

**A HISTORY OF *INZU YA MASABA* CULTURAL INSTITUTION IN EASTERN
UGANDA, 1902-2020**

BY

GALIWANGO MIRO ZUBAIRI

18/U/GMAH/19896/PD

**A RESEARCH DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE DIRECTORATE OF
RESEARCH AND GRADUATE TRAINING IN
PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD
OF THE DEGREE OF MASTERS OF ARTS IN HISTORY OF
KYAMBOGO UNIVERSITY**

APRIL, 2024

DECLARATION

I, Galiwango Miiro Zubairi, hereby declare that this dissertation is my original endeavor and has not in its entirety been submitted to any university or institution for the award of any degree.

Where the work of other scholars was consulted, reference has been made.

Signed:

Galiwango Miiro Zubairi

Date:

APPROVAL

This dissertation has been submitted for examination with my approval as the student's Supervisor.

SUPERVISOR

Signed:

Prof. Charles Amone

Date:

SUPERVISOR

Signed:

Dr. Robert Ojambo

Date:

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my late father, Dr. Hassan Wasswa Galiwango.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank the following people for the contributions they made toward the success of this study both directly and indirectly. First and foremost, I thank my two supervisors, Prof. Charles Amone and Dr. Robert Ojambo, my lecturers, Dr. Nathan Senkomago, Dr. Cyprian Adupa and Dr. James Magezi, and most importantly my mentor, Hajjat Aiseta Aisha for the support they rendered to me during my study.

I am equally thankful to my research assistants, Mr. Booza Ashraf, Mr. Kangadia Ashraf and Mr. Kerichan Emmanuel for assisting me in the field during the collection of data, the data analysis and the writing of the findings in order to come up with this dissertation.

I also thank the various respondents and key informants who provided me with the information that has enabled me to write this dissertation such as John Wasikye, Mabonga Godfrey, Aiseta Aisha, Khaukha Muhammad, Namugoowa Job, and Masai Mudebo among others. Their contributions cannot be taken for granted.

In a special way, I would like to thank my late dad, Dr. Hassan Wasswa Galiwango who sponsored the largest part of my study and always motivated me not to give up. I also thank my mother, Hajjat Mastula Nanteza, my siblings, Umar Galiwango, Nsubuga Yusuf, Biso Kenneth, Manana Joel, Namayuba Sumayya, Nankya Mariam, Nakidde Azida, my wife, Nakusi Fahima, and other members of the family for the financial and moral support during my study.

I can not forget to thank my dear friends, Sendagire Adam, Galabuzi Yusuf, Sanywa Jeremiah, Kaweesa Gerald, Mawanda Huzaifa, Khauka Muhammad, Namugoowa Job, Nsamba Cyrus, Sentongo Isaac, Kabugo Ibrahim, Nabuzale Faridah, Shamirah Umar, Shafar Umar, Nsadu Umar, Ndalo Fazali among others. They all supported and motivated me during my study.

Lastly, I thank Allah for the gift of life, the energy, and the financial ability to do and complete this course and for granting me the desire to do this work and complete it. Without His guidance, I would not have succeeded.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	x
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	xi
DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS	xii
CHAPTER ONE	1
GENERAL INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Background of the study	2
1.3 Statement of the Problem.....	3
1.4 Objectives	4
1.4.1 General Objective.	4
1.4.2 Specific Objectives.	4
1.5 Research Questions.....	4
1.6 Scope of Research.....	4
1.7 Significance of the Study	6
1.8 Literature Review.....	6
1.8.1 Introduction.....	6
1.8.2 The Origin and Evolution of <i>Inzu Ya Masaba</i>	7
1.8.4 The Controversies within <i>Inzu Ya Masaba</i> from 2010 to 2020	11
1.9 Research Methodology	13
1.9.1 Research Design.....	13
1.9.2 Area of Study	14
1.9.3 Sampling Techniques.....	14
1.9.4 Study Population and Size	14
1.9.5 Data Type and Source.....	15
1.9.6 Data collection procedure	17
1.9.7 Ethical Considerations	17
1.9.8 Problems Encountered	17
1.9.9 Chapters of the Dissertation.....	18
1.9.10 Conclusion	20
1.13 Endnotes.....	21
CHAPTER TWO	25

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC ORGANISATION OF THE BAMASABA PRIOR TO THE FORMATION OF <i>INZU YA MASABA</i>	25
2.0 Introduction.....	25
2.1 Origin, Migration and Settlement of the Bamasaba.....	25
2.2 Pre-colonial Social Organisation of the Bamasaba.....	27
2.2.1 Language among the Bamasaba.....	28
2.2.2 The Sub-culture of Circumcision (<i>Imbalu</i>).....	29
2.2.3 Traditional Religious Beliefs of the Bamasaba.....	32
2.2.4 Marriage, Child Birth and Divorce among the Bamasaba	33
2.2.5 Death and Inheritance among the Bamasaba	37
2.3 Pre-Colonial Economic Life of the Bamasaba.....	41
2.4 How the Bamasaba Related with their Neighbouring Communities	43
2.9 Conclusion	45
CHAPTER THREE	54
THE ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION OF <i>INZU YA MASABA</i>	54
3.0 Introduction.....	54
3.1 The Pre-colonial Political Organisation of the Bamasaba	54
3.1.1 The Family System	55
3.1.2 The Clan System.....	56
3.2 British Colonialism and its Impact on the Early Political Structure of the Bamasaba.....	58
3.3 Uganda’s Acquisition of Independence and the Formation of <i>Ubuhinga</i>	61
3.4 The Period between 1967-1986	64
3.5 The National Resistance Movement Regime and the Revival of ‘Cultural Institutions’ in Uganda	65
3.6 The Formation of <i>Inzu ya Masaba</i>	66
3.7 Conclusion	69
3.10 End notes.....	71
CHAPTER FOUR.....	76
ORGANISATION AND SIGNIFICANCE OF <i>INZU YA MASABA</i> FROM 2010 TO 2020.....	76
4.0 Introduction.....	76
4.1 The Political Organisation of <i>Inzu ya Masaba</i>	76
4.2 The Socio-Economic Organisation and Significance of <i>Inzu ya Masaba</i>	80
4.2.1 The Restoration, Promotion and Preservation of the Masaba Culture	80

4.2.2 The Promotion of Unity and Self-Awareness among the Bamasaba	83
4.2.3 Promotion of Tourism and Recreation in Bugisu	85
4.2.4 <i>Inzu ya Masaba</i> and The Education Sector of Bugisu	88
4.2.5 <i>Inzu ya Masaba</i> and Understanding of Natural Calamities in Bugisu	90
4.2.6 <i>Inzu ya Masaba</i> and Land among the Bamasaba	92
4.3 Conclusion	95
4.4 Endnotes.....	97
CHAPTER FIVE	104
THE CONTROVERSIES WITHIN <i>INZU YA MASABA</i> FROM 2010 TO 2020	104
5.0 Introduction.....	104
5.1 <i>Inzu ya Masaba</i> as a Kingdom, Chiefdom or just a Cultural Institution.....	104
5.2 The Question of the Headquarters of <i>Inzu ya Masaba</i>	106
5.3 The Leadership Question in <i>Inzu ya Masaba</i>	109
5.4 The Question of Bagisu and Babukusu.....	116
5.5 Government Intervention in the Cultural Affairs of <i>Inzu ya Masaba</i> and Vice Versa	119
5.6 The Corruption Scandal of Wilson Wamimbi’s Reign	122
5.7 The Bududa Secession Crisis	124
5.8 Conclusion	128
5.9 End notes.....	129
CHAPTER SIX.....	137
GENERAL CONCLUSION	137
BIBLIOGRAPHY	145
Books	145
Articles from Journals.....	146
Articles from Newspapers and Websites	147
Archival Sources.....	149
Appendix III: Interview Guide.....	156
Appendix IV: Field pictures.....	159
Figure 1: A Map of Masabaland	159
Figure 5: The District Administrative Building in 1955	161
Figure 6: Yonasani Mungoma with his classmates in Nabumali Primary School in 1941	162
Figure 7: Umuhinga Yonasani Mungoma and his grandmother in 1965	162

Appendix V: A table showing the 26 clans of the Bamasaba	168
Appendix VI: A table showing the Cultural Institutions which are recognized by the Government of Uganda as per the 2011 Institution of Traditional or Cultural Leaders Act.....	172
Appendix VII: The Inzu ya Masaba Anthem.....	173
Appendix VIII: <i>Umukuuka</i> Wilson Wamimbi’s Cabinet (2010-2015).....	174
Appendix IX: <i>Umukuuka</i> Bob Mushikori’s Cabinet (2015-2020).....	175

ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the history of *Inzu ya Masaba*, a cultural institution that is found in the Bugisu sub-region in Eastern Uganda. The researcher was motivated by the current influx of cultural institutions in various parts of Uganda. Unlike the previous generations where very few ethnic groups such as the Baganda, Batooro, and Banyoro were organised under cultural institutions, other ethnic groups in Uganda, especially the non-centralised ones have also embarked on establishing cultural institutions. These include the Bamasaba, Bagwere, and Banyole, to mention but a few. This is a trending issue that motivated the study of the history of *Inzu ya Masaba*. The main objective of this study was to document the history of *Inzu ya Masaba* and the specific objectives were to trace its origin, examine its significance to the Bamasaba, and to analyse the controversies which emerged within it from the time of its establishment in 2010 up to 2020 when the reign of *Umukuuka* Bob Mushikori ended. The study was purely qualitative in nature. Historical materials were analysed and interviews were conducted by meeting the respondents face-to-face and at times over the phone. The respondents were identified by the researcher through purposive sampling and snowball method. The findings of this study are covered in a total of six chapters and they unveil the fact that Bugisu has never been a kingdom or chiefdom. It was a non-centralised society that was composed of twenty-six clans and each of them administered itself independently. *Inzu ya Masaba* was established in 2010 as a result of the amalgamation of the twenty-six clans of the Bamasaba. The study also unveils the significance of *Inzu ya Masaba* to the Bamasaba especially through the promotion of unity and co-operation between the Bagisu of Uganda and the Babukusu of Kenya. The institution is also significant in the preservation of the Masaba culture and identity among the Bamasaba, most of whom had adopted the Kiganda culture which was introduced by Semei Kakungulu. The study further uncovers a multitude of controversies that emerged within *Inzu ya Masaba* over time. The biggest controversy of all was the attempted secession of Bududa from *Inzu ya Masaba* in order to establish a parallel cultural institution led by Joseph Wash Kanyanya. It caused a lot of divisions among the Bamasaba and weakened the cultural institution. The different non-centralised cultural institutions which are emerging in the various parts of Uganda all have a story to tell. On top of that, they are being established for various reasons which need to be investigated by future scholars. The study therefore bridges the knowledge gap in non-centralised societies in Uganda which have been understudied by previous scholarships with the major focus being on *Inzu ya Masaba*. In its conclusion, the study indicates the need for further investigations into the cultural institution and how important it is to the Bamasaba. It also calls for further dialogue between the cultural institutions of Uganda and the central government in order to foster unity, transparency, and effective administration of the general population of Uganda.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

GOU- Government of Uganda

NRM- National Resistance Movement

BCU- Bugisu Co-operative Union

CBO- Community Based Organisation

FM- Frequency Modulation

LC- Local Council

FDC- Forum for Democratic Change

UPC- Uganda People's Congress

UNEB- Uganda National Examinations Board

MDD- Music, Dance and Drama

RDC- Resident District Commissioner

USA- United States of America

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

- i) Bamasaba- An ethnic group of people who predominantly live in Bugisu sub region
- ii) Buganda- A kingdom in the central region of Uganda.
- iii) Kabaka- The title given to the king of Buganda.
- iv) Inzu ya Masaba- Cultural Institution of the Bamasaba of Eastern Uganda.
- v) Umukuuka- The head of Inzu ya Masaba
- vi) Ubuhinga- The defunct cultural institution of the Bagisu
- vii) Umuhinga- The title which was given to the head of Ubuhinga
- viii) Umwami we sikooka- A clan head among the Bamasaba
- ix) Umugasha- A sub-clan head among the Bamasaba
- x) Malewa- Bamboo shoots, the staple food of the Bagisu
- xi) Baalosi- Spiritual leaders among the Bagisu
- xii) Umukasa- A village headman in Bugisu
- xiii) Harungu- Former name of Mbale Distri

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This study examines the history of *Inzu ya Masaba* cultural institution from 1902 to 2020 specifically focusing on its origin and evolution, its significance and the controversies that emerged within it over time. This chapter generally introduces the study and specifically covers the background, statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, scope of research, literature review and research methodology. Uganda is a heterogeneous country of fifty-six ethnic groups that initially settled in different parts of the country¹. During the pre-colonial period, various societies were organised socially, politically and economically at different stages. Some of these were politically centralised while others were non-centralised. The centralised societies were either kingdoms or chiefdoms and they had influential cultural leaders who were kings and chiefs respectively. The Bamasaba had well-developed structures of governments and their kings or chiefs possessed central positions which gave them power and control over the people and the resources under their jurisdictions². The non-centralised societies, on the other hand had neither kings nor chiefs. Their leaders were either in the form of clan heads, lineage heads, family heads, or distinguished elders. The Bamasaba community in Bugisu was an example of a non-centralised community under a clan system whereby each clan was on its own.³ This arrangement went on from the pre-colonial era, into the colonial period and the larger part of the post-colonial times. The Bamasaba formed an institution known as *Inzu Ya Masaba* in 2010 and it was established to foster unity and development among the Bamasaba in both Uganda and Kenya.⁴ This was mainly a response to the influence of other societies such as Buganda which had centralised states or kingdoms.⁵

1.2 Background of the study

Cultural institutions are organisations or establishments that promote, preserve and celebrate the cultural heritage of a society or community⁶. Since time immemorial, most societies across the world could not be separated from their ethnic identities. Consequently, different communities or societies organised themselves into different cultural institutions⁷. These cultural institutions took different forms depending on the nature and organisation of the society. In Africa, most centralised societies were kingdoms and chiefdoms such as Buganda in Uganda⁸, Dahomey in West Africa⁹, Zulu in South Africa¹⁰, while others were chiefdoms such as Nyamwezi in Tanganyika¹¹. However, the non-centralised societies such as the Bamasaba in eastern Uganda and western Kenya were neither organised in a kingdom nor chiefdom¹². They were under a clan system each clan with its own cultural leader known as *Umwami we Sikoka*¹³ (nobleman/head of the clan). The clan heads were chosen based on their age, wisdom and wealth. This system went on in the whole pre-colonial period with transformations and changes here and there as a result of interaction with neighbouring communities.¹⁴

In 1963, the different Bamasaba clans were amalgamated and established into a cultural unit which was known as *Ubuhinga* (The Pride).¹⁵ Yonasani Mungoma was elected as the *Umuhinga* of the Bamasaba in the same year.¹⁶ That was the first time that the Bamasaba established a semblance of a homogeneous cultural institution.¹⁷ However, the *Ubuhinga* collapsed before it could even blossom due to the abolition of cultural institutions by president Apollo Milton Obote in 1967.¹⁸ In the period from 1967 to 1993, cultural institutions were dormant in Uganda and couldn't perform any activities.¹⁹ In 1993, the National Resistance Movement (NRM) regime restored cultural institutions.²⁰ However, the Bamasaba did not revive theirs immediately

because it had not been established on a strong foundation. They had to return to the grass roots and rebuild it from scratch.²¹

After a series of discussions, the institution was revived in 2010 with a new name, *Inzu ya Masaba* (House of Masaba). The title of the leader was changed from *Umuhinga* to *Umukuuka*; coming from *kuuka* which means ‘grandfather’.²² The *Umukuuka* was to be elected by the clan heads and was to be in power for a five years term.²³ The first *Umukuuka* was Wilson Wamimbi who was in power between 2010 and 2015.²⁴ Wamimbi was succeeded by Bob Mushiroki who was in power between 2015 and 2020.²⁵ It is upon such a background that this study therefore establishes a detailed history of *Inzu ya Masaba* in an attempt to bridge the knowledge gap on non-centralised societies in Uganda which have been under-studied by previous scholars.

1.3 Statement of the Problem.

Many scholars such as Apter²⁶, Semakula Kiwanuka²⁷ and Ingham²⁸ have written about the history of kingdoms such as Buganda and Tooro among others. However, very little has been written about non-centralised societies that existed in different parts of the country. In addition, a few scholars who have explored the history of non-centralised societies such as the Bamasaba including Were²⁹ and Simiyu³⁰ only look at the society of Bugisu in terms of its origin and social organisation with the biggest emphasis being put on the sub-culture of circumcision among the people in this community. Thus, there is little scholarship with empirical evidence on the deeper history of the socio-political institutions in Bugisu such as *Inzu ya Masaba*, and how it has transformed over time. This leads to a scholarship gap in the history of non- centralised societies in Uganda. It is upon this background that this study aimed at analysing the origin and evolution of *Inzu ya Masaba* in Bugisu sub-region in Eastern Uganda.

1.4 Objectives

1.4.1 General Objective.

The general objective of this research was to document the history of the *Inzu Ya Masaba* cultural institution from 1902 up to 2020.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives.

1. To examine the origin and evolution of *Inzu ya Masaba*.
2. To assess the significance of *Inzu ya Masaba* to the Bamasaba from 2010 to 2020.
3. To analyse the controversies within *Inzu ya Masaba* that developed from 2010 to 2020.

1.5 Research Questions.

1. How did *Inzu ya Masaba* evolve from 1902 upto 2010?
2. How significant was *Inzu ya Masaba* to the Bamasaba from 2010 to 2020?
3. What controversies developed within *Inzu ya Masaba* from 2010 to 2020?

1.6 Scope of Research.

The study was carried out in Bugisu sub-region in Eastern Uganda. The sub-region is composed of six districts that are Mbale, Sironko, Manafwa, Bududa, Bulambuli and Namisindwa³¹. In the pre-colonial period, the region was known as Harungu. Then it became Mbale District (popularly known as greater Mbale) during the colonial and the first half of the post-colonial period. It was later disintegrated into five more districts in the NRM era. By 2020, the region had six districts, where the study was carried out.³²

The study generally looked at the history of the *Inzu Ya Masaba*. Specifically, the study concentrated on the evolution of the institution, its significance to the Bamasaba, and the controversies that have emerged over time within the institution. In the the evolution of *Inzu ya Masaba*, the study examines the different stages in the transformation of the cultural institution; from the pre-colonial period when the Bamasaba were still organised under a clan system up to 2010 when *Inzu ya Masaba* was officially established. In the significance of *Inzu ya Masaba*, the study analyses the functions of the cultural institution, its relations with the people of Masabaland, and its modus operandi. Lastly, in the controversies of *Inzu ya Masaba*, the study examines the various challenges that the cultural institution faced from its establishment in 2010 up to the end of *Umukuuka* Bob Mushikori's reign in 2020.

