that showed that because of lack of avenue to express their dissatisfaction, women use songs as a vehicle to air their feelings and constraints they face at the family level. Similarly, Khan et al. (2015) research established that involvement in meaningless quarrels and fights was attributed to women with particular reference to those who are in polygamous families.

### 3.1.5 A Woman Portrayed as Unfaithful

According to study results, some songs especially those sung by men have portrayed females as being unfaithful to their husbands at home. They are seen to be engaged in adulterous and unfaithful type of behaviours in the community as reflected through the following song 'Kipsoiywet' by Junior Kotestes (a male songwriter):

*"Ndo twegu kipsoiywet yun kageny subendo arek chelelach yon tui kipsoiywet, makorot ne mwae"*

(If a cock would talk, when the hen hatches white chicks, When it is dark, it would talk wonders.)

*"Kokerge aik kimogul met, mabolotet ne oo yon kang'et seretet makorot ne mwae."*

(The cock is just like a man, he will quarrel when he faces problems in his family).

*"Uyon kanerech kakokure ng'atatek inge mara kolelel kipsoiywet ak kogigeny arek che tuen anan kogigeny cheserger kaat kole koroi kotakibar"*

(The cock is just like a man, when the cock is going on with its daily duties, the hen hatches dark chicks and then the cock is white in colour or a different species have been hatched, he will say "I feel like killing this one (wife)"

In this excerpt, a man has been likened to a cock and thus the husband. Sometimes a woman gives birth to a light/brown baby and the father is dark. This implies that the woman could be unfaithful. The fact that the cock does not talk even after seeing different offspring that are not his, is indicative of how gullible men are when it comes to children. This could also be an indicator that the Kipsigis society values children so much and the men are ready to take care of them irrespective of the paternity issues. The character of a woman being unfaithful is 'cursed' in the African society compared to when a man becomes unfaithful. This is likened during the situation where a woman bears child and if it happens that the child does not resemble the father, she is castigated to have been unfaithful to her partner. Considering that most members of the society are not literate on genetics, some may force even the husband to separate with the wife. Further, the woman is likened to a chicken that mates with every cock that comes on its way. Considering that the song was composed and sung by a male singer, it may promote the narrative that women are sexual objects, cheaters and unfaithful to their partners. This may also suggest that a female is someone who cannot be dependent upon, is not reliable always, not worthy of trust, is not honest and she may sometimes mislead. These findings are in tandem with those of Barasa and Opande (2017) who established that among the Babukusu and Abagusii societies, women are portrayed as sex objects including those who are married. The only difference is that when a man steals a married woman, he has to be very careful not to be found out by the owner.

Further, Masuku (2005) research among the Zulu of South Africa found out that women were seen as untrustworthy if they were beautiful, but as mothers, they were exalted by community for being the caregivers of children. Thus, community perpetuates the idea of fear and subjugation of women. In addition, Namubuya (2016) research established that Bukusu circumcision song exalted whatever that is found on men and downgraded what is found on women lexical words used presuppose that men are at liberty of sexually exploiting

women because all women need is to please men. It is worth noting that whereas the Bukusu circumcision songs refer to the women seen as promiscuous using denigrating words, contrary, men who are seen as promiscuous are referred to using euphemistic words. This is attributable to the fact that a woman is seen as a property or an object to be used by men in the African society and the message is regularly communicated through secular songs like for the case of Kipsigis.

### **3.1.6 A Woman has been Portrayed as a Homemaker / Caring / Nurturing**

This was the main discourse that appeared in many songs that the researcher reviewed. According to the songs, a woman should be at home to ensure that everything is in place. If she keeps loitering in the village, there is a total mess at home. A song titled 'Obot mini' by Kipchumba (a male songwriter) had the following discourse:

*"Kokwo banda kanyin ii aiye wee weny takaolionen  
Kikasinyan ole kiech ak Kochar kot keit  
Kaa kokamusok kiy age tugul ne tumosu ton  
Irote aibu eng' chuto nee chu.....abire raa..."*

(She has gone loitering in the village; I do not know what I will ever do with this woman. All the time when she is away, everything is in a total mess. If a visitor comes, you will get embarrassed... I will beat her today.)

