

THE GENDER FACTOR IN KENYA'S CANON FORMATION: THE CHALLENGES IN CONTINUING INNOVATIONS IN HISTORY

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The first generations of post independence Kenyan scholars faced the challenges of building canonical works which had lacked in during the colonial period. Some of these scholars include the doyens and luminaries of Kenyan history such as B.A Ogot, G.Muriuki, G.Were, W.R. Ochieng just to mention but a few. Most of these early works focused on the theme of migration and settlement of the various Kenyan communities and later on the colonial period.

One most glaring phenomenon of these early historical works is the fact that women remained largely invisible or were often misrepresented in the mainstream of these historical canons. For example, works on migration involved heroic adventures of male leaders and warriors in the political space. In this connection, the question one asks is for example: Did women play any role in the migration or in the formative stages of Kenyan history?

This paper therefore, seeks to critique and demonstrate the level of inadequacy in the representation of women in Kenya's canonical formation in historical texts. It also argues that historians can no longer ignore the fact that history is gendered and women's roles must be made visible in historical texts.