The period of the study was from 1902 up to 2020. 1902 was chosen as the study's starting point because it is the year Semei Kakungulu arrived in Bugisu.³³ His arrival in the sub-region is significant to the study because he was the first to make attempts towards uniting the clans of the Bamasaba to establish a unified cultural unit. 2020 was chosen as the endpoint of the study because it is the year when the second *Umukuuka*, Bob Mushioki's reign came to an end³⁴. The end of his reign is historically significant because it led to a three-year political vacuum, which was characterised by succession disputes among the different sects of the Bamasaba. These disputes affected the progress and the activities of *Inzu ya Masaba* because the Bamasaba had disagreed on who was to become the next *Umukuuka*. The matter was not resolved until 2023 when Mike Mudoma was elected as the third *Umukuuka* of *Inzu ya Masaba*.³⁵

1.7 Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the body of knowledge on non-centralised societies in Uganda, which have been under-studied and therefore have many knowledge gaps. The information on the history of *Inzu ya Masaba* cultural institution among the Bamasaba is important in that endeavour because it helps us understand how they evolved from a clan-based non-centralised society to the unified cultural institution that we see today. The findings of this study will also guide other researchers to further the debate on whether the Babukusu of Kenya are really party of *Inzu ya Masaba* or their membership is just in rhetorics. Last, but not least, this study also motivates future researchers to further investigate on the relationships between the ethnic groups on the borders of Uganda with those on the other sides of the borders. This is so because despite being separated by the borderline, most of them share the same ancestral origin, something that is significant in the re-construction of African history and heritage.

1.8 Literature Review

1.8.1 Introduction

This section discusses the existing relevant literature on the centralised and non-centralised societies in Uganda and Africa at large. The available literature shows that some scholars have done some studies in Bugisu and generally the Bamasaba of Eastern Uganda. They have been analysed in this section to establish the debates and gaps in the scholarship of non-centralised societies in Africa and Uganda in particular. The section is arranged according to the research objectives of this study. This enhances the thematic analysis of the study as seen below.

1.8.2 The Origin and Evolution of *Inzu Ya Masaba*

Politically, the Bamasaba had a non-centralised political structure which was on the basis of clans. Every clan was led by an elder who was known as *Umwami We Sikoka*.³⁶ It was the role of these clan heads to preserve the cultural values of the clan and lead the process of making sacrifices to the spirits of their ancestors. According to Mwakikagile³⁷, some clan heads which were stronger than others would extend their influence to them. However, no clan head managed to subdue the rest of the clans and impose his rule on them or unite them as a single institution.³⁸ As much as his observation is important to this study, Mwakikagile does not go into the details of how many clans they were, what criteria was used to bring the clan heads to power, and how those clans co-existed socially and economically. He does not also bring out clearly the most important detail to this study which is what inspired these clans to later unify and form the *Inzu ya Masaba* and the course of its evolution.

According to Were³⁹, the Bamasaba are believed to be descendants of Mundu and Seera who migrated from the Ethiopian highlands and settled along the slopes of Mt. Elgon. He introduces us to the historical traditions of the Bamasaba and how their clans emerged. Were further gives details of the superstitious nature of the Bamasaba. However, he has no actual detail of the origin and evolution of traditional cultural institutions that later emerged in his area such as the *Ubuhinga* in 1963 and later the *Inzu ya Masaba*.

Simiyu⁴⁰ traces the origin of the Babukusu people of western Kenya, as one of the eighteen 'tribes' of the Luyia ethnic group. He explains where they came from, how they were organized in various clans, when and how they identified themselves as a cultural and political entity and above all their relationship and co-existence with the Bagisu of Uganda. However, he does not clearly explain how the clans of the Babukusu and the Bagisu formed one unified cultural

institution, why they formed it and the challenges they encountered in the process of unification. The present study has ably done this by showing the evolution of *Inzu ya Masaba* which originated from the several clans of the Bamasaba communities.

Twaddle⁴¹, in his explanation of the social lifestyle of the Bamasaba during the early part of colonial rule in Bugisu shows how Kakungulu's arrival affected the Bamasaba and how he co-existed with them when he finally settled there. However, although his book has some history of the Bamasaba, it mainly concentrates on Kakungulu as an individual and his imperial expeditions. It does not give a detailed account of how the structures which Kakungulu put in place became a foundation for the emergence of traditional political and cultural institutions such as the *Ubuhinga* in 1963. It is on such a background that this particular study traces the origin of *Inzu ya Masaba* to find out whether it had some links to the pre-colonial and post-colonial periods in Bugisu and Bukusu land.

Nzita and Niwampa⁴² stressed that the Bamasaba practiced *imbalu* in order to construct their identity and stand out as a race of 'men' as opposed to other un-circumcising ethnic groups whom they considered as 'boys'.⁴³ However, as much as the book has details about the way of life of the Bamasaba, it leaves out much of the information that is useful in explaining the origin and evolution of cultural institutions such as *Inzu ya Masaba* of the Bamasaba of Eastern Uganda.

Mukhwana⁴⁴, in his analysis on the history of Masabaland hints on the formation of *Ubuhinga* in 1963 and how Yonasani Mungoma ascended to power as the *Umuhinga*. He also briefly talks about the process through which *Inzu ya Masaba* was established in 2010. However, his analysis is not detailed enough as it lacks many salient features in the origin and evolution of *Inzu ya*

Masaba such as the personalities who were involved in its formation, the mode through which Wilson Wamimbi, the first *Umukuuka* ascended to power among others. This study therefore unveils all the details of the origin and evolution of *Inzu ya Masaba*.

1.8.3 The Significance of *Inzu Ya Masaba* to the Bamasaba in Bugisu and Bukusu

Khanakwa⁴⁵ explores the traditions of the Bamasaba as a tool of political advocacy and she also explains the significance of circumcision to the Bamasaba. Circumcision among the Bamasaba is known as *imbalu* and it is an integral aspect of their culture. It takes place at the Mutoto Cultural Site in the 8th month of every even year. It is characterized by food and dance. The boys are smeared with local herbs and other mixtures from head to toe and brought in front of a jubilating crowd to ‘face the knife’ under everybody’s careful gaze. She emphasizes that, since the pre-colonial era, the circumcision process was orchestrated by the clan elders and traditional religious leaders. However, in her writing, she leaves out how *Inzu ya Masaba* influenced the institution of *Imbalu* among the Bamasaba. Khanakwa mainly concentrates on *Imbalu* and its significance and does not clearly show how *Imbalu* became an important element of political advocacy through *Inzu ya Masaba* cultural institution. This study analyses how *Inzu ya Masaba* became an integral element in promoting the culture of circumcision as a key identity element of the Bamasaba.

Shero⁴⁷ discusses the characteristics of the Bamasaba clan elders and the nature of their leadership in Bugisu sub-region in Eastern Uganda. He explains the relationship between the clan elders of the Bamasaba and the political leadership of the land. He also gives some details about the formation of the *Inzu ya Masaba* as a forum for the Bamasaba clan elders to work in unison. This writing of his mainly gives details about the significance of clan elders to the

Bamasaba, most especially in promotion of culture and unity. This and many other studies are used to explain how the clan leaders have been used to mobilise and promote unity among the clan elders in Bugisu. In all these, Shero clearly shows how cultural institutions have played a major role of creating unity in areas where they operate. However, he does not go into the details of how significant *Inzu ya Masaba* is to the Bamasaba.

Cultural institutions have played a big role in developing the tourism sector of Uganda. According to Nawire⁴⁸, *Inzu ya Masaba* has created tourism awareness among the Bamasaba, it has protected, preserved and promoted the culture of the Bamasaba by encouraging the development of tourism infrastructures in the region. The institution has also sensitised and mobilised the Bamasaba to promote their tourism sites such as religious land marks, historical buildings, caves, rivers and mountains in order to foster tourism in the land and promote their cultural heritage.⁴⁹ This has helped the people of Bugisu to identify themselves in their cultural identity and has also advertised the Bamasaba culture to other ethnic groups. However, as much as Nawire's writing is crucial to this study, it only brings out the role of *Inzu ya Masaba* in promoting tourism and leaves out its significance in other sectors among the Bamasaba and the country that this study has ably analysed.

Ndiho⁵⁰ asserts that cultural institutions play a big role in the conservation, interpretation and dissemination of cultural, scientific and environmental knowledge. They promote activities which are meant to educate people on the various aspects of their culture. Cultural institutions are an inextricable part of the identity of Ugandans, from which people draw a lot of pride and happiness. He further writes that cultural institutions do not only unite their people in terms of identity and belonging, but they also mobilise them in developing their areas through working with the government. However, although Ndiho brings out the significance of cultural

institutions to the people of Uganda, it mainly concentrates on the Buganda kingdom and leaves out other cultural institutions such as *Inzu ya Masaba* in Bugisu and Bukusu.

Wekesa⁵¹ examines the history of community relations across the Kenya-Uganda border using the case of the Babukusu of Kenya and the Bagisu of Uganda. From his analysis, he explores the social, economic and political relations that have evolved between the two communities over time. However, he does not clearly show how both communities came up to form *Inzu ya Masaba* and how the institution has been significant to both of them. Therefore, this study broadens Wekesa's discussion by analysing the significance of *Inzu ya Masaba* to both the Bagisu and Babukusu.

1.8.4 The Controversies within *Inzu Ya Masaba* from 2010 to 2020

Mutibwa⁵² analyses the abolition of cultural institutions by Dr Milton Obote in 1966. This was so because he feared that King Mutesa of Buganda was allegedly scheming to topple the government using mercenaries. However, this analysis does not go into detail about how Obote's abolition of cultural institutions negatively affected the cultural identity and heritage of Uganda. Even the *Ubuhinga*, which had just been formed in 1963 collapsed in its early stages, and this later, caused a lot of controversies that this study has analysed.

Ojambo⁵³ explores the role of the land question in the sociopolitical conflicts in Bugisu and Bukedi. He mainly covers the relationship between the land policies of the colonial period and those in the post-colonial era. He also gives a detail of the land conflicts among the Bamasaba and the quest to recover their grabbed land. However, on account of the land conflicts; he leaves out the part of how those land conflicts jeopardized the growth and development of *Inzu ya*

Masaba as a cultural institution of the Bamasaba. The study has looked into that challenge and how it led to the controversies within the institution.

Since the colonial era, the education system of Uganda was so ineffective in guaranteeing the educated people jobs. Sheldon⁵⁴ concentrates on Bugisu which had many graduates who lacked jobs. Because of this, many were forced to leave their home areas and traverse other parts of the country in order to get jobs. Some even left the country. However, he leaves out the fact that when these educated Bamasaba left their land, they adopted new cultures and therefore deserted their Bamasaba culture. This left the majority of the uneducated Bamasaba clueless on how to preserve their culture and keep the candle of their cultural institution burning. It was also a major stumbling block to the growth and development of *Inzu ya Masaba* and this study has explored it and its role in the controversies within the cultural institution.

Atmore⁵⁵ in his analysis states that, when the European powers met in Berlin, Germany in 1884, they divided the African continent among themselves. They then came and drew boundaries which partitioned Africa into different countries such as Uganda and Kenya. The boundaries of Uganda and Kenya were defined in 1894 and 1895 respectively. However, Atmore does not give the details of how the drawing of these boundaries negatively affected the societies through which the borderlines passed. The border line divided the Bamasaba into two sides; the Ugandan side and the Kenyan side. That's why those in Uganda are called the Bagisu and those in Kenya are called the Babukusu because they settled on Bukusu hill. However, they were the same ethnic group, just in two different countries. This cannot be undermined as one of the controversies which were faced by *Inzu ya Masaba* and it has been explored by the researcher.

This section has therefore analysed some main issues in this study through the existing relevant literature on the centralised and non-centralised societies in Uganda and Africa at large. Some of them were traced in the writings of scholars such as Mwakikagile who hints on the early political structure of the Bamasaba which was characterised by clan-based leadership. Another main issue that this section uncovers is the fact that the Babukusu of Kenya share a lot of cultural features with the Bagisu of Uganda which is discussed in Wekesa's book. This was significant to the study especially when investigating the controversies which have emerged within *Inzu ya Masaba* over time. Last but not least, Mukhwana's writing also unearthes an important aspect of this study, especially in the origin of *Inzu ya Masaba*. This was through his brief narration of how the *Ubuhinga* was formed in 1963. The information from the above scholars that was analysed in this section was significant to this study in a way that it led to the discovery of knowledge gaps in the scholarship of non-centralised societies in Uganda, especially the Bamasaba. This therefore enabled the researcher to come up with an appropriate methodology which he used to unearth the findings of the study.

1.9 Research Methodology

1.9.1 Research Design

The study adopted the qualitative research approach in collecting and analysing of data for this study. The research was explanatory in nature and it involved the historical materials that were collected and analysed chronologically. The qualitative research approach was adopted because it is the most significant way of collecting historical data according to Taylor and Bogdan⁵⁶. This is so because it gave an opportunity to the researcher to closely interact with the respondents through interviews hence acquiring more information from the respondents' perspective in the

process. It also gave the researcher a chance to analyse the different historic materials such as books and articles, which enabled the study to comprehend the views and theories of various scholars concerning the area of study.

1.9.2 Area of Study

The study was carried out in Bugisu sub-region in eastern Uganda in all the six districts which are Mbale, Sironko, Manafwa, Bududa, Bulambuli and Namisindwa. These districts were chosen because they are within the geographical boundaries of *Inzu ya Masaba* and most of the Bamasaba in Uganda reside there.

1.9.3 Sampling Techniques

The study employed a purposive sampling technique in which the researcher used his prior knowledge of the people and independent judgment to select key informants from whom he collected information.⁵⁸ This was primarily used in order to select respondents who were knowledgeable in the subject being studied by virtue of their offices such as clan leaders, elders in society, teachers, the councilors, members of parliament to mention but a few. The study also depended on the snowball method to find a spectrum of informants. In this case, those interviewed were asked to guide the researcher to other people who were deemed to have knowledge on the subject of study.

1.9.4 Study Population and Size

In total, sixty one people participated in the study. The study had initially planned for about one hundred respondents. However, by the sixtieth respondent, the data which was being collected had reached saturation and was being repeated⁵⁷. The respondents included leaders of the *Inzu ya*

Masaba, teachers who were knowledgeable about *Inzu ya Masaba*, elders between the ages of fifty and eighty five and clan heads of the Bamasaba. These categories of respondents were chosen because they had primary information on the history of Bugisu sub-region and *Inzu ya Masaba* in particular. The elders provided information on the origin and evolution of *Inzu ya Masaba* while the leaders of *Inzu ya Masaba*, clan heads of the Bamasaba and teachers primarily provided information on the significance and controversies of *Inzu ya Masaba*. They were selected from each of the six districts of Mbale, Bududa, Namisindwa, Sironko, Bulambuli and Manafwa.

1.9.5 Data Type and Source

Both primary and secondary data were collected to answer the research questions and address the research objectives. The study employed interviews as the main source of data and also several documentations were reviewed.

Different interview guides containing questions on the evolution, significance and controversies of *Inzu ya Masaba* were established to acquire information from various targeted respondents such as teachers, religious leaders, current and former leaders of *Inzu ya Masaba*, elders between the ages of fifty and eighty five, clan heads and religious leaders. The use of the interview guide was important to this research as it enabled the researcher to generate data through probing⁵⁹. Interviews were made both face to face and over the phone. The respondents were interviewed in English, Luganda and Lumasaba languages depending on what language the respondent was fluent in. In-depth interviews were important because they enabled the researcher to be guaranteed of an immediate feedback.⁶⁰ Using this instrument, information on the evolution, significance and controversies of history of *Inzu ya Masaba* was generated.

Secondary data was also collected from public libraries and university libraries in Bugisu where the researcher visited and retrieved information which was relevant to the study. Libraries were pivotal to the researcher because they had in-depth resources in the form of books, magazines, journals, articles and bibliographies⁶¹. They also had staff who helped the researcher to locate the information he needed. Further more, secondary data was electronically retrieved from various websites on google such as Wikipedia, JSTOR, ResearchGate, Academia, Quora, Google Scholar, among others. Internet surfing was significant in a way that data was easily accessible, it saved time and it enabled the researcher to easily perform research in any place of his convenience; either the home or the office.⁶² Through this, the researcher managed to acquire information on the evolution, significance and controversies of *Inzu ya Masaba*.

Bugisu sub-region has a Records Center in Mbale town which was visited by the researcher in search of primary data which was relevant to the study. It had audio and video recordings, minutes of past meetings and photographs which were analysed by the researcher. Through that, primary information was acquired on the origin of *Inzu ya Masaba* such as minutes of a meeting which was held by the cultural leaders of Bugisu in 2009 discussing about the formation of *Inzu ya Masaba*. Audio and video recordings of the speeches of *Umukuuka* Bob Mushikori and *Umukhungu* Joseph Kanyanya were retrieved and analysed by the researcher. There were also old photographs of *Umuhinga* Yonasani Mungoma and the old District Administrative building in the 1950s (which is the current headquarters of *Inzu ya Masaba*). These materials were important to the study because it offered a background to the findings of the past researchers. This content also provided transparency and ensured research continuity.⁶³

1.9.6 Data collection procedure

The researcher visited the sampled locations to meet sampled respondents and obtain the required data. The researcher conducted interviews in person with the key informants. Information was both written down, recorded in audio and sometimes on video to ensure accuracy. A letter of permission to carry out the research was obtained from Kyambogo University and also the local authorities in the selected districts.

1.9.7 Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted following ethical procedures governing research of Kyambogo University. An introductory letter was obtained from the Directorate of Research and Graduate studies at Kyambogo University, introducing the researcher to the respondents as seeking assistance in conducting the study. Authorization from the local authorities like the police and local government was also sought. Consent was also sought from respondents to participate in the study. All respondents were assured that the information given to the researcher was to be used only for this purpose of this research. Those who were not comfortable with their identities being made public have been kept anonymous.

1.9.8 Problems Encountered

During the study, a number of problems were encountered;

Relevant literature on the history of *Inzu ya Masaba* was not easily accessible in libraries. This was so because little has been written about the cultural institution. To address this problem, the researcher visited the records center of Mbale and acquired some information which was important to the study.

Most of the young people who were interviewed were not knowledgeable about Bamasaba culture and lacked information concerning *Inzu Ya Masaba*. This was solved by cross checking and comparing the information which was provided by different respondents.

Some people were not willing to be interviewed because they suspected the researcher of being malicious towards the cultural institution. However, this suspicion was solved by showing to them the letter from Kyambogo University and also a document showing permission from the local authorities.

The researcher also faced a challenge from the respondents of Bududa, who have made attempts to secede away from the *Inzu ya Masaba* and form their own cultural institution with their own *Umukuuka*. They gave him biased information about the institution. However, this was solved by sensitizing them about the importance of unity and the dangers of having selfish interests.

The Bugisu sub-region is composed of 6 districts. This required the researcher to visit all of them in order to collect data. This was so tiresome for the researcher. However, he solved this problem by using a private vehicle.

1.9.9 Chapters of the Dissertation

The dissertation is organised in a total of six chapters with each chapter analysing a specific issue. Chapter One establishes the general introduction of the study while Chapter Six discusses the general conclusion. The four chapters in the middle i.e Chapter Two to Chapter Five analyse the findings of the study. Each chapter has endnotes (apart from the general conclusion) since the research was made using the Turabian style of referencing. After Chapter Six, a Bibliography is included showing all the sources which were analysed during the study. The last part of the dissertation is the Appendix and it has the respondents, pictures and tables.

Chapter One: General Introduction.

This chapter generally introduces the study and specifically covers the background, statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, scope of research, literature review and research methodology.

Chapter Two: The Socio-economic Organisation of the Bamasaba Prior to the Formation of *Inzu ya Masaba*

This chapter analyses the Bamasaba community starting with their origin, migration and settlement, their language, their sub-culture of circumcision, traditional religious beliefs, the concepts of marriage, divorce, death and inheritance, their economic life and concludes with how they related with their neighbouring communities.

Chapter Three: Origin and Evolution of *Inzu ya Masaba* from 1902 to 2010

The chapter establishes a chronicle of the different periods in Uganda's history and how each of those eras affected the political organisation of the Bamasaba. It starts from the pre-colonial era when the clan was their largest political unit and ends in 2010 when the 26 clans of the Bamasaba were amalgamated to establish *Inzu ya Masaba*.

Chapter Four: Organisation and Significance of *Inzu ya Masaba* from 2010 to 2020

This chapter analyses the functions of *Inzu ya Masaba*, its modus operandi, its constitution and the biographies of the first two *Umukuukas*. It further examines how significant the cultural institution was to the Bamasaba from 2010 to 2020 in ways such as promoting culture, unity, education, tourism, solving land disputes, combating natural calamities among others.

Chapter Five: Controversies which emerged within *Inzu ya Masaba* from 2010 to 2020

This chapter examines the various controversies which emerged after the establishment of Inzu ya Masaba. They included; its system of administration, its true headquarters, which criteria was to be followed when choosing the *Umukuuka*, the mode of succession, the issue of corruption, its role in partisan politics, the Bududa secession crisis and the question of Babukusu as part of *Inzu ya Masaba*.

Chapter Six: General Conclusion

This chapter concludes the study by summarising the key findings in each chapter, establishing areas of further research and establishing conclusive remarks which justify the significance of the study in the chosen field of the history of cultural institutions in Uganda.

1.9.10 Conclusion

This chapter presented the the General Introduction of the study. It looked into the background of study, the statement of the problem, the general and specific objectives of the study, the research questions, significance of the study, scope of the study, literature review, research methodology, and the problems encountered during the study. The Chapter also hinted on the next four chapters which describe the findings of the area of study. The study is paramount for scholars of history because it explores the evolution, significance and controversies of *Inzu ya Masaba*, a non-centralised traditional cultural institution which like others, has not been explored enough by previous scholarships. The next chapter will answer the question of ‘who are the Bamasaba?’ and it will specifically look at the per-colonial socio-economic life of the Bamasaba and how they related with their neighbouring communities.

1.13 Endnotes

¹*Constitution of the Republic of Uganda*, Article 10(a), Third Schedule, (Uganda Constitution Commission, 1995), 155-157.

² John Paul II Justice and Peace Centre, *The State and Cultural Institutions In Uganda: Buganda and Bunyoro Kingdoms Perspective*, (John Paul II Justice and Peace Centre, Kampala, 2013), 16-25

³*Ibid.*, 23-24.

⁴Phillip A. Shero, “*Embedded Leadership: The Role of Gisu Clan Elders in Uganda in Supporting and Limiting Executive Authority*”, (Regent University ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2014), 60-82

⁵*Ibid.*, 70-73.

⁶Paul Ndiho, *The Significance of Cultural Institutions in Uganda*, (Ndiho Media, 2019), 1-3

⁷*Ibid.*, 2.

⁸Matia M. Semakula-Kiwanuka, *A History of Buganda from the Foundation of the Kingdom to 1900*, (Africana publishers, 1972), 34-40

Stanley B. Alpern, *On the Origins of the Amazons of Dahomey*, *History in Africa*, Vol 25, pp. 9-25, JSTOR, 1998.

¹⁰“*Zulu Kingdom*”, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

¹¹Raphael G. Abrahams, *The Peoples of Greater Unyamwezi*, International African Institute, 1967.

¹²Godfrey Mwakikagile, “*Ethnicity and National Identity in Uganda: The Land and Its People.*” *New Africa Press*, (Google Books, 2009), 169.

¹³*Ibid.*, 170.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 171.

¹⁵Eric S. Mukhana, *Masaabaland: So Amazing*, (Monitor Publications, Kampala, 2022), 5.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 5-6.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, 6-7.

¹⁸Tabu Butagira, *Uganda: Why Obote Abolished Federo*, (The Daily Monitor, 11th October 2009), 34.

¹⁹Phares M. Mutibwa, *Uganda since Independence: A Story of Unfulfilled hopes* (Africa World Press, Trenton, 1992), 36.

²⁰Nelson Kasfir, *'Buganda and the Kingship'*, Uganda: A Country Study (2nd Edition), Washington DC, Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 172-175.

²¹Shero, *Embedded Leadership*, 98.

²²Daniel Edengu, *Bamasaba Cultural Leader Installed*, (New Vision, November 15th 2010), 22

²³*Ibid.*

²⁴*Ibid.*

²⁵Fred Wambede, *New Bamasaba Cultural Leader Installed*, (Uganda Radio Network, 16th November 2015), 1-3

²⁶David E. Apter, *The Political Kingdoms in Uganda: A Case Study of Bureaucratic Nationalism*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1967

²⁷Matia M. Semakula-Kiwanuka, *A History of Buganda from the Foundation of the Kingdom to 1900*, Africana publishers, 1972

²⁸Kenneth Ingham, *The Kingdom of Toro in Uganda*, Harper & Row Barnes & Noble Import Division, 1975

²⁹Gideon S. Were, *The Bagisu And Their Past: Some Notes on Their Legends About Creation, The Origins of Death, The Economy of Their Ancestors and The Phenomenon of Kintu*, *Transafrican Journal of History*, Vol. 11, (Gideon Were Publications, 1982), 184-195.

³⁰Vincent G. Simiyu, *The Emergence of a Subnation: A History of Babukusu to 1990*, *Transafrican Journal of History*, Vol. 20, (Gideon Were Publications, 1991), 125-144.

³¹Peter W. Wekesa, *History, Identity and the Bukusu- Bagisu Relations on the Kenya and Uganda Border*, (Cambridge University Press, 2023), 6-9.

³²*Ibid.*, 9-10.

³³Michael Twaddle, *Kakungulu and the creation of Uganda*, (Ohio University Press, 1993), 98-103

³⁴*How intrigue has kept Bamasaba without cultural leader for a year*, (Daily Monitor, 4th January 2022), 41.

³⁵*Ibid.*, 41.

³⁶Mwakikagile, *Ethnicity and Identity*, 141-143.

³⁷*Ibid.*, 142.

³⁸*Ibid.*, 143.

³⁹Were, *Bagisu and their past*, 187.

- ⁴⁰Simiyu, *History of Babukusu*, 139.
- ⁴¹Twaddle, *Creation of Uganda*, 88.
- ⁴²Richard Nzita, Mbaga-Niwampa, *Peoples and Cultures of Uganda*, (Kampala Fountain Publishers Ltd, 1995), 6-7
- ⁴³*Ibid.*, 81-82.
- ⁴⁴Mukhwana, *Masabaland*, 6-7.
- ⁴⁵Pamela Khanakwa, “*Reinventing Imbalu and Forcible Circumcision: Gisu Political Identity and the Fight for Mbale in Late Colonial Uganda*”, *The Journal of African History*, Volume 59, Issue 3, (Cambridge University Press, 2019), 357-379
- ⁴⁶Gideon S. Were, *The Historical Origins of Circumcision Among the Bamasaba*, *Transafrican Journal of History*, vol.6/7, (Gideon Were Publications, 1977), 129-141
- ⁴⁷Shero, *Embedded Leadership*, 32-36.
- ⁴⁸Christine Nawire, *The Role of Cultural Institutions in Tourism Development: A Case Study of Inzu Ya Masaba in Mbale district*, Masters Dissertation, (Makerere University, 2021), 35-40
- ⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 42.
- ⁵⁰Ndiho, *Cultural Institutions*, 1-2.
- ⁵¹Wekesa, *Border Relations*, 7-10.
- ⁵²P.M Mutiibwa, *Uganda Since Independence: A Story of Unfulfilled hopes*, Africa World Press, Trenton, 1992
- ⁵³Robert Ojambo, “*The land question in socio-political conflicts in Bukedi and Bugisu in Eastern Uganda; 1900-2007*”, KYUSpace, 2017
- ⁵⁴Sheldon G. Weeks, *Where are all the Jobs? The Informal Sector in Bugisu, Uganda*, *A Journal of African Politics, Development and international affairs*, vol. 3, (Brill Publishers, 1973), 111-132.
- ⁵⁵Anthony E. Atmore, *Africa on the Eve of Partition*, The Cambridge History of Africa, (Cambridge University Press, 1985), 10-95.
- ⁵⁶Taylor S.J and Bogdan R., *Methodological Considerations in Qualitative Research*, (Wiley Publications, 1984), 45-60.
- ⁵⁷Robert V. Krejcie & Daryle W. Morgan, *Determining Sample Size for Research Activities*, Educational and Psychological Measurement, Vol. 30, Issue 3, (Kenpro Publishers, 1970), 607.
- ⁵⁸David J. Creswell & John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*, (SAGE Publications, 2017), 491-516.

⁵⁹Irving Seidman, *Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences*, (Teachers College Press, 1998), 89-106.

⁶⁰Creswell & Creswell, *Research Design*, 512.

⁶¹Pete Comely & Jon Beaumont, *Online Market Research: Methods, Benefits and Issues*, Journal of Direct, Data and Digital Marketing Practice, Vol. 12, (Abe Books, 2011), 315-327.

⁶²Aamir Rasul & Diljit Singh, *The Role of Academic Libraries in Facilitating Postgraduate Students' Research*, Malaysian Journal of Library & Information Science, Vol. 3, (Hachette Book Group, 2011), 75-84

⁶³Richard Taylor & William Francis, *Archives and Records*, The Journal of the Archives and Records Association, Vol. 43, Issue 2, (Penguin Random House, 2022), 40-54

CHAPTER TWO

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC ORGANISATION OF THE BAMASABA PRIOR TO THE FORMATION OF *INZU YA MASABA*

2.0 Introduction

This chapter establishes a detailed analysis of the Bamasaba community. It starts by analysing their origin, migration, and settlement. It then examines their social organisation which involves aspects such as their language, specifically looking at their dialectic differences. Under their social organisation, it looks into the details of the sub-culture of circumcision and the traditional religious beliefs of the Bamasaba. Additionally, in the social organisation, the chapter analyses the concepts of marriage, divorce, death and inheritance among the Bamasaba communities. It then examines their economic life and concludes with how they related to their neighbouring communities. Their pre-colonial political organisation is left out because it is covered in the next chapter. The main purpose of this chapter is to illustrate the ways in which the Bamasaba lived socially and economically prior to the formation of *Inzu ya Masaba*. Although they did not have any cultural institution that united them and enabled them to work in unison during that time, there were some activities that brought them together such as circumcision and burial ceremonies. However, their ways of survival were predominantly at individual, family and clan levels. That is what defines who they are. The chapter therefore answers the question of who the Bamasaba are in a detailed analysis as seen below.

2.1 Origin, Migration and Settlement of the Bamasaba

The Bamasaba are a Bantu ethnic group found in Bugisu sub-region in Eastern Uganda. The sub-region is comprised of the districts of Mbale, Sironko, Manafwa, Bududa, Bulambuli and

Namisindwa.¹ There are various theories and legend stories that try to explain the origin of the Bamasaba. According to Mwakikagile, the Bamasaba are descendants of Masaba, the second son of Mundu and Seera.² Mundu and Seera are believed to have migrated from the Ethiopian Highlands traveling via Lake Turkana and eventually settled on the slopes of Mt Elgon. They produced two sons, Kundu who was their first born son and Masaba who was their second born.³ Mulekwa narrates that,

Kundu (commonly known as Kintu) is believed to have migrated to the central region of Uganda hence founding the Baganda ethnic group while Masaba stayed in the Mt. Elgon region.⁴

According to Were, Masaba fell in love with a Maasai girl who was known as Nabarwa and sought her hand in marriage.⁵ The family of Nabarwa demanded that for Masaba to marry their daughter, he had to undergo their rite of circumcision. He then agreed to get circumcised and eventually married her.⁶ Together, they produced three sons; Mwambu, Mubuyya and Wanale. It was from those three sons that the twenty-six clans of the Bamasaba emanated. The Bamasaba are therefore descendants of Masaba and that explains why they named their cultural institution *Inzu ya Masaba* which means the house of Masaba.⁷ According to Wakoko's narration,

Mwambu, the first-born son of Masaba and Nabarwa, was nicknamed *Nkisu* by his Maasai uncles who had stolen his father's cows from him. Masaba failed to pronounce the nickname of *Nkisu* meaning a bull in Maasai language, and he pronounced it as *Mugisu*. The name Bagisu originated from the nickname *Nkisu* given to Mwambu by Masaba's Maasai brothers-in-law.⁸

The Bukusu myths on the origin of the Bamasaba according to Simiyu⁹ state that they emanated from the first man, Mwambu (the discoverer or inventor), who was made from mud by *Weere Khakaba* (meaning God the Creator) at a place called Mumbo (which translates to 'west'). *Weere* then created a woman known as Seera to be his wife.¹⁰ Mwambu and his descendants moved out

of Mumbo and settled on the foothills of Mount Elgon (known to them as Masaba), from where their descendants grew to form the current Bukusu population.¹¹

According to Purvis¹², the Bamasaba are believed to have first settled north of Lake Turkana at a place called Enambukutu. From there, they settled in the Cherangani Hills at a place called Embayi, also known as Silikwa-mbayi.¹² They then dispersed taking two routes; those going around the western side of Mount Elgon and those via the eastern side of Mount Elgon.¹³ The ones who went via the western side of Mount Elgon eventually became the Bagisu.¹⁴ The cluster which took the eastern side route and settled on the slopes of Bukusu hill came to be known as the Babukusu, a name adopted from Bukusu hill.¹⁵ This area that the Babukusu settled in was already inhabited by some Kalenjin sub-nationalities such as the Laku, the Sabiny (known by the Babukusu as *Basawinja*), the Masai, and the Nandi, who were hostile to their new neighbors. To promote harmony with the Kalenjin, the Babukusu inter-married with them.¹⁶

Currently, the Bugisu sub-region of Eastern Uganda is comprised of the districts of Mbale, Sironko, Manafwa, Bududa, Bulambuli and Namisindwa¹⁸ while the Bukusu region of Western Kenya is comprised of the counties of Bungoma and Trans-Nzoia.¹⁹ According to Wafula, the major difference between the Bagisu of Uganda and the Babukusu of Kenya is in nationality. This is so because the borderline which was established by the colonial masters passed through their land when it was established in 1904 hence dividing the Bamasaba into two different nationalities. However, they have a number of cultural similarities.²⁰

2.2 Pre-colonial Social Organisation of the Bamasaba

This section looks at how the Bamasaba communities were organised socially in the pre-colonial period. Before analysing the topic under study which is the history of *Inzu ya Masaba*, it is

paramount to first understand the social organisation of the Bamasaba communities. This is so because the cultural institution was established to protect and preserve these social norms and traditions of the Bamasaba people. The social organization of the Bamasaba also equips one with the rationale behind the formation of *Inzu ya Masaba* in a way that they cultural institution, through its constitution later established guidelines which were to be followed by the Bamasaba in their social way of life in order to promote unanimity in their society. These social aspects include their language, the sub-culture of circumcision that mainly defined them, their traditional religious beliefs, and the concepts of marriage, divorce, death and inheritance in their society. Although some pre-colonial social practices of the Bamasaba have since phased out, others are still ongoing such as circumcision and it is primarily addressed in present tense by the researcher. The section therefore examines the social life of the Bamasaba as explained below.

2.2.1 Language among the Bamasaba

Inzu ya Masaba recognises both *Lugisu* and *Lubukusu* as the two languages of the Bamasaba people. The *Lugisu* language which is spoken by the Bagisu of Uganda is composed of various dialects such as *Ludadiri*, *Lungokho*, *Lufumbo*, *Lugunyanya* among others.²¹ The *Ludadiri* dialect is spoken by the Bagisu of the north in Sironko and Bulambuli, *Lungokho*, and *Lufumbo* are spoken by the Bagisu of the west in Mbale while the *Lugunyanya* dialect is spoken by the Bagisu of the south in Bududa, Manafwa and Namisindwa. In the *Ludadiri* dialect, the statement, ‘I am coming’ is translated as *ndi kweeza*. However, in *Lugunyanya*, it is pronounced as *ndi ukhwiza*. On the other hand, in the *Lungokho* dialect, the statement is pronounced as *ndi kwiiza*.²²

The Babukusu of Kenya speak the *Lubukusu* language which has three main dialects; the dialect spoken north of Kimilili area of Bungoma County, the dialect spoken west of Webuye town in

Bungoma County, and that spoken east of Webuye town, extending into Uasin-Gishu and Trans-Nzoia.²³ Wabila emphasises that,

Of these three dialects, the one spoken around Kitale town in Trans-Nzoia is usually considered the purest form. This is because the other two dialects are significantly influenced by other dialects of the Luhya languages.²⁴

During the reign of President Iddi Amin in the 1970s, many of the Bagisu left Uganda for Kenya, mainly to live with their Babukusu relatives around the Bungoma area.²⁵ After Amin's downfall in 1979, a large number did not return to Uganda, having already started new lives in Kenya.²⁶ Their large dispersal among the Babukusu in that area had a discernible influence on the *Lubukusu* language in the Bungoma region because it was mixed with *Lugisu* dialects. For example, there was substitution of the letters R with L, so that verbs such as *khuufwara* (which means to wear clothes) would be pronounced as *khuufwala*.²⁷

According to Wabwala's analysis,

The dialect spoken east of Webuye town was influenced by the neighbouring *Kabras* and *Tachoni* dialects of the Luhya language. This is particularly noticeable in the changes in noun prefixes in the original *Lubukusu* language, for example, the term 'something' would be rendered as 'sisindu'. In the *Kabras* language, the term is rendered as 'eshindu'. The Babukusu east of Webuye town will usually say 'esindu', thus adopting the prefix of the *Kabras* language while retaining the *Lubukusu* root word 'Sindu' (as opposed to the *Kabras* root word, 'Shindu').²⁸

Because it borders the Nilotic Kalenjin languages of the Pokot, Nandi and Sebei to the north, the *Lubukusu* language spoken in Kitale area was largely retained its original form.²⁹

2.2.2 The Sub-culture of Circumcision (*Imbalu*)

Circumcision is an old sub-culture among the Bamasaaba. This sub-culture was adopted from their in-laws, the Maasai of Western Kenya. It was one of the main social activities which united

the Bamasaba people even before they united to form a cultural institution known as *Inzu ya Masaba*. Although the various clans of the Bamasaba were disintegrated, the only time they united and worked together was during circumcision periods. They would all converge at Mutoto cultural ground in Mbale and circumcise their boys to initiate them into adulthood. When *Inzu ya Masaba* was later formed in 2010, it was the responsibility of the *Umukuuka* to organise circumcision ceremonies at Mutoto.³⁰ According to Mukamba's analysis,

The men among the Bagisu tribe undergo initiation ceremonies known as *Imbalu* which are held every even year. A goat or a bull is sacrificed, and then the young men are circumcised with knives that are to be used only for these occasions. Then the women perform the *kadodi* dance, where they twist their waist up and down. Afterwards the men are isolated so their wounds can heal. If any man avoids or dodges the circumcision, they are forced to undergo the process upon being discovered.³¹

Mangobe adds that,

Before the circumcision is done, there is a traditional herb that is administered to the 'candidate' so as to arouse their desire for circumcision. This herb is called *Itinanyi* which is as well tied on the big toe of the candidate to be circumcised. Due to the power that is believed to be in the local herb *itinyani*, if circumcision is delayed to the candidate who is supposed to be circumcised, this candidate may end up circumcising himself due to the uncontrolled desire that enters in his mind.³²

This traditional ritual is performed to boys that have reached puberty.³³ The candidates to be circumcised are always tuned by walking them around for about 3 days on the village, then smeared with cassava flour and painted with millet beer (*malwa*).³⁴ Then their relatives and friends dance the traditional dances of *kadodi* demonstrating the circumcision while drumming and singing.³⁵

Nakayenze asserts that,

The sisters of the candidate to be circumcised are the ones who lead the rest of the ladies in the singing and dancing of *kadodi* as they run around the village.³⁶

After circumcision is done, the candidates are believed to have been transitioned into a true mature male and a true Mumasaba person.³⁷ The boy that has been circumcised is referred to as *Musinde*.³⁸ The circumcision is done by two people, the circumciser and the assistant who pulls the foreskin of the penis before the circumciser cuts it off. The circumciser does three cuttings and ends the Ritual.³⁹

After the circumcision, the *Musinde* is taken to his father wrapped in a piece of cloth and made to sit down on a stool. He is made to walk around his father's house for three days.⁴⁰ During these days, he is not allowed to eat using his hands; he is fed. After those three days, the circumciser is called upon to wash his hands before the *Musinde* can start eating.⁴¹ That is what completes his initiation into manhood. He is then allowed to marry and he is taught the duties and responsibilities of manhood⁴². During the pre-colonial era, after the *Musinde*'s wounds had healed, he was required to attend a ceremonial ritual which was referred to as *Iremba*. During this ritual, any girl from the community was invited to have sexual intercourse with him as a way of confirming his manhood.⁴³ However, that ritual was abandoned by most Bamasaba in the later generations because it was regarded barbaric.⁴⁴

In conclusion therefore, *Imbalu* played a great role in uniting the Bamasaba communities. It was mainly during *Imbalu* ceremonies that the Bamasaba clan leaders would come together and discuss the issues affecting their society. The cultural practice was therefore historically significant in the later formation of *Inzu ya Masaba*.

2.2.3 Traditional Religious Beliefs of the Bamasaba

From the pre-colonial period, even before the formation of *Inzu ya Masaba*, religious beliefs and practices varied among the Bamasaba. However, there were two main classes of supernatural beings; the creator spirit and the ancestral spirits.⁴⁵ The creator spirit was considered to be the creator of all human beings and the foodstuffs upon which they subsisted. Another concept of the creator spirit was that he was the giver of life and death, and allotted each individual a particular span of life.⁴⁶ Namugowa narrates that,

In the northern communities of the Bamasaba, the creator spirit was called *Nabende*. He was believed to live in the plantain garden in the form of a large snake or hairy dwarf. A small hut-like shrine was constructed for the *Nabende* in the plantain garden and sacrifices were made to him there.⁴⁷

He adds that,

In the southern communities of the Bamasaba, the creator spirit was referred to as *Weere* and he did not have a shrine nor were sacrifices made to him directly. However, there was a belief that he was the ultimate recipient of all sacrifices made to the ancestral spirits.⁴⁸

The Bamasaba also made sacrifices to the ancestral spirits of their lineage. Generally it was the male ancestors who received these offerings, although in some cases, female ancestors of the lineage would be included.⁴⁹ The ancestral spirits were said to take the form of snakes and they were often summoned during ceremonies such as *Imbalu* and naming of new born babies. The Bamasaba believed that the soul of a human had its counterpart in that of the snake and when the snake died, so did the human with whom it shared its soul.⁵⁰ Sacrifices to the ancestors were also traditionally held during crises such as epidemic outbreaks, drought, infertility of wives in families or failure to produce male children, etc.⁵¹

The Bamasaba also had a strong belief in the power of magic. Their perspective on even the most mundane events was tinged with magic.⁵² The Bamasaba's magic experts were divided into three

categories; the witch doctor known as *Umulosi*, the witch finder known as *Omufumu*, and lastly, the medicine man.⁵³ The medicine man's job was to determine when sacrifices should be made. He also sold anti-witchcraft medicine, healed snake bites, provided charms for use in battle, and also issued infection-inducing drugs. He was believed to read an oracle and could also keep a creditor away from collecting debts.⁵⁴

The *Umufumu* possessed the abilities of a medicine man, as well as the ability to detect who had cast a spell against someone. However, he lacked the ability to cast a spell. He could easily figure out who had done it, and steps would be taken to obtain an antidote.⁵⁵ Wamboga adds that,

The *Umulosi* was the most feared and dangerous of all. He was a hereditary position holder who lived alone in the woods. He wielded considerable power, and occasionally combined the functions of the witchfinder with his other responsibilities. He was thought to be a direct medium of communication between *Weere* and man, and no medicine could counteract his spells.⁵⁶

There were several types of witchcraft, some of which were associated with men and others with women.⁵⁷ *Buyaza* was the name of one of them. It was done by putting a snake's backbone into some of her victim's belongings and then summoning the spirits to attack him or her; other forms involved various actions and objects, but the end result was usually the same, causing harm or misfortune to the victim.⁵⁸ *Gamalogo*, which was specific to women, and *Gamasala*, which was specific to men, required the use of food scraps encased in a poisonous caterpillar cocoon and placed in the thatch of the victim's hut.⁵⁹ These were only a few examples. There were a variety of other types and manifestations of witchcraft.

2.2.4 Marriage, Child Birth and Divorce among the Bamasaba

Among the Bamasaba communities, women were treated as jural minors throughout their lives. First, they were under the authority of their fathers and then under that of their husbands.⁶⁰ Prior

to the formation of *Inzu ya Masaba*, there were three types of marriage among the Bamasaba communities; arranged marriages (*Bukhwale*), elopement (*Bubela*); and widow inheritance (*khurela namelekhwa*). Once the bride price was paid, all three types became equally valid, and all the three gave the husband superior rights and control over his wife.⁶¹

The *Bukhwale* (arranged marriage) was arranged by the fathers of the couple and validated only after payment of the bride price. According to Mudebo,

These marriages were typically between men aged eighteen to twenty, and women about the age of fifteen to seventeen. The ability of a girl to cook well, bear children and work in the fields were the main attractions of a potential wife. Once a girl was identified, an emissary was sent to her parents to ask for her hand. The girl had no say whatsoever in the whole matter. Bride price would be discussed, and once paid she would be sent to live with her new husband.⁶²

This form of marriage is still common in traditional households in Bugisu sub-region in the village areas such as Manafwa.⁶³

Bubela (elopement) was also very common among the Bamasaba communities. The potential groom would sometimes be from a poor family and could not afford to pay the likely bride price. Traditional society allowed such boys to run away with the girls whom they intended to marry. The couple would then leave their home to live with a far-off relative for a while, until the boy acquired enough wealth to pay the original bride price, as well as a fine, to the parents of the girl.⁶⁴ Mabonga analyses that,

It was often seen as the only way in which a reluctant father was forced to provide bride price for his son. The bride price was frequently negotiated after the elopement had taken place to legitimize the union.⁶⁵

Marriages of this type were often the result of clandestine love affairs between the man and the woman in the area, or grew out of casual unions. Once the woman moved in with the man, she was referred to as his wife.⁶⁶

In the *khurela namelekhwa* (widow inheritance) form of marriage, only a goat or two needed to be given to a woman's father in recognition of the new marriage. The main candidates who were subject to inheritance of a widow were the male relatives of her deceased husband such as her brothers in law, her father in law or the cousin brothers of her late husband.⁶⁷ Makowe adds that,

On other occasions, any other interested man in the society who wasn't related to her deceased husband would be allowed to marry her. However, it was on the condition that he would consider her children as his own.⁶⁸

The Babukusu highly approved inter-marriages between themselves and the Bagisu because they had similarities in codes of conduct, marriage customs, circumcision traditions and folklore.⁶⁹ Among the most famous marriage customs of the Bagisu and Babukusu was the immense respect accorded to in-laws. A lady, for example, treated her father-in-law with much deference, and she was not allowed to make physical contact in any way. The same was true of a man and his mother-in-law.⁷⁰ In marriage, duties were strictly segregated. Housework and agricultural duties were performed by the women and children. The older boys looked after cattle. Young, newly married men formed the community's warriors, while middle-aged men did little. Older men formed the village's council of elders, and resolved disputes.⁷¹

Cattle were used as the main means of exchange, alongside cowrie shells (*chisimbi*).⁷² Most values such as the beauty of a girl, her manners, the reputation of her family among others were appreciated by the boy's family in terms of heads of cattle.⁷³ Since they possessed cattle, wealth, and prosperous agriculture, the Babukusu were so admired by their neighboring communities such as the Kalenjin who occasionally inter-married with their sons in order to acquire their

herds of cattle.⁷⁴ In times of famine, which are said to have been frequent among their Kalenjin neighbours, the latter used to even 'sell' their children to the Babukusu.⁷⁵

The majority of births among the Bamasaba took place in the home.⁷⁶ Traditionally, a medicine man would be consulted in order to prescribe drugs to alleviate labour pains. During the course of the labour, the husband would sometimes be present to support his wife through the pain. The medicine man would cut the umbilical cord after the woman gave birth and it would be buried.⁷⁷ The child's name was not given right away. They would generally wait until he/she began to wail non-stop, say throughout the day or night.⁷⁸ Nabukwasi claims that,

An ancestor would then appear in the form of a dream and dictate the name for the child. The name that was demanded was usually that of an ancestor who appeared in the dream. No one was meant to challenge the propriety of the name suggested in this way.⁷⁹

Polygamy existed among the Bamasaba and was often an achievement among some men, while denounced by others for the trouble it caused, particularly in terms of quarreling between co-wives.⁸⁰ Generally, it was the wealthier men in the society who could hope to achieve stable polygamous families since they could afford extra bride price payments, provide a higher standard of living for their wives, and provide sufficient land for their use.⁸¹ Both simultaneous and serial polygamy were common among the Bamasaba and the men would marry as many wives as they wanted as long as they could provide for them. The more wives one had, the more prestigious he was in society.⁸²

The concept of divorce also existed among the some communities of Bamasaba. At any time during her marriage a woman could return to her father without interference from her husband. If she did this and did not return to her husband, or if she was said to be barren, lazy, or adulterous,

the husband could divorce her and the bride price paid for her would be returned.⁸³ If the woman had produced children for the husband, her father would keep some cows from the brideprice.⁸⁴

According to Muduku's analysis,

In cases where her husband without justification chased her away from their home, or if she left him because of his failure to fulfill his duties toward her, then no bride price was returned.⁸⁵

The woman would then obtain a divorce and be free to marry again. Since *Inzu ya Masaba* was not yet in existence, the divorce procedures in the latter case followed a traditional pattern of appeal to the lineage head and council of elders. The lineage head or presiding elder asked the woman three times if she would return to her husband. If the woman answered in the negative, the lineage head and elders would attempt to determine who was at fault in the marriage in order to decide the question of the return of the bride price.⁸⁶

After the divorce, the woman usually took her youngest children with her while the older ones were given the choice of residence; with the father, mother, mother's brother or any other relative.⁸⁷ A husband could bring suit against his father-in-law if the latter received his daughter back into his home without taking any action to inform the former about the grievance against him or sending the woman back. Punishment of such an offense was traditionally the fine of a goat.⁸⁸

2.2.5 Death and Inheritance among the Bamasaba

In the ancient times, the Bamasaba did not bury their dead in the earth but rather kept them in the bushes for wild animals to eat. It was believed that the soul of the deceased, if buried, would not be able to act as a guardian spirit for future children of the lineage and would cause them to die.⁸⁹ Roscoe claims that the Bagisu ate the bodies of their dead, but there is no evidence to prove or

disprove this assertion.⁹⁰ Since there was no *Inzu ya Masaba* and therefore no *Umukuuka* to lead the process of sending off the dead, the responsibility fell in the hands of the elders and lineage heads who took the skull of the deceased and placed it in the lineage shrine. That practice became extinct in the later generations and it was replaced by the concept of burial, most especially after the formation of *Inzu ya Masaba* which emphasized the concept of burial.⁹¹

If the dead person was of mature age and high status in the society, drums were be beaten by specialists and women performed traditional dances. The body was then removed from the hut and placed on a mat in the veranda. Then leaves of bamboo shoots were placed on the chest of the body to prevent it from swelling.⁹² Wasikye stresses that,

If the body swelled despite these precautions, this was an indication to the Bamasaba that the death was caused by witchcraft or sorcery.⁹³

The body was then left unburied for up to four days during which relatives and friends came to view it and gave gifts to the family of the deceased. Dancing took place for the four days, but there was no feasting, or drinking of *malwa*.⁹⁴

After the four days of dancing, the burial took place early in the afternoon of the fifth day. The corpse was wrapped in white cloth, purchased with the funeral gifts. Graves were dug in the plantain gardens near the homestead by the close patrilineal kin of the deceased.⁹⁵ The exception to this was that an old man of high status was buried on the compound of his homestead.⁹⁶ Favorite possessions were generally buried with the corpse or placed on the grave. About a month after the funeral, *malwa* was brewed and dispensed to all the individuals who danced and gave gifts at the funeral.⁹⁷ The minimal lineage met to choose the dead man's heir and to see that the deceased's property was fairly distributed among the sons. At this time, the cause of the death

was also discussed. After the above events were completed, the widow shaved her head and was either inherited by the ex-husband's brother, or returned to her parental home.⁹⁸

When an elder or clan head died, he was buried in a grave with a warrior's weapons.⁹⁹ Ordinarily, burial pits were about 3 or 4 feet deep.¹⁰⁰ Wotunga claims that,

The Bamasaba were buried facing east, the direction in which the sun rises. There were also some families amongst the Babukusu who buried their lineage heads in a sitting position as a way of honouring them.¹⁰¹

Wild animals such as hyenas would sometimes exhume corpses from graves and eat them. In such an incident, the people in the community recovered the skull of the desecrated body and hanged it in a leafy tree.¹⁰² When the family of the deceased migrated, they transferred the skull with them to the new home or settlement. An elder woman was entrusted with the responsibility of conveying the skull to the new site.¹⁰³

On the concept of inheritance, the man's land was equally divided among his wives during his lifetime. At his death, the sons of each of his wives inherited an equal share of the property in proportion to the amount of land used by their mothers.¹⁰⁴ If a woman had no sons, the property of her home was divided equally among the sons of his other wives. This property included domestic animals, utensils, agricultural tools, and land. The daughters, however, did not inherit either land or livestock upon their father's death. Should there be many animals, a brother would give her one, but this was considered a gift rather than any form of inheritance.¹⁰⁵

Unlike other property, cattle were not divided among a man's wives, thus the sons do not inherit according to the shares of their mothers, but instead equally from the whole herd. These cattle would either be divided among the sons or retained as one herd under the supervision of the eldest brother. Each son was entitled to take as many animals from the herd as he wished to

provide the bride price for a wife.¹⁰⁶ If some of the sons were very young when the father died, land and livestock would be held in trust for them by the eldest son. According to Mafabi,

The heir to the status and authority of the father was generally determined in a meeting at the end of the period of mourning. Often, this position fell to the brother of the deceased, although on other occasions, the eldest son would be chosen for this role.¹⁰⁷

The duties of this individual were to see that the widow and daughters were taken care of and that all the sons received their proper share of the inheritance. He was also expected to take the dead man's place in the regulation of domestic affairs among his descendants and to act in their behalf in lineage affairs. The heir was also entitled to inherit the widow or widows of the deceased, but generally he only took one.¹⁰⁸

Differences varied between the Bamasaba in the southern communities and those in the north in regard to widow inheritance. Watila states that,

Among the southern communities, a son could inherit all the widows of his deceased father, except his biological mother. However, this custom was not observed among the northern people.¹⁰⁹

When inheriting a widow, marriage rituals had to be performed. However, her bride price depended on how old she was and the number of children she had produced.¹¹⁰ Upon the death of a woman, all land and livestock that had been given to her during her lifetime by members of her lineage were inherited equally by her sons.¹¹¹ Before one died he/she would make a verbal will distributing his/her property following his/her death. This will was usually made known to his/her most entrusted relatives and some of the elders of the lineage. The dead people's wishes were usually respected in the distribution of their property, unless he/she had disinherited one or more of his/her sons, the land would be equally divided among them. If this was not done, the lineage council would see it fit to override the will.¹¹²

2.3 Pre-Colonial Economic Life of the Bamasaba

From the pre-colonial period, the Bamasaba, like many other Bantu people, were farmers. Although they did not have a cultural institution that regulated their economic activities, they managed to survive predominantly through subsistence farming. Bananas (*Kamatore*), potatoes (*kamapondi*), beans (*kamakanda*), and bamboo shoots (*kamalewa*) were among the principal crops that they grew for survival.¹¹³ They also reared cattle, sheep, and goats in addition to agriculture.¹¹⁴ However, their staple food was bamboo shoots also known as *malewa* in the Lumasaba language.¹¹⁵ These bamboo shoots were collected from bamboo trees on top of Mt. Elgon and it was the food that their ancestors primarily lived on. The collection of the bamboo shoots was done collectively by the members of a specific community among the Bamasaba and this activity was very significant in bringing people together.¹¹⁶ Maize, beans, yams, and cassava were also grown by the Bamasaba in various parts of the region. Wanendeya narrates that,

After drying the maize, they placed it in big wicker baskets with removable lids that acted as granaries. The baskets are approximately five feet tall and three feet wide. Villagers also raise the stones off the ground with boulders or tree stumps and cover the exterior with cow manure to protect their crops from rain and insects.¹¹⁷

Even among the Babukusu of Kenya, both agricultural and pastoral economies were practiced in their land in the pre-colonial era.¹¹⁸ They used to farm mainly maize for subsistence and sugar canes in the Bungoma area, as well as wheat in the Kitale area.¹¹⁹ Cattle and sheep were universally kept; cattle for milk, and sheep for meat and ceremonial functions such as offers for sacrifice.¹²⁰ Larger or polygamous families usually had a team of oxen for ploughing and haulage. Chicken, a traditional delicacy, were also kept for food and egg production.¹²¹

Traditionally, the Bamasaba did not hold markets for the exchange of their products in the pre-colonial period. Since *Inzu ya Masaba* was not there to regulate how they traded with one

another, craft specialists, generally of a particular family or clan, sold directly to their customers from their homes from the stock at hand, or took orders for products which were not available at the time.¹²² Certain local areas were noted for particular products, such as bows and pots. Many of these goods were traded internally over a fairly wide area. Trade also took place between the Babukusu and the people of the North Nyanza region for products such as beads, iron, and cowrie shells. Food was also exchanged for baskets with the Sabinyi, since the Bamasaba had no knowledge of basketry manufacture or weaving.¹²³

Barter was the principal means of trade exchange, but there was no fixed rate of value assigned to the individual products. Each transaction continued until both buyer and seller reached a satisfactory agreement.¹²⁴ According to LaFontaine, the exchange was cyclic in a way that,

Animals of low prestige value were exchanged for those of higher value. For example, the hen and its chicks were exchanged for a goat, the goat and its kids for a cow, the cow and its calves used in the payment of bride price to obtain a wife, who then bears a son, who again started keeping hens and the cycle began all over.¹²⁵

Each of the above transactional stages involved considerable bargaining and individual arrangements between the parties concerned. In this type of exchange, each item had a rough scale of values.¹²⁶ He adds that,

Six hens were equivalent to a goat, three to four goats for a cow, and one or two cows and a goat being the usual bride price expected for a wife.¹²⁷

There was also another type of trade among the Bamasaba which was known as *Lusango*. Here, a man would buy the unborn calf of another man's pregnant cow. After an initial payment was made, the buyer brought the cow home and waited until the calf was born. After the calf was weaned, the cow was returned to the original owner with an additional payment.¹²⁸ The

Bamasaba considered these exchanges not as ordinary market transactions, but more as a means of cementing the kinship relations which existed among them.¹²⁹

2.4 How the Bamasaba Related with their Neighbouring Communities

In the pre-colonial era, most societies in Uganda were not separated by well-defined boundaries; most especially the non-centralised societies such as the Bamasaba, Iteso, Bagwere among others. However, there was a semblance of boundaries which separated one community from another and it was illustrated by the effective occupation of an ethnic group on a specific piece of land for many generations.¹³⁰ The Bamasaba predominantly lived on the slopes of Mount Elgon and their communities spread on the land surrounding the Mountain as they grew in numbers. Their neighbouring communities are; the Japadhola in the south, the Banyole in the south-west, the Bagwere in the west, the Iteso in the north-west, the Karamajongs in the north, the Sabinysis in the north-east, the Nandi in the north-east and Masai in the west.¹³¹

The relationship between the Bamasaba and their neighbours was economic, social and political. Economically, the Bamasaba often engaged in barter trade with their neighbours such as the Iteso whereby they exchanged food stuffs such as bananas, maize and *malewa* for sorghum and millet.¹³² They obtained millet and sorghum especially during the even years, because they needed them when conducting *imbalu* circumcision rituals. They also exchanged foodstuffs with the Karamajong for cattle. This was so because the Bamasaba had arable land which was favourable for agriculture while the Karamajongs' land was not favourable.¹³³

Socially, the Bamasaba inter-married with their neighbouring communities such as the Bagwere, Banyole, Basamia, Nandi, Masai among others. This was done on many occasions to promote

harmony and co-operation between them and their neighbours¹³⁴. According to Khauka's analysis,

These inter-marriages led to the mixing of cultures and adoption of new names and words from the languages of their neighbouring communities. As a result, names such as Weere, Nekesa, Wangobi, Wandera, Wandega among others were shared between the Bagisu, Banyole and Basamia. Even some words and dialects were shared as a result of the inter marriages. For example, the word 'Gisu' came from the Masai word 'Kisu' which means a cow.¹³⁵

This sharing of words and dialects came as a result of the inter-marriages between the Bamasaba and the Masai.

Politically, since they had not yet formed *Inzu ya Masaba*, it was the role of the Bamasaba clan heads and village headmen to ensure that their villages were protected from external intervention from the neighbouring communities. Some clans such as the *Bangokho* and the *Basano* formed alliances for security reasons and created a semblance of unity which would later contribute towards the formation of *Inzu ya Masaba*. This external intervention was mainly characterized by raids and land grabbing.¹³⁶ For example, since some of the Bamasaba communities were cattle keepers, the Masai and Nandi periodically raided their villages and forcefully took their cattle.¹³⁷ Wegulo adds that,

On other occasions, the Bamasaba were raided by the Karamajongs and Itesots who grabbed their 'green' lands and wetlands in order to feed their cattle with pasture and water. It was therefore the role of the clan heads and village headmen to establish a semblance of an army of young and strong men who were equipped with spears, bows and arrows in order to protect their villages from raiders and land grabbers.¹³⁸

Therefore, the relationship between the Bamasaba and their neighbouring communities was both positive and negative depending on the time and circumstance. It also depended on the cultural similarities and differences between the Bamasaba and a particular society.¹³⁹ For example, how

Bamasaba related with the Bagwere, Banyole and Basamia; who were their fellow Bantu speaking people and had some cultural similarities with them was different from how they related with the Itesos, Karamajongs and Sabinis who were not Bantu speaking people.¹⁴⁰ On the positive side, the Bamasaba inter-married and traded with their neighbouring communities such as the Banyole and Basamia while negatively, their property, especially cattle was raided on various occasions by their violent neighbours such as the Masai and Nandi.¹⁴¹

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter answers the question of who the Bamasaba people are through analysing their origin, migration and settlement. It examines their social and economic life. Socially, it looks at how their Lumasaba language varies through its various dialects and gives a detailed analysis of their sub-culture of circumcision. The chapter also examines the concepts of marriage, death and traditional faith among the Bamasaba communities. It then illustrates their economic life and concludes by analyzing how they related with their neighbouring communities. These are some of the aspects which define and describe the Bamasaba communities and paint a clear picture of who they are as a people. It should be noted that since the Bamasaba society was non-centralised, every clan managed its own social and economic affairs without the interruption or influence of another. On most occasions actually, every family managed its own socio-economic affairs. There was no cultural institution which regulated how these clans and families co-existed socially and economically. However, there were some few occasions when these clans united and temporarily worked together for example, during circumcision ceremonies at Mutoto cultural grounds. Therefore, the next chapter discusses the origin and evolution of *Inzu ya Masaba*. The pre-colonial political organization is left out because it is covered in the next chapter (Chapter Three) which talks about the evolution of *Inzu ya Masaba*. The next chapter therefore analyses

how the Bamasaba society transformed from a clan-based political entity to the cultural institution that we see today, *Inzu ya Masaba*.

2.10 Endnotes

¹Godfrey Mwakikagile, *Ethnicity and National Identity in Uganda: The Land and Its People*, (New Africa Press, 2009), 160.

²Ibid., 161.

³Ibid., 162.

⁴Interview, Mulekwa Herbert, former LCV of Sironko District, 58 years old, 17th December 2022

⁵Gideon S. Were, *The Bagisu And Their Past: Some Notes on Their Legends About Creation, The Origins of Death, The Economy of Their Ancestors and The Phenomenon of Kintu*, *Transafrican Journal of History*, Vol. 11, (Gideon Were Publications, 1982), 184-195

⁶Ibid., 187.

⁷Ibid., 190.

⁸Interview, Wakoko Anthony, an elder in Bududa District, 66 years old, 18th December, 2022

⁹Vincent G. Simiyu, *The Emergence of a Subnation: A History of Babukusu to 1990*, *Transafrican Journal of History*, Vol. 20, (Gideon Were Publications, 1991), 125-144.

¹⁰Ibid., 131.

¹¹Ibid., 133.

¹²John B. Purvis, *Masaba And Its People*, *The Journal Of The Uganda Society*, Vol. 1, (Thrift Books, 1946), 175-178

¹³Ibid., 175.

¹⁴Ibid., 177-176.

¹⁵Ibid., 176.

¹⁶Ibid., 177-178.

¹⁷Peter W. Wekesa, *History, Identity and the Bukusu- Bagisu Relations on the Kenya and Uganda Border*, (Cambridge University Press, 2023), 11-22.

¹⁸Ibid., 13.

¹⁹Ibid., 13-14.

²⁰ Ibid., 18.

²¹Malcom Guthrie, *The classification of the Bantu Languages*, (Oxford University Press for the International African Institute, London, 1948), 43-45

²²*Ibid.*, 44.

²³*Ibid.*, 45.

²⁴Interview, Watila John, an elder in Bududa District, 79 years old, 4th December 2022

²⁵SIL International, *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, 14th edition, Section on Masaba, ([http://www.ethnologue.com/show language](http://www.ethnologue.com/show_language), June 2003), 453-456.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 454.

²⁷*Ibid.*, 455.

²⁸Interview, Wabwala Michael, an elder in Bulambuli District, 70 years old, 8th November, 2022

²⁹*Ibid.*

³⁰Richard Nzita & Mbagwa-Niwampa, *Peoples and Cultures of Uganda*, (Kampala Fountain Publishers Ltd, 1995), 134-145.

³¹Interview, Mukamba Robert, former principal of Mbale Progressive Secondary School in Mbale (also former LC3 of Bukasacha Division in Mbale), 44 years old, 17th December, 2022.

³²Interview, Mangobe Hassan Magomu, current LC3 of Namabasa Division in Mbale City, 40 years old, 13th December 2022.

³³Pamela Khanakwa, “*Reinventing Imbalu and Forcible Circumcision: Gisu Political Identity and the Fight for Mbale in Late Colonial Uganda*”, *The Journal of African History*, Volume 59, Issue 3, (Cambridge University Press, 2019), 357-379

³⁴*Ibid.*, 360.

³⁵*Ibid.*, 362-363.

³⁶Interview, Nakayenze Suzan, teacher of Lumasaba in Mbale Progressive SS, 47 years old, 4th November 2022

³⁷John P.W. Khamalwa, *Identity, power, and culture: Imbalu initiation ritual among the Bamasaba of Uganda*, (Bayreuth African Studies, 2004), 53-64.

³⁸*Ibid.*, 57.

³⁹*Ibid.*, 60.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 66.

⁴¹Gideon S. Were, *The Historical Origins of Circumcision Among the Bamasaba*, Transafrican Journal of History, Vol.6, (Gideon Were Publications, 1977), 129-141.

⁴²*Ibid.*, 130.

⁴³*Ibid.*, 130-133.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 134-141.

⁴⁵Interview, Gudoi Eric, an elder in Namisindwa District, 77 years old, 6th December, 2022

⁴⁶Interview, Wanduulu Jacob, former Deputy Speaker of Inzu ya Masaba, 57 years old, 1st February, 2023

⁴⁷Interview, Namugoowa Job, an elder in Sironko District, 72 years old, 7th November, 2022

⁴⁸*Ibid.*

⁴⁹Andrea K. Mayegu, *The Bamasaba Tribal History*, (Abe Books, 1952), 30-46.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 37.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, 41.

⁵²*Ibid.*, 43.

⁵³Interview, Mulelenga Abigail, an elder in Mbale District, 78 years old, 5th December, 2022

⁵⁴Interview, Madanda Stephen, an elder in Sironko District, 67 years old, 7th December, 2022

⁵⁵*Ibid.*

⁵⁶Interview, Wamboga Asumani, clan elder of the Batuta clan, 60 years old, 6th November 2022

⁵⁷Were, *The Bagisu And Their Past*, 184-195.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 189.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, 192.

⁶⁰Wagner Gunter, *The Bantu of North Kavirondo*, London, (Oxford University Press, 1949), 23-24.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, 24.

⁶²Interview, Masai Mudebo, clan elder of the Batiiru clan, 61 years old, 5th November 2022

⁶³*Ibid.*

⁶⁴Suzette Heald, *Controlling Anger: The Sociology of Gisu Violence*, (Manchester University Press, 1989), 87-96.

⁶⁵Interview, Mabonga Godfrey, current Secretary General of Inzu ya Masaba, 41 years old, 1st February, 2023

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Interview, Makowe Mark, former LC1 of Budama Cell in Mbale, 4th November 2022

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Gideon S. Were, *A History of the Abaluyia of Western Kenya: 1500-1930*, (Gideon Were Publications, 1967), 43-79

⁷⁰Ibid., 44.

⁷¹Ibid., 46.

⁷²Ibid., 54.

⁷³Ibid., 55.

⁷⁴Ibid., 66.

⁷⁵Ibid., 71.

⁷⁶Henry A. Okello, *History Texts of the Lake Region of East Africa*, Nairobi, Kenya, (Kenya Literature Bureau, 1977), 320-322

⁷⁷Ibid., 321.

⁷⁸Ibid., 322.

⁷⁹Interview, Nabukwasi Patience, a cabinet member of *Inzu ya Masaba*, 39 years old, 3rd January, 2023

⁸⁰Interview, Kakayi Rebecca, teacher at Mbale Secondary School, 49 years old, 8th December, 2022

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³Interview, Muduku Job, a teacher of Lumasaba at Nkoma SS in Mbale, 40 years old, 4th November 2022

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵Ibid.

⁸⁶Interview, Maani Asinaani, an elder in Namisindwa District, 68 years old, 6th November, 2022

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹John Roscoe, *The Bagesu and other tribes of the Uganda Protectorate*, The Mackie Ethnological Expedition to Central Africa, (Cambridge University Press, 1924), 194-221

⁹⁰Ibid., 198.

⁹¹Ibid, 201.

⁹²Ibid., 215.

⁹³Interview, John Wasikye, Interview, John Wasikye, a radio presenter at Signal FM and a former cabinet member of *Inzu ya Masaba*, 44 years old, 10th January 2023

⁹⁴Ibid.

⁹⁵Ibid.

⁹⁶Ibid.

⁹⁷Ibid.

⁹⁸Ibid.

⁹⁹Interview, Wotunga Charles, an elder in Bududa District, 81 years old, 4th December 2022

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

¹⁰¹Ibid.

¹⁰²Ibid.

¹⁰³Ibid.

¹⁰⁴Interview, Gizamba Paul, an elder in Sironko District, 73 years old, 7th December 2022

¹⁰⁵Ibid.

¹⁰⁶Interview, Mafabi Peter, an elder in Mbale District, 80 years old, 5th December 2022

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

¹⁰⁹Interview, Watila John, an elder in Bududa District, 79 years old, 4th December 2022

¹¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹¹Ibid.

¹¹²Ibid.

¹¹³Interview, Magomu Robert, a lecturer at Uganda Christian University (UCU), Mbale Compass, 43 years old, 3rd February, 2023

¹¹⁴Mickey R, Jonathan D.M, Xuantong W & Paul S, *Estimating District GDP in Uganda*, Fredrick S. Pardee Center for International Futures, (Josef Korbel School of International Studies & University of Denver, 2017), 346-378.

¹¹⁵Ibid., 350.

¹¹⁶Ibid., 367.

¹¹⁷Interview, Wanendeya James, an elder in Namisindwa District, 70 years old, 6th November, 2022

¹¹⁸Gideon S. Were, *The Economy of Precolonial Bugisu*, *Journal of African Studies*, Vol.5, 1978, 12-17

¹¹⁹Ibid., 14.

¹²⁰Ibid., 15.

¹²¹Ibid., 16.

¹²²Stephen G Bunker, *Ideologies of Intervention: The Ugandan State and Local Organisation in Bugisu*, *Journal of International African Institute*, Vol.54, (Cambridge University Press, 1984), 50-71.

¹²³Ibid., 52.

¹²⁴J.S LaFontaine, *The Gisu of Uganda. Ethnographic Survey of East and Central Africa*, (London: International African Institute, 1959), 10-23

¹²⁵Ibid., 13.

¹²⁶Ibid., 14.

¹²⁷Ibid., 20.

¹²⁸Interview, Masole Peter, an elder in Bungoma County, 85 years old, 16th December 2022

¹²⁹Ibid.

¹³⁰Mwakikagile, *Ethnicity and Identity*, 86-90.

¹³¹*Ibid.*, 91.

¹³²Roscoe, *Bagesu and other tribes*, 156-157.

¹³³*Ibid.*, 157.

¹³⁴Interview, Khauka Shafar, an elder in Manafwa District, 76 years old, 19th December, 2022

¹³⁵*Ibid.*

¹³⁶Interview, Wegulo Titus, an elder in Bulambuli District, 70 years old, 3rd December 2022

¹³⁷*Ibid.*

¹³⁸Roscoe, *Bagesu and other tribes*, 186-198.

¹³⁹*Ibid.*, 187.

¹⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 189.

¹⁴¹*Ibid.*, 190.

CHAPTER THREE

THE ORIGIN AND EVOLUTION OF *INZU YA MASABA*

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the origin and evolution of *Inzu ya Masaba* cultural Institution from the pre-colonial period when the Bamasaba were still organised under a clan system up to 2010 when *Inzu ya Masaba* was officially established. It analyses when and how *Inzu ya Masaba* came to be and how it transformed over time. The main purpose of this chapter is to bring to light the whole process in which *Inzu ya Masaba* evolved from nothing to the cultural institution that we see today. It also shows the various stakeholders who participated in the establishment of *Inzu ya Masaba* and the roles they played in its formation. The chapter therefore looks at a chronicle of the different periods in Uganda's history; starting from the pre-colonial era up to the era of the NRM/A government of President Museveni in which *Inzu ya Masaba* was established.

3.1 The Pre-colonial Political Organisation of the Bamasaba

This section analyses the administrative structure of the Bamasaba during the pre-colonial era. It shows the nature of leadership which existed among them in their communities, from homestead level to society level. As earlier stated, during the precolonial era, the Bamasaba were neither a kingdom nor chiefdom, which means that they did not have kings or chiefs. Their leaders were family heads, clan heads, village headmen, spiritual leaders and distinguished elders.¹ The family was the smallest unit of leadership while the clan was the largest.²

3.1.1 The Family System

Being the smallest unit of leadership, a family was a fundamental political pillar of Bamasaba societies. Most families among the Bamasaba were extended in nature where by the father, mother, children, grand parents, uncles, aunts among others all stayed together. The families were also characterized by mostly polygamous types of marriage. As such, the family played a major role in shaping the children into future leaders³. The father was known as *Paapa* and he was the political head of the family. It was his role to ensure law and order, provide food, security and shelter, ensure discipline and promote the cultures of their society among his children. The mother (*maayi*) and children were supposed to obey and respect the father at all times. The societies of the Bamasaba were entirely patriarchal in a way that the men had all the powers over their wives who were often seen as mere child bearers.⁴ However, in most polygamous families, the first wife was often given a higher rank in terms of status compared to her co-wives.

The children always inherited the clan in which their father belonged. The first born son of the first wife was always chosen as the heir to his father in case of the demise of the latter.⁵ The heir was termed as *Umusika*.⁶ In some families of the Babukusu, he was given a special name, *Simakulu*.⁷ The female children were not allowed to become heirs because they would soon get married to other families and leave their fathers' homesteads.⁸ In case the father died and left only female children, the heir was to be chosen among his brothers or among the children of his brothers. It should be noted that an uncircumcised son would not be allowed to inherit the property of his father because male circumcision was a compulsory sub-culture among the Bamasaba.⁹

The family was therefore historically important among the Bamasaba community because it was the foundation of the society, it formed the basis of all social cooperation and responsibility among the Bamasaba and it also provided them with social identity. It took the central role in the survival of their society as a whole.¹⁰

3.1.2 The Clan System

The Bamasaba were non-centralised societies who were politically organized in a clan system. The clan was their largest political unit after the family.¹¹ It was a group of families which shared the same ancestry and origin. The Bamasaba were known for the diversity of their clans. They were divided into twenty six major clans which were also sub-divided into several sub-clans.¹² The head of a major clan was known as *Umwami We Sikooka* while the head of a sub-clan was called *Umugasha*.¹³ These were elders who were chosen by the people on basis of their age, wealth and reputation in society.¹⁴ They had so many responsibilities such as preserving the culture, promoting law and order and promoting unity within the clan.¹⁵ The clan heads were also advisors, consultants on cultural matters, they settled disputes and ensured that their clans had demarcated boundaries. Each clan was administered independently and no clan managed to annex other clans in order to subdue them into one political institution.¹⁶

According to Nakayenze¹⁷, the twenty six major clans of the Bamasaba all originated from their ancestor, Masaba and his three sons, Mwambu, Mubuuya and Wanale. The families which descended from Mwambu were organized in nine clans, those who descended from Mubuuya were organized in ten clans and the descendants of Wanale were organized in seven clans.

The twenty six clans of the Bamasaba lived in fortified villages. According to Wamboga¹⁸, most of these villages did not have well defined political structures or a central authority to preside

over them. The clan elders often mobilised the village men to elect a council of head men who would help them in administering the village. A village head man was known as *Umukasa*. Some times, the village head men were appointed by the clan heads. They played many roles such as settling disputes, ensuring safety of the people, and preserving law and order in the village. Aguo¹⁹ adds that the clan heads and village head men were elected by the people in the community through lining up behind the candidates and they would hold that position till their death. However, they emphasized that one had to be above the age of fifty in order to qualify to be a clan head or village headman.

Mudebo²⁰ notes that the Bamasaba were superstitious in nature and they strongly believed in spirits, ancestors and witch craft. Because of that, the clan heads constantly consulted the *Baalosi* (spiritual leaders) on matters of administration. The spiritual leaders were believed to possess super human powers which enabled them to communicate to the gods and spirits, communicate with the dead, foretell and predict the future, change people's fortunes, change weather among other powers. The clan heads therefore respected and feared the spiritual leaders of their societies. Although the clan heads had the political authority, these spiritual leaders had the actual powers because their opinions and thoughts on various matters concerning the community were rarely questioned and often taken very seriously.

Among the descendants of Mwambu, the nine clans were; Bayobo, Bahugu, Baginyanya, Balago, Baluganya, Basulani, Batandiga, Bahalasi and Bamasifa. They mainly resided in present-day Bulambuli District, Sironko District in Uganda and present-day Uasin Gishu County in Kenya. Among the descendants of Mubuuya, the ten clans were; Babumbo, Bamubuutu, Batiiru, Batuta, Bakigai, Balutsekhe, Bashika, Wakoko, Wabwala and Bakobero. They mainly resided in present-day Manafwa District, Namisindwa District, Bududa District in Uganda and

present-day Trans-Nzoia County in Kenya. Lastly, among the descendants of Wanale, the seven clans were; Bakonde, Bafumbo, Basiu, Bangokho, Basaano, Basoba and Bashiyende. They primarily resided in present-day Mbale District in Uganda and present-day Bungoma County in Kenya.²¹

The clan system was therefore historically significant among the Bamasaba through ensuring that there were strong ties of loyalty and sense of belonging among their communities. The clan elders were the custodians of the law, they laid down the rules about what kind of behaviour was acceptable in the society and what was considered a taboo. They therefore formed a well-knit group of people who related to one another while at the same time existing within the larger society of the Bamasaba.²²

3.2 British Colonialism and its Impact on the Early Political Structure of the Bamasaba

Before the coming of the European colonialists at the zenith of the nineteenth century, there were no borders between the people of 'current day Uganda' and those of 'current day Kenya'. They closely interacted with one another without the need to identify themselves under specific nations. When the European colonial powers crowded the African continent, they sliced it among themselves. This led to the formation of the Uganda Protectorate (current day Uganda) and the East African Colony (current day Kenya) which fell under the British sphere of influence in the 1890 Anglo-German Agreement. The borderline which was drawn separating the two countries passed through the land of the Bamasaba hence dividing them into two different nationalities; the Bagisu of Uganda and the Babukusu of Kenya.²³

In their colonial administration, the British used indirect rule. This was a system of colonialism which involved the use of African colonial agents who extended colonial rule to various parts of

Africa on behalf of the British imperialists. In Uganda, they used Semei Kakungulu to extend colonial rule to Eastern Uganda. He was a Muganda agent who was instrumental in the extension of colonial rule to Busoga, Bukedi and eventually Bugisu and Teso. Semei Kakungulu arrived in Bugisu in 1902²⁴. Upon his arrival in Bugisu, Semei Kakungulu realised that the Bamasaba were organised in a non-centralised system. Their administration had a loose political structure which was based on Clan leadership²⁵. Each clan was administered separately and independently.

As a muganda who grew up in a kingdom, he developed the desire of transforming Bugisu into a kingdom by uniting all the clans of the Bagisu to form a central authority. He started by establishing well defined boundaries which separated Bugisu from Bukedi and Teso.²⁶ The name of the land that was retained by the Bagisu was changed from *Harungu* to Mbale due to a statement he once made while in Budaka, '*tugende tubaale baaleko eyo*' meaning '*let's go and enjoy from there*'.²⁷ He then divided the newly formed *greater* Mbale into *Sazas* (counties) such as Mpumude, Gangama, Kasanvu, Nakaloke, Busajjabwankuba, Namunsi, Nkoma, Nabumali and Mangiya. He imposed his Baganda surbodinates as the *saza* chiefs of the newly formed counties.²⁸

By introducing the Kiganda system of administration in the region, Kakungulu's primary goal was to establish *greater* Mbale as a kingdom and impose himself as the *Kabaka* (king).²⁹ Although his ambition of becoming king had failed in Busoga and Bukedi, he believed it could succeed in Bugisu.³⁰ However, his request was denied by the British colonial regime that instead compensated him with twenty square miles of land in *greater* Mbale.³¹ Bugisu therefore was not transformed into a kingdom during the colonial era. Although the political set up of the region remained non-centralised in a clan system, many aspects of the Masaba culture were infiltrated by the Kiganda culture which was introduced by Semei Kakungulu such as dresscode, language

and food. Many Bamasaba therefore abandoned their cultures and clans and adopted the kiganda way of living.³²

Besides the intrusion of Semei Kakungulu and his introduction of the Kiganda culture, another salient feature of British Colonialism which primarily weakened the clan-based leadership of the Bamasaba was the introduction of the central government and the establishment of provinces and districts by the British colonial administration. The British Colonial Administration established districts in the Uganda Protectorate and imposed British administrators as District Commissioners in each district for effective administration. The *greater* Mbale also became a district. It was administered by the colonial regime from parish level, to county level and then to district level. The leadership of the region therefore shifted from the clan elders to the British colonial government.³³

On the Kenyan side, the East African Protectorate was divided into provinces and counties by the British colonial regime, the Babukusu were 'confined' in the *greater* Bungoma County in the western province. The county was put under the leadership of a British governor for effective colonial administration.³⁴ This also undermined the clan-based leadership of the Babukusu people, some of whom deserted their culture and clans and adopted the western way of life.³⁵ The land of the Babukusu was also 'crowded' by Christian missionaries. They introduced Christianity in the region and abolished some cultural practices such as the sounding of cowbells, the wearing of clothes inside-out by widows, etc.³⁶ In addition to that, the British colonial government abolished circumcision songs and dances. Although some of them submitted to the new changes, a large section of Babukusu resisted and defiantly continued practicing their culture.³⁷

3.3 Uganda's Acquisition of Independence and the Formation of *Ubughinga*

The Ugandan Protectorate acquired Independence on 9th October, 1962 after sixty eight years of colonial rule. This was achieved without much struggle because the British colonial regime peacefully handed over the instruments of power to the Ugandans. It was declared a republic and Sir Edward Muteesa II became the first president while Dr. Apollo Milton Obote became the first Prime Minister.³⁸ It should be noted that Sir Edward Muteesa was not only the president of the republic of Uganda, but also the *kabaka* of Buganda kingdom. According to Wasagami³⁹, this meant that Buganda Kingdom would be the most powerful cultural institution in Uganda. It also meant that Buganda was going to have an upper hand on most of the issues concerning administration and the economy, something that some societies such as the Banyoro opposed.⁴⁰

Mabonga⁴¹ asserts that the contestation of King Muteesa II for the presidential seat in 1962 influenced other ethnic groups in Uganda to declare similar intentions such as the Banyoro, Banyankole, Batoro and even the Bamasaba. This was so because each ethnic group wanted to be the one that produced the president of the country as a source of pride. They also had the belief that the president would in turn use his political power to serve the interests of the people who belonged to his ethnic group. To make matters worse, Muteesa was not just a mere Muganda, he was the king of Buganda. This caused a bigger threat in other kingdoms such as Bunyoro and Tooro who also put their cultural leaders on pressure to contest for the presidential seat.⁴²

Ethnic groups such as the Bamasaba, who were not organized under unified cultural entities, started rushing to organize themselves and establish a central authority, someone who could also contest for the presidential on their behalf.⁴³ In 1963, the seven clans who fall under the descendants of Wanale namely the Bakonde, Bafumbo, Bangokho, Basaano, Basiu, Basoba and

Bashiyende came together and formed a loose cultural unit known as *Ubuhinga* which they also regarded as a *kingdom*.⁴⁴ The term *Ubuhinga* comes from the Lumasaba word *Ukhwinga* which means 'to be proud'. Therefore, the *Ubuhinga* was a symbol of their pride to these clans among the Bamasaba. The other nineteen clans of the Bamasaba that is; the descendants of Mwambu and the descendants of Mubuuya were left out in the formation of *Ubuhinga* and they carried on with administering themselves according to independent clans.⁴⁵ The Bamasaba who lived on the Kenyan side were also excluded from the *Ubuhinga*.⁴⁶ After the formation of *Ubuhinga*, Yonasani Buyi Mungoma was elected by the seven clan heads as their *Umuhinga* (cultural head). It was the first time in the history of the land that two or more clans amalgamated to come up with a cultural unit.⁴⁷ According to Mungoma,

Yonasani Mungoma belonged to the *Basaano* clan and resided in Bubuulo County, Mbale. He was born on 5th November 1925 to Mungoma Derrick and Nandudu Stella. He acquired his education in Nabumali High School and Makerere University where he graduated as a lawyer in 1952. Yonasani Mungoma strongly supported the Democratic Party in the 1950s because he was a staunch catholic. He was elected as the clan head of the *Basaano* in 1958. In 1960, he was the representative of Bugisu Province in the Legislative Council. He was also one of the people who strongly supported the idea of uniting the clans of the Bamasaba under one central authority. In 1963, the 7 clan heads came together and elected Mungoma as the *Umuhinga* of the Bamasaba, a position he held until 1966 when President Obote abolished all kingdoms.⁴⁸

Mungoma further adds that the Bamasaba to some extent elected Yonasani Mungoma as their *Umuhinga* due to the rumors that had circulated in the country concerning the 1962 presidential election.⁴⁹ She narrates that at the eve of the 1962 presidential elections, there were rumors that the government would not allow any commoner to contest against the king of Buganda. This therefore meant that for one to contest for the presidential seat, he had to first be king. Wasagami⁵⁰ agrees with Priscilla on the claim that the Bamasaba based on these rumors to quickly establish a *kingdom* so that their king could also contest for presidency. However, these

rumors subsequently emerged not to be true because Benedicto Kiwanuka and Milton Obote, who also eventually took part in the elections, were not kings.⁵¹ It should be noted that, although the rumors were not true, they played a big role in uniting the Bamasaba because they partly influenced them to form a cultural unit.

Although they insisted on calling it a *kingdom*, the *Ubuhinga* did not qualify to be one. This was so because it was comprised of only seven of the twenty six clans of the Bamasaba.⁵² The *Ubuhinga* also lacked the structures, organisation and features of kingdoms such as Buganda, Bunyoro and Toro. It had a loose political structure, lacked funding and had no infrastructure; not even a palace for the *Umuhinga*. Yonasani Mungoma's home in Bubuulo acted as the palace of the *kingdom*. Even the foundation on which it was formed was weak. It was formed mainly on the foundation of creating a cultural leader who would be eligible to contest against King Muteesa II, something that subsequently was not achieved.

The *Ubuhinga* collapsed in 1967 after President Obote abolished all Kingdoms and their activities.⁵³ Despite the fact that Obote's primary focus was on the four major kingdoms of Buganda, Bunyoro, Tooro and Ankole whose assets were confiscated⁵⁴, even the minor cultural units of decentralized societies such as *Ubuhinga* were negatively affected. By the time of its collapse in 1967, the *Ubuhinga* had not achieved much apart from the fact that it had united some clans of the Bamasaba such as the Bangokho, Bafumbo, Bakonde and Basaano.⁵⁵

Therefore, the *Ubuhinga* failed in its attempt to unify the twenty six clans of the Bamasaba into one cultural unit. Although it had initially tried to unite some clans, most especially those on the Ugandan side, they also eventually disintegrated when it collapsed in 1967 and they resumed their old ways of administering themselves independently. This therefore delayed the unification

process of the Bamasaba which was supposed to be the foundation for their establishment of a cultural institution.⁵⁶

3.4 The Period between 1967-1986

This was the period after the abolition of all cultural institutions and their activities by President Obote through the 1967 Republican Constitution. It was a 'dark' period in the history of cultural institutions in Uganda; most especially the non-centralised societies such as the Bamasaba.⁵⁷ As already explained above, the Bamasaba had just established a resemblance of a cultural institution in 1963 called the *Ubuhinga* which was headed by Yonasani Mungoma as its *Umuhinga*.⁵⁸ Although it was still in its early stages, there was hope that it would evolve into a more substantial cultural institution. However, this hope was thwarted by the abolition of cultural institutions by the regime of president Obote.

With abolition of kingdoms and cultural institutions, it was illegal for the *Ubuhinga* to perform any cultural activities. It also meant that the leadership of the *Umuhinga* was null and void and therefore, Yonasani Mungoma could no longer assert his influence on the Bamasaba community.⁵⁹ The Bamasaba therefore ceased to recognize the *Ubuhinga* as cultural entity that united them and this made its collapse inevitable. By the end of Obote's first regime in 1971, the *Ubuhinga* was no more.⁶⁰

During the reign of president Amin (1971-1979), the Bamasaba and other ethnic groups in Uganda hoped that his government would give them the latitude of re-establishing themselves and performing their activities in kingdoms and other cultural institutions. However, Amin's government did not restore the cultural institutions.⁶¹ He only made attempts towards reviving the good working relationship between the central government and some cultural institutions

such as Buganda; a relationship which had collapsed during president Obote's regime.⁶² Therefore, any attempt to unite the Bugisu society into one political entity was kept in abeyance.⁶³

The period between 1979 and 1986 was characterized by chaos and political instability.⁶⁴ Uganda was led by a plethora of heads of state who deposed one another such as Obote (17th December 1980- 27th July 1985), Yusuf Lule (13th April 1979- 20th June 1979), Godfrey Binaisa (20th June 1980- 12th May 1980), Paulo Muwanga (12th May 1980- 22 May 1980), and Tito Okello (29th July 1985- 26th January 1986).⁶⁵ Therefore, due to this political instability, no attempts were made as far as reviving cultural institutions was concerned.⁶⁶

Therefore, during this period, the Bamasaba were still in a state of clan leadership with no supreme cultural leader. This was so because their clans were still disintegrated and no attempt had been made to unify them into one cultural entity. The period therefore wasn't significant to the Bamasaba as far as establishing the cultural institution was concerned.⁶⁷

3.5 The National Resistance Movement Regime and the Revival of 'Cultural Institutions' in Uganda

On 26th January, 1986, National Resistance Movement/ Army (NRM/A) under the leadership of Yoweri Kaguta Museveni came to power in Uganda.⁶⁸ Museveni's government among other things supported the restoration of all 'cultural institutions' which had been abolished by Apollo Milton Obote in 1967.⁶⁹ Three of the four original cultural institutions in Uganda (except Ankole) were revived. *Obukama bwa Tooro* was restored on 24th July, 1993 when *Omukama Olimi III* was coronated⁷⁰, *Obwa Kabaka ba Buganda* was restored on 31st July, 1993 when

Kabaka Ronald Muwenda Mutebi was coronated⁷¹ and *Obukama bwa Bunyoro* was restored on 11th June, 1994 when *Omukama* Solomom Gafabusa Iguru I was coronated.⁷²

All the above were crystallised in 1995 when the Government of Uganda established a constitution that recognized cultural institutions and their cultural activities⁷³. However, unlike the earlier kingdoms that had been abolished in 1967, Article 246 (1) of the constitution limited the powers of cultural institutions to only cultural matters in their areas of jurisdiction. The restored cultural institutions were not allowed to engage in any political matters of the central government, local government or Political Parties.⁷⁴ As a result of this law, a plethora of other ethnic groups which were initially decentralized such as Basoga, Baruuli, Langi, Iteso, Japadhola, Alur, Bagwere, Bakonjo and Bagisu eventually embarked on reorganizing themselves to form a centralized administration.⁷⁵ It was on that account that the Bagisu also founded the *Inzu ya Masaba* in 2010.⁷⁶

After a series of discussions, in April 2011, the Parliament of Uganda adopted the Institution of Traditional or Cultural Leaders Act, (Bill No. 24 in the ‘Uganda Gazette’, No. 72, vol. CIII) on April 2011. This Act provided a list of twelve *Cultural Institutions* which were recognized by the government of Uganda. As outlined in article 19, the provision recognized their cultural leaders, flags, logos, seals, and anthems⁷⁷. This was a legal basis on which *Inzu ya Masaba* was based.

3.6 The Formation of *Inzu ya Masaba*

When *cultural institutions* were restored in the 1995 constitution of the republic of Uganda, the Bamasaba did not immediately re-establish any cultural institution. The British colonial administration and introduction of the *kiganda* way of life by Semei Kakungulu had weakened the 26 clans of the Bamasaba to the extent that many of them had even lost a sense of identity.⁷⁸

Nabukwasi⁷⁹ argues that a number of Bamasaba in Bugisu could not even identify which clan they belonged to. On top of that, she adds that most of the clans did not even have clan heads anymore. Therefore, the period between 1995 and 2007 was that of ‘cultural reorganization’. It was a period in which the various ethnic groups in Uganda, both centralized and decentralized, reorganized themselves and united to form cultural institutions.⁸⁰ The Bamasaba embarked on making seminars which focused on reorganizing themselves under clans, electing clan heads and mobilizing themselves to have a sense of belonging. By 2007, the vast majority of the Bamasaba had been sensitized about their culture and identity.⁸¹ According to Wasikye,

The clan heads then embarked on a series of meetings which were geared towards establishing a new *cultural institution* which would unite not only the Bagisu of Uganda but also include the Babukusu of Kenya, restore and preserve the Kigisu culture which had almost become defunct and act as a catalyst towards the social economic transformation of Masabaland. The first meetings were held in the Uganda Community Centre in Mbale on 13th and 14th of April, 2007 and they agreed to form a cultural institution that would be known as *Inzu ya Masaba*.⁸²

The institution of *Inzu ya Masaba* would pay respect to the past and present leadership of the Bamasaba and recognize those who had made positive contributions to their cause. The cultural institution would also work to economically empower the Bamasaba as a people through a disciplined scheme that would enhance their well-being and would establish forums to educate the people of Masabaland on their health, rights, economics and the world of politics around them. Additionally, the cultural institution would help to encourage, and educate Bamasaba farmers, business people and students to achieve their dreams. Most importantly, *Inzu ya Masaba* would work to bring together all Bamasaba people and restore a sense of self-fulfillment in them. In order for all that to be effective, there would be annual conferences to be held at different venues to discuss matters concerning the cultural institution.⁸³

An interim committee which would build the structures of the cultural institution and also administer it until July, 2010, was immediately created when the first elections were to be held. The committee was composed of Florence Wakoko, Sabastine Wanzama, Mwambu Masaba, Bob Mushikori, Wansala Francis, John Mudonyi Maberu, Magharet Khaita and John Wanda. On 9th June 2009, a meeting was held by these individuals in Maluku in which the emblem, the flag, the motto, the anthem and the constitution of *Inzu ya Masaba* were declared. Maluku, Mbale was chosen as the headquarters of the Cultural Institution.⁸⁴

The interim committee was also to organise and conduct elections in which the 26 clan heads were to elect the overall head of the institution who would be known as the *Umukuuka*.⁸⁵ The *Umukuuka* was to rule for a non-renewable term of five years until the next election.⁸⁶ He was to act as a symbolic grandfather to the Bamasaba community.⁸⁷ According to the constitution of *Inzu ya Masaba*, if one was not grandfather, he did not qualify to become the *Umukuuka*. This was so because the term *Umukuuka* comes from the lumasaba word *kuuka* which means grandfather. Therefore, he had to be experienced in being a grandfather for him to administer the Bamasaba effectively as his grandchildren.⁸⁸

On 2nd July, 2010, the clan heads and delegates from both Bugisu and Bukusu elected Wilson Weyasa Wamimbi as the first *Umukuuka* of the newly formed *Inzu Ya Masaba*.⁸⁹ On 13th November 2010, he was coronated at the Mutoto Cultural Grounds, Mbale in a ceremony which was attended by many people including President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni.⁹⁰ In his coronation ceremony, over 500 Babukusu people from Kenya attended and they had been mobilized by Florence Lukosi, the then Culture Officer of Bungoma County. In April 2011, the parliament of Uganda passed the 'Institution of Traditional or Cultural Leaders Act', which recognized *Inzu ya Masaba* as one of the 12 Cultural Institutions in the country. The others include; Obwakabaka

bwa Buganda, Obukama bwa Bunyoro, Obukama bwa Tooro, Obwakyabazinga bwa Busoga among others.⁹¹

Therefore, the establishment of *Inzu ya Masaba* was a long and well-orchestrated process. It did not only involve the Bamasaba cultural leaders but also the government of Uganda which guided them through the 1995 Constitution of Uganda on which guidelines were to be followed in their establishment of the cultural institution. By the end 2010, *Inzu ya Masaba* was a fully functioning cultural institution which administered both the Bagisu of Uganda and the Babukusu of Kenya.⁹²

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter analysed the origin, evolution and transformation of the Bamasaba community and how they formed *Inzu ya Masaba* cultural Institution. It explained how the political organization of the Bamasaba evolved through the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial eras. The chapter started with the pre-colonial period when the Bamasaba were organized in a non-centralised system of families under the different clans. It also illustrated how these clans and Bagisu in general related with their neighbouring communities and societies. It then examined the impact of British colonial rule on their political and cultural structure, specifically showing how the colonial rule played a major role in keeping these clans divided for its own benefit. An attempt to unite Bugisu was only made by Semei Kakungulu who was a colonial administration agent in Bugisu. Even this was not for the good of the people of Bugisu, but for his selfish interest of forming his own kingdom which did not succeed. There after, it showed how the different post-independence governments affected the political structure of the Bamasaba. The chapter ended with the analysis of how the formation of *Inzu ya Masaba* comes in 2010 after the 1995

Constitution of the Republic of Uganda and restores traditional institutions in Uganda. However, even then, the 1995 Constitution had limited the restored cultural institutions to only cultural matters without much political powers, a factor that affected the newly formed *Inzu ya Masaba*. Therefore, the next chapter discusses the significance of *Inzu ya Masaba* on the socio-political life of the Bamasaba.

3.10 End notes

¹Godfrey Mwakikagile, “*Ethnicity and National Identity in Uganda: The Land and Its People.*” (New Africa Press, 2009), 36-38.

²Ibid., 37.

³Peter W. Wekesa, *History, Identity and the Bukusu- Bagisu Relations on the Kenya and Uganda Border*, (Cambridge University Press, 2023), 12

⁴Gideon S. Were, *The Bagisu And Their Past: Some Notes on Their Legends About Creation, The Origins of Death, The Economy of Their Ancestors and The Phenomenon of Kintu*, *Transafrican Journal of History*, Vol. 11, (Gideon Were Publications, 1982), 184-195.

⁵Ibid., 186.

⁶Ibid., 187.

⁷Ibid., 193.

⁸Vincent G. Simiyu, *The Emergence of a Subnation: A History of Babukusu to 1990*, *Transafrican Journal of History*, Vol. 20, (Gideon Were Publications, 1991), 125-144.

⁹Ibid., 127.

¹⁰Ibid., 130.

¹¹Wafula Msaja, *A History of the Bukusu*, (Google Books, 2011), 23-29.

¹²Ibid., 25.

¹³Ibid., 26.

¹⁴Ibid., 28-29.

¹⁵Mwakikagile, *Ethnicity and Identity*, 81-82.

¹⁶Ibid., 82.

¹⁷ Interview, Suzan Nakayenze, teacher of Lumasaba at Mbale Progressive SS, 47 years old, 4th November 2022

¹⁸ Interview, Asumani Wamboga, clan elder of the Batuta clan, 60 years old, 6th November 2022

¹⁹Florence Aguo, *The Establishment of the Emorimor Institution 1850-2012*, Masters Dissertation, (Islamic University in Uganda, 2017), 78-93.

²⁰ Interview, Masai Mudebo, clan elder of the Batiiru clan, 61 years old, 5th November 2022

²¹ Interview, Suzan Nakayenze, teacher of Lumasaba at Mbale Progressive SS, 47 years old, 4th November 2022

²²Ibid

²³Wekesa, *Bukusu- Bugisu Relations*, 44-59.

²⁴Ibid., 51.

²⁵Ibid., 52.

²⁶Andrea Kauka, *The Bamasaba Tribal History*, (Google Books, 1952), 11-13.

²⁷Ibid., 12.

²⁸Ibid., 13.

²⁹Gideon S. Were, *A History of Abaluyia of western Kenya: 1500-1930*, (Gideon Were Publications, 1967), 42-90.

³⁰Ibid., 44.

³¹Ibid., 90.

³²Aguo, *Emorimor Institution*, 62-63.

³³Ibid., 64.

³⁴Samwiri Karugire, *A Political History of Uganda*, *Transafrican Journal of History*, Vol. 1, Issue 2, (Gideon Were Publications, 1981), 187-189.

³⁵Michael Twaddle, *Kakungulu and the creation of Uganda*, (Ohio University Press, 1993), 78-91

³⁶Ibid., 79.

³⁷Ibid., 90.

³⁸Phares M. Mutibwa, *Uganda Since Independence: A Story of Unfulfilled hopes*, (Africa World Press, Trenton, 1992), 102

³⁹Interview, Francis Wasagami, a former journalist of New Vision, 20th November 2022

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Interview, Godfrey Mabonga, current Secretary General of Inzu ya Masaba, 41 years old, 1st February, 2023

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Interview, Charles Mungoma, son of Yonasani Buyi Mungoma (the former *Umuhinga*), 64 years old, 8th January 2023

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Francis Wasagami, *The Bagisu never had a king*, (The New Vision, 18th November 2008), 35

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Interview, Job Muduku, a teacher of Lumasaba at Nkoma SS in Mbale, 40 years old, 4th November 2022

⁵³Tabu Butagira, *Uganda: Why Obote Abolished Federo*, (The Monitor, 11th October 2009), 52

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Interview, Job Muduku, a teacher of Lumasaba at Nkoma SS in Mbale, 40 years old, 4th November 2022

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Tabu Butagira, *Uganda: Why Obote Abolished Federo*, (The Monitor, 11th October 2009), 4

⁵⁸Interview, Charles Mungoma, son of Yonasani Buyi Mungoma (the former *Umuhinga*), 64 years old, 8th January 2023

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Nelson Kasfir, *'Buganda and the Kingship'*, Uganda: A Country Study, Federal Research Division, Washington DC, (Library of Congress, 1992) 172-175.

⁶²Ibid., 173.

⁶³Ibid., 174.

⁶⁴Richard Posnett, *Uganda after Amin*, The World Today, Vol. 36, (Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1980), 147-153.

⁶⁵Ibid., 148.

⁶⁶Ibid., 149.

⁶⁷Ibid., 152.

⁶⁸*Museveni sworn in as President*, (The Times, 30th January 1986), 1-4

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰Andrew Mwenda, *King Oyo's 25 years on the throne*, (The Independent, 11th September 2020), 2-4

⁷¹*Kabaka Ronald Mutebi turns 57*, (New Vision, 13th April 2012), 7

⁷²*Omukama Iguru: Bridging the past and present*, (Daily Monitor, 18th June 2013), 30

⁷³*Constitution of the Republic of Uganda*, Article 246, (Uganda Constitutional Commission, 1995), 128-129

⁷⁴Ibid., 128.

⁷⁵Ibid., 128.

⁷⁶Ibid., 129.

⁷⁷ www.parliament.go.ug, *Institution of Traditional or Cultural Leaders Bill*, 2011

⁷⁸Aisha Aiseta, *The Legacy of Semei Kakungulu on the Cultural History of Bugisu*, Masters Dissertation, (Islamic University in Uganda, 2011), 60-68

⁷⁹Interview, Patience Nabukwasi, a cabinet member of *Inzu ya Masaba*, 39 years old, 3rd January, 2023

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²Interview, John Wasikye, a radio presenter at Signal FM and a former cabinet member of *Inzu ya Masaba*, 44 years old, 10th January 2023

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴*Minutes of Meeting on the formation of Inzu ya Masaba*, Written by John Wasikye on 9th June 2009, MRC.2013.004, box 1, folder 3, Cultural Records, Mbale Records Center, Mbale Town, 13th August 2024

⁸⁵Interview, Catherine Muduwa, a radio presenter at Elgon FM and cabinet member of *Inzu ya Masaba*, 48 years old, 11th January 2023

⁸⁶Ibid.

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹Daniel Edengu, *Bamasaba Cultural Leader Installed*, (New Vision, November 15th 2010), 51

⁹⁰Ibid.

⁹¹Ibid.

⁹²Ibid.

CHAPTER FOUR

ORGANISATION AND SIGNIFICANCE OF *INZU YA MASABA* FROM 2010 TO 2020

4.0 Introduction

The previous chapter analysed the origin and evolution of *Inzu ya Masaba*. This chapter examines the functions of *Inzu ya Masaba*, its relations with the people of Masabaland, its modus operandi and its political, social and economic organisation. In the organisation of *Inzu ya Masaba*, the chapter examines some salient features of its constitution and its administrative structure which includes the functions of *Umukuuka*, his ministers, the clan heads and the delegates conference. The chapter also gives details in the biographies of both *Umukuuka* Wilson Wamimbi (2010-2015) and *Umukuuka* Bob Mushikori (2015-2020), the first two leaders of *Inzu ya Masaba* whose administrations this study primarily focuses on. In the socio-economic analysis, the chapter discusses the role of *Inzu ya Masaba* in the promotion of unity among the Bamasaba, the preservation of the Masaba culture, promotion of the tourism sector of Bugisu and Bukusu, its role in the education sector of the region, its role in combating natural calamities in Bugisu and Bukusu and how it helped in the settling land disputes among the Bamasaba between 2010 and 2020.

4.1 The Political Organisation of *Inzu ya Masaba*

Politically *Inzu ya Masaba* was operated under its own constitution which was established in 2009 by a committee of members from both Bugisu and Bukusu.¹ According to the constitution, the *Umukuuka* is the cultural head/ paramount chief of the Bamasaba. He was their symbol of unity and prosperity and their spokes person on cultural matters. It is *Umukuuka's* role to ensure that the culture, customs and norms of the Bamasaba were protected and preserved.² He was also

the custodian of the cultural lands, assets and properties such as the Mutoto Cultural Grounds and the Mt Elgon Culture and History Museum.³ In addition to that, the *Umukuuka* also solved land disputes, family wrangles and clan conflicts among the Bamasaba.⁴

The constitution provides for the election of *Umukuuka* and he would administer the cultural institution for a non-renewable term of five years.⁵ Since the 26 clans of the Bamasaba were classified in three clusters, the administration would go from a descendant of Wanale, then to a descendant of Mubuyya and then to a descendant of Mwambu (in that order).⁶ The constitution also emphasized that for one to contest for the position of *Umukuuka*, they had to be a grandfather and most importantly, they must have been circumcised through *Imbalu*.⁷ The position of *Umukuuka* was the only one which was subjected to an election and he was to be elected by the 26 clan heads of the Bamasaba and delegates from all the parishes of Bugisu sub region.⁸ The other positions such as Prime Minister, Minister of Culture, Secretary General, and Representatives of Districts among others were to be appointed by the *Umukuuka* and the whole cabinet was composed of twenty four cultural leaders.⁹ According to their constitution, for one to be appointed on the cabinet of *Inzu ya Masaba*, they have to be thirty years old and above.¹⁰

The first *Umukuuka of Inzu ya Masaba* was *Uwelukoosi* Wilson Wamimbi whose reign was between 2010 and 2015.¹¹ He was born on July 1st 1938 in Busano Sub County in Mbale district. Wilson Wamimbi acquired his secondary education in Nabumali High School between 1952 and 1960. He then joined Kyambogo Institute of Teacher Education where he trained as a teacher. From there, he joined Makerere University in 1973 and acquired a degree in Marketing. He was then elected as the Marketing officer of the Bugisu Cooperative Union (BCU) where he worked till 1987.¹² Wilson Wamimbi was the Chairman, Local Council (LC) V of Mbale District from 1987 to 2001. After his reign as the Chairman LCV of Mbale district, Wamimbi was appointed

by President Museveni as the High Commissioner of Uganda to Canada, a position he held till 2009.¹³

In the 2010 elections for the position of *Umukuuka*, Wamimbi contested against Canon Codova Wakiro. Wamimbi won the election hence becoming the first *Umukuuka* of *Inzu ya Masaba*.¹⁴ He was sworn in at Mutoto Cultural Grounds on 13th November 2010 at a ceremony in which President Museveni was the guest of honor. His coronation was also attended by over 500 Babukusu from Kenya.¹⁵ He administered *Inzu ya Masaba* till 2015 when he handed over power to Bob Mushikori.¹⁶ On his cabinet member, he appointed Muniafu Phillip as the Prime Minister, Bob Mushikori as the Minister of Diaspora, Catherine Muduwa as the Minister of Finance and Planning, Priscilla Mungoma as the Minister of Culture, Music and Tourism among others.¹⁷

After the reign of *Umukuuka* Wilson Wamimbi, Bob Mushikori ascended to power as the second *Umukuuka* of *Inzu ya Masaba* between 2015 and 2020.¹⁸ He was born in 1948 in Busayi sub county, Bududa District. He acquired primary education in Nanyere Primary School before he joined Nabumali High School for his Secondary Education. Bob Mushikori worked as a commercial officer at the Pakwach railway line in 1967. In 1968, he was employed as the officer in charge of transportation of tea at the Masindi railway.¹⁹ In 1985, he moved to Canada where he acquired Canadian citizenship. While in Canada, he enrolled into the University of Toronto and acquired a degree in Environmental Studies. He was then employed at the Department of Solid Waste Management in the Municipality of Toronto. He was also one of the founder members of the North American Bamasaba Cultural Association that brought all the Bamasaba in North America together.²⁰ In 1998, Bob Mushikori returned to Uganda.²¹

He actively took part in the formation of *Inzu ya Masaba* and even served under *Umukuuka* Wilson Wamimbi's administration as the Cultural Minister in Charge of Diaspora, a position he held till 2015.²² In the 2015 elections for the position of *Umukuuka*, Bob Mushikori contested against three other candidates who were; Charles Walimbwa Peke, Gimui Kiboma and Gregory Gidagui Mafabi. He won the election and was declared the second *Umukuuka* of *Inzu ya Masaba*.²³ He was sworn in at Mutoto Cultural Grounds on 15th November 2015 at a ceremony in which Hon Ruhakana Rugunda, the then Prime Minister of Uganda was the guest of honor. His coronation was also attended by over 700 Babukusu from Kenya.²⁴ He administered *Inzu ya Masaba* till 2020 when his reign came to an end.²⁵ On his cabinet, he appointed Francis Nagimesi as the Prime Minister, Bazil Wanzira as the Minister of Culture, Music and Tourism, Dr. Alfred Wamurubu as the Minister of Planning and Finance among others.²⁶

Inzu ya Masaba also had a delegates' conference which was composed of delegates from all the parishes in Bugisu sub region. These also take part in the process of electing the *Umukuuka*. The delegates had a chair person, a speaker, a treasurer, an auditor among other positions²⁷. They worked closely with the 26 clan heads to facilitate the smooth running of the cultural institution. This was done through establishing committees at village level, parish level and sub county level. These committees often held meetings with the *Umukuuka* and his cabinet members in which they discussed matters concerning the welfare of the Bamasaba community. The delegates were also represented by their chairperson in the cabinet meetings which were chaired by the *Umukuuka*.²⁸

Besides the *Umukuuka*, the other two key positions of *Inzu ya Masaba* were the Prime Minister and the Secretary General. Both positions were appointed by the *Umukuuka*, but approved by the 26 clan heads and the delegates' conference.²⁹ The Prime Minister was the head of the cabinet

and he ensured that the cabinet resolutions were implemented. He also spearheaded all the cultural activities of *Inzu ya Masaba* on behalf of the *Umukuuka*.³⁰ The Secretary General ensured that all the meetings of the cultural institution were organized and minuted and all records of the cultural institution were well protected and preserved.³¹

4.2 The Socio-Economic Organisation and Significance of *Inzu ya Masaba*

This section analyses the role of *Inzu ya Masaba* in the various socio-economic aspects of the people of Bugisu sub-region. It shows how important *Inzu ya Masaba* has been to the Bamasaba community in a number of ways such as the promotion and preservation of the Masaba culture, the promotion of unity and self-awareness among the Bamasaba, the promotion of tourism sector of the region, the role of *Inzu ya Masaba* in improving the education sector of Bugisu and Bukusu, the role of *Inzu ya Masaba* in combating natural calamities such as floods and landslides in areas such as Bududa and how the cultural institution has solved land disputes not only among the Bamasaba, but also between the Bamasaba and their neighbouring communities. This is all explained below;

4.2.1 The Restoration, Promotion and Preservation of the Masaba Culture

One of the cardinal roles of *Inzu ya Masaba* was to restore and promote the *Gisu* culture among the Bamasaba, many of whom had dropped it and adopted new cultures. It is believed that many Bamasaba had become ignorant about their ancestral origin, cultures and norms³². Some of the Bamasaba especially those born in urban areas did not identify themselves as to be from Bugisu. This was primarily caused by the Kiganda culture which was introduced by Semei Kakungulu.³³ A number of the Bamasaba in Bugisu sub-region, especially in Mbale town had adopted the

kiganda way of life and had become completely disconnected from their true culture; the Masaba culture.³⁴

In most schools, kiganda folk songs were taught, kiganda dances such as *back simba*, kiganda plays among others had been adopted by some communities in Bugisu. It made Bagisu students more acquainted with the kiganda Music, Dance and Drama (MDD) than their own.³⁵ The kiganda dresscode of *gomesi* (a colourful floor-length dress) and *omuleela* (a long garment) was widely used by the Bamasaba on functions such as weddings and circumcision ceremonies.³⁶ The Bamasaba even undermined their traditional mode of marriage ceremonies and adopted the kiganda marriage ceremonies which involved *okukyaala* (where the coffee seeds were eaten by both families as a sign of pledging allegiance to one another), *okwanjula* (the introduction ceremony).³⁷

Luganda language was the widely spoken language in Mbale town. Wanendeya³⁸ stresses that it reached a point that even when two Bagisu were communicating between one another, they did so in Luganda. Some of them gave their children Kiganda names such as Kintu, Mukungu, Nsubuga among others. Thus some Bagisu had lost pride in their language and culture, developed an inferiority complex of thinking that Luganda was a more ‘civilized’ language. In some areas, those who could not speak Luganda fluently were undermined by those who spoke it eloquently. It eventually reached a point where some Bagisu started identifying themselves as Baganda. There were also Bagisu in Mbale district who couldn’t speak Lugisu completely but could communicate in Luganda. Maani emphasizes the situation as follows;

Summons in mosques and churches on Fridays and Sundays respectively were conducted in Luganda. During political rallies, political candidates mostly communicated to the people in Luganda. In schools, the most spoken vernacular among both students and teachers was Luganda.

Luganda was the most spoken language even on the local radio stations and *boda boda* stages. The most popular musicians in the region were not those whose songs were in Lugisu, but those whose songs were in Luganda. In cinemas, the Bagisu enjoyed films which were translated in Luganda. Luganda had therefore dominated the whole of Mbale town.³⁹

Many Bamasaba even started considering *Imbalu* as a backward sub-culture. Some of them, especially the educated preferred taking their children to hospitals for circumcision and did not respect the concept of ‘even’ years⁴⁰. They could circumcise their children any year which they felt like. The Mutoto *Imbalu* Festival was no longer treated as a sacred ceremony; it became a ‘disco ground’ where ‘un-cultural’ Music was played and people could dance all night. Other Bamasaba often snubbed the festival and rendered it ‘useless’ and primitive. The religious factor also played a role in a way that most Bamasaba, especially the Muslims regarded the *Imbalu* dance as *Haram* (sinful) because of the ‘obscenity’ and ‘indecenty’ it was associated with. They condemned the act of exposing one’s private parts to the public. All these made circumcision which is taken as one of the pillars of culture among the Bamasaba to become any other act that people carried out the way they felt. Many of them were even marrying from their clans yet it was regarded as incest according to the Masaba culture. The *Inzu ya Masaba* therefore embarked on the restoration of the Masaba culture and pride among the Bamasaba. According to Khaukha,

During both the reigns of Wamimbi and Mushikori, many seminars were organized to sensitize and educate the Bamasaba about their culture. These seminars were organized in schools, play grounds and radio stations. The cabinet members of *Inzu ya Masaba* such as John Wasikye and Godfrey Mabonga were hosted on a series of talk shows at radio stations such as Signal FM, Open Gate FM, Step FM among others to mobilize, sensitize and educate the Bamasaba about the significance of their culture. The Lumasaba anthem was also played on radio stations so that the vast majority of the Bagisu would learn it.⁴¹

Lumasaba was also introduced in both primary and secondary schools such as North Road Primary School, Nabuyonga Primary School, Nabumali Secondary School, Mbale Secondary

School among others to ensure that the young generation of the Bamasaba became fluent in their language. The Lumasaba anthem was also taught in Bugisu schools and was sang during school assemblies.⁴² *Inzu ya Masaba* also condemned the practice of marrying from one's clan, because it was regarded as incest according to their culture. The cultural institution also established a museum in Musoto, Mbale in which most of the cultural tools of the Bamasaba were preserved. By 2020, some mosques such as *Masjid Kaali*, *Masjid Aqswa* and *Masjid Bilal* in Mbale were holding summons in Lugisu language. By doing so, the Masaba culture was promoted and preserved by the *Inzu ya Masaba*.⁴³

4.2.2 The Promotion of Unity and Self-Awareness among the Bamasaba

Inzu ya Masaba was established in 2010 with the cardinal role of promoting unity among the Bamasaba in both Uganda and Kenya. The cultural institution mobilised the Bagisu in the six districts of Mbale, Bududa, Sironko, Manafwa, Namisindwa and Bulambuli and the Babukusu in the three counties of Bungoma, Trans-Nzoia and Uasin-Gishu and united all the groups under one 'umbrella'.⁴⁴ One of the methods it used to unite the people in this area was the elimination of the terms 'Bagisu' and 'Babukusu' and promoted the term 'Bamasaba'. The institution did so in order to ensure that they recognize one another as one group of people. In its constitution, only the term 'Bamasaba' was emphasised in all clauses⁴⁶. This played a key role in uniting all the Bamasaba in both Uganda and Kenya.

Both *Umukuuka* Wilson Wamimbi and *Umukuuka* Bob Mushikori made tours in all the nine districts in Masabaland; six of these in Uganda and another three in Kenya mobilising the people through rallies.⁴⁷ In these gatherings, the visiting *Umukuuka* reminded congregations to have a sense of belonging and self-awareness as Bamasaba. In these meetings, the people were also

urged to remember their heritage by tracking their ancestral origins. This was so because some Bamasaba did not know which clans they belonged to. They just knew one another as the Bagisu and that was all.⁴⁸

The *Inzu ya Masaba* therefore developed a policy which categorized the names of the Bamasaba according to their respective clans.⁴⁹ This has helped many people to realise which clan they belonged to. The cultural institution also established specific geographical identity for each of the 26 clans of the Bamasaba in order for each of them to know where their ancestors lived. This would enable them learn their geographical origin. The clans which descended from Mwambu belonged to Bulambuli and Sironko, those which descended from Mubuuya belonged to Namisindwa, Manafwa and Bududa and those which descended from Wanale belonged to Mbale. This helped to equip the Bamasaba with a sense of belonging and self-awareness.⁵⁰

The cultural institution also promoted unity among the Bamasaba through organising annual inter-clan sports competitions. These competitions were mainly in the sectors of football and netball.⁵¹ The 26 clans of the Bamasaba such as Wakoko, Mututa, Muyobo, Mukonde, Wangokho among others would compete until the final game which was held at the Mbale Municipal Stadium in Mbale.⁵² The winner's prize was a bull and a sum one million shillings awarded by the *Umukuuka* himself.⁵³ Before each game started, the Lumasaba anthem was sang and they would all respect it by standing up.⁵⁴ These sports competitions always brought the Bamasaba from the various clans and districts together and promoted unity and harmony among them.

Inzu ya Masaba also promoted unity among the Bamasaba by advising them to always elect Bagisu politicians into power.⁵⁵ The *Umukuukas*; Wilson Wamimbi and Bob Mushikori

condemned the practice of voting for politicians who were ‘non-Bagisu’ during parliamentary elections and election of councilors.⁵⁶ Although it was perceived by some people as an act of ‘tribalism’ given that Mbale had become a heterogeneous district, *Inzu ya Masaba* convinced the vast majority of the Bagisu to believe that it was an act of unity and Masaba nationalism.⁵⁷ They argued that they needed to elect Bagisu leaders who knew their culture, loved their culture, loved their people and could unite them. This therefore explains why it was very difficult for a non-Mugisu to win any election in Bugisu.⁵⁸

4.2.3 Promotion of Tourism and Recreation in Bugisu

Bugisu region is endowed with a multitude of recreational centers and tourist attractions such as Mount Elgon National Park in Mbale, Simu and Sisi falls in Sironko, Bufumbo and Wanale Forest reserves in Mbale, Bulegeni and Butandinga cliffs in Mbale, Bulukyeke-Bukigai Hills in Mbale, Semei Kakungulu tombs in Mbale, Mutoto Circumcision site in Mbale, Mbale Cricket Grounds, Mbale Gold Club, Mbale Stadium, Mbale Resort Hotel, Mt Elgon Hotel, Mt Elgon Culture and History Museum in Mbale, Wanale Hill in Mbale among others.⁵⁹ These tourist centers attracted a plethora of tourists to the region.⁶⁰ Therefore, the major aim of *Inzu ya Masaba* was to develop the tourism sector in a manner that would generate substantial revenue for the region.⁶¹

From its establishment in 2010, *Inzu ya Masaba* made enormous contributions towards the development of the tourism sector of Bugisu. The Institution put in place various strategies which promoted tourism in the region.⁶² Bugisu had many tourism sites and *Inzu ya Masaba* formulated specific guidelines which were to be followed by the tourism sector of the region.⁶³ It also encouraged the Bamasaba to develop more tourism infrastructures in order to attract tourists

in the region. *Inzu ya Masaba* also sensitized many Bagisu about the advantages of tourism and advised them to directly participate in it.⁶⁴ Umukuuka Bob Mushikori ensured tourism websites were created on internet and the tourist attractions of Bugisu were uploaded on them for marketing reasons. The location and cost were also attached to every tourist attraction which was uploaded.⁶⁵

Inzu ya Masaba also organised workshops in which various people were trained as tourism guides so that they could be employed in the tourist attraction centres.⁶⁶ It also advised the Bamasaba to study tourism-related course in universities so that they could improve the tourism sector of Bugisu.⁶⁷ *Inzu ya Masaba* also lobbied for funds from the government which could be used to develop the tourism sector.⁶⁸ Between 2012 and 2014, the government donated over 200 million to *Inzu ya Masaba*. Part of this money was used to develop tourism.⁶⁹

Inzu ya Masaba also advocated to the government to construct tarmac roads leading to most tourist centers. This was so because some tourist centers were in remote areas which had poor roads and therefore couldn't attract tourists.⁷⁰ It also urged schools within the region to annually take their learners to these tourist centers so that they could learn more about the history of the region and its cultural heritage.⁷¹ The development of the tourism sector of Bugisu helped to attract more tourists in the region, provide jobs to people and generate revenue for the cultural institution which also took a share of the money paid by the tourists in some tourism centers.⁷²

In 2015, *Inzu ya Masaba*, under the leadership of *Umukuuka* Bob Mushikori established the Mt Elgon Culture and History Museum on plot 1-3, Masaba Road in Musoto, Mbale. It was registered as a Community Based Organization (CBO) and became the first museum in the whole of Bugisu region.⁷³ Mr Wanyina Francis was appointed by the *Umukuuka* as the Museum

curator.⁷⁴ It played a big role in the collection, documentation and preservation of the diverse cultures of the Bagisu.⁷⁵ It also provided jobs to some Bagisu youth who became tour guides, security guards, secretaries, cashiers etc. it also attracted many white tourists and students who studied about the history and culture of the Bamasaba.⁷⁶

Inzu ya Masaba also organised bull fighting events which attracted many tourists to the region⁷⁷. The tradition of bull fighting started in 1956 in Bududa. It was invented to replace the fighting of men⁷⁸. Initially, in case two men had a dispute, the clan heads would organize an event and invite the members of the village to watch them fight until one yielded. They were however not allowed to use weapons in order to avoid killing one another. This tradition was abolished by the colonial regime in 1956 because it was described as ‘primitive’. The Bagisu therefore replaced it with Bull fighting.⁷⁹

The tradition of bull fighting became very popular among the Bagisu most especially those in Bududa who organised an event in the last Saturday of every fortnight.⁸⁰ The event was often organized at Namasho playing field in Bushika sub country, Bududa.⁸¹ Although some people saw it as animal cruelty, it was perceived by most whites as a tourist attraction which attracted most of them in the region.⁸² The bulls which often fought were trained and well fed on *malewa* and banana stems before the fights. They were between four to seven years old and they were brought from different villages.⁸³ *Inzu ya Masaba* vehemently promoted the bull fighting tradition and started organizing events in other districts such as Mbale and Sironko.⁸⁴ In Mbale, Mutoto Cultural Grounds was used for a number of bull fights.⁸⁵ This attracted many tourists in the region and helped to generate revenue for *Inzu ya Masaba*.

4.2.4 *Inzu ya Masaba* and The Education Sector of Bugisu

Inzu ya Masaba played a great role in the development of the Lumasaba language in the schools of