The extract in the song implies that a woman should stay at home and do the home chores. If she goes out, there will be a total mess at home. This represent the notion that women in Kipsigis culture are supposed to perform domestic chores and they have to be busy at all times in making their homes. They have to ensure that their husbands and children are served well and those who have daughters, it is the responsibility of the mother to train them on how to perform domestic chores so that they will know when they start their homes. The discourses indicate that in Kipsigis culture, women are confined at home and the husbands have a right to batter them if they loiter about in the village. They are also not expected to perform other roles apart from that in the society. The songs sung therefore promote this stereotype by women. In agreement with the findings, Kudzai and Bhatasara (2015) analysis of popular Zimbabwe music constructed women as feminine, weak and victims who are only good for domestic labour. Ndungo (2006) established that women through songs and other narratives have been reduced to tools for procreation. In addition, Yohannes (2007) research in Ethiopia found out that despite women's involvement in a range of activities and in productive work, women were mainly portrayed as mainly engaged in domestic responsibilities. This makes their role in contributing towards the household economy invisible. Even in US, Rogers (2013) found out that country music referred to traditional gender role of women being in the kitchen, cooking for men. Eagly's social role theory explains that historically, it was expected that women would serve as primary care givers for their children, while men served as bread winners for the family.

The Kipsigis secular songs also encourage young men to marry early so that they can have someone to take care of them. Failure by Kipsigis women to perform their domestic

duties, another song by Micah Maritim titled 'Cheplemindet' went further to make comparison between performance of Kipsigis and Luo women in terms of performing domestic chores as shown below in the discourse:

*"Ingen koriib biik cheplemindet x2*

*Ingen korii bulyondenyin wee"*

(A Luo woman knows how to take good care of her husband.)

*"Ole ripto biik cheplemidet ko oton inchuru buiyot yon*

*Koinyubut tugun, kotorugun akokesenin ak komuti mpaka koo"*

(The way a Luo woman takes care of the husband is that when the husband comes home while drunk, she will come for you and put you on her back and take you inside the house.)

*"Akoregun kwoshiiek akoregun sikisinik ak kobo beek*

*Aliomwetun kelyek kousun kweyot kabisa"*

(She removes your shoes and socks, then warm water and washes your feet; she will wipe your shoes until they shine.)

The import of the extract is that Luo women are praised on the way they take care of their husbands compared to Kipsigis women who are seen as 'not caring' and 'not dedicated'. Considering that the two communities share border (Kisumu County) and some Luo families are working in Chepalungu Sub County, may explain why the song writer made the comparisons. A challenge is also made whereby the singer 'teases' the Kipsigis women to go and learn how Luo women treat their husbands. The discourses also suggest that the reception that men (even those drunk) require to receive from the spouses when they get home. The songs may advocate for Kipsigis women to learn from their neighbours on how to honour, treat and respect their partners. In this discourse, the women are expected to be homemakers i.e. take care of the husband, stay at home, bear children and perform domestic duties. In agreement with this finding, Rogers (2013) found out that American country music depicted women in traditional gender roles for instance, 'I kept her barefoot and pregnant in the kitchen.' The discourse also denotes the division of labour that exists between male and female persons in the Kipsigis culture. Failure to perform those duties may result to punishment from her husband like; assault, abuse, attack and even separation. The implication of this is that the role of women and girls is to cook food for the men and boys in the society.

These findings are in agreement with Connel (1996) view of hegemonic masculinity that guarantees the dominant position of men and the subordination of women. Further, it is observed that in Kipsigis culture, men dominate women in all aspects of life. In addition, in patriarchal societies, language is openly used to disparage women (Cameron, 1994; Sapiro, 1994; Sen & Grown, 1987). According to Sen and Grown (1987), proverbs and other nuances of oral literature have been predominantly used by males to denigrate women's physical, mental and social weaknesses. While it is true that groups that hold the secondary position in a society predictably suffer from linguistic disparagement imposed by the other groups that hold a relatively better position (Leith, 1987), studies have shown that sexist proverbs are not

used exclusively to denigrate women (Mbiti, 1988; Oha, 1998). The association of women mostly with domestic responsibilities also shows the need to balance this image to have a balanced society.

### 3.1.7 Woman are Portrayed as Beautiful

Analysis of discourses shows that the physical appearance of women is associated with beauty. The songs suggest that women are identified due to their natural looks, appearance and body morphology. These traits are usually appealing to individuals through their eyes and mind. Most of songs that depict women as beautiful are mostly sung by men as revealed in the extract below from 'Kitot Kobaran' song by Tumbalala arap Sang (a male songwriter):

*"Burtanyin kokibo muiyo kotamne suet  
King'ing'in suwet kilasit katamne katit  
Kiterter katit inguni katamne konyek  
Aresen kunyek bo kwongut kutamne kutit  
Kitui kutit kou lamai kutamne kelek indanan  
Kokimalelach kokikoruron."*

(She had a very beautiful body  
Her waist was slender like a glass  
Her neck was slim  
Her eyes were beautiful  
Her lips were dark like *lamai* fruits  
Her teeth, though not white were good and glowing.)

When making these descriptions, some singers commonly use metaphors to describe the physical beauty of women. From the extract above, it is seen that the singer praise a female based on her body size, waist length, neck length, eyes formation, lips and teeth. All these metaphors are aimed at showing women as individuals that need to be admired. This shows that women who are ready to be married need to have those characteristics so that they can get attention from men. Further, the singer may be teasing the women who do not have 'white teeth' that despite their condition their arrangement is good and glowing. The discourse used by most singers denotes women as beautiful in order to fulfil their responsibilities as sexual objects. In line with the study findings, Rogers (2013) analysis of country songs found out that women worth was determined by her appearance (for instance "*I loved her because she was beautiful*").

It is also assumed that a beautiful woman in the society appears to be targets of every suitor. This shows while beauty is considered negative to men, it is taken positively to females. The above descriptions also show that the aspects of beauty that women have makes men to gaze at them and gain desire to marry them. In agreement with the study findings, VanDyke (2011) research findings show that women are objectified and sexualized in music videos. Khan et al. (2015) found out women in Pashtu proverbs were portrayed as extravagant in spending the hard-earned money of their men in order to make them beautiful and attractive. The expression, (*Oh, shameless sister*) is used to scold an immodest,

shameless, or brazen woman, that is, one who fails to exhibit modesty in her dress, public behaviour and demeanour, for example, not covering her head or face properly, wearing tight clothes, walking ahead of her husband, talking openly with men.

#### 4. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study found out that secular songs sung by male artists degraded women to traditional roles. Females through secular songs were perceived as; *chepbitinaek* (gossipers), *Chepsusurek* (practice witchcraft), dependent, quarrelsome, *chemulainik* (unfaithful or prostitutes), *tibikyok* (beautiful girl child) and homemakers. In addition, women are constructed as givers of life, mothers, carers, nurturers and servers. When analysing the stereotypical portrayals, the researcher found out that the styles and terms used by songwriters to write their music communicated certain information that influences gender roles in the society. From the songs lyrics, women were seen to be inferior and subordinate to male persons. This shows the existence of patriarchy among Kipsigis community towards members of certain gender in Chepalungu Sub County. Females are portrayed and constructed through various negative strategies to be passive, unengaged, disempowered and shallow individuals whereas male have been portrayed as controller of female, he is able to pick and choose the female (wife) he wants and he has the power to make them do whatever he wants. Stereotypical portrayals of songs advocated for women to be carers and male to be the heads of the households. This created the division of labour. Women are also described to be sexual objects through their body morphology while men are depicted as drunkards. Examinations of lyrics in the fifteen songs shows that they support patriarchy as the male is seen as having more worth than female in all majority of songs that the research selected. It was common only to find songs that talked female in a respective and positive way to be related to their composers (female). These songs are seen to promote gender equity and equality in the Kipsigis culture. There is need for music composers to develop music that portray realistic roles of members of each gender. This will change the way men and women are viewed in the society. This can succeed through collaboration between male and female composers.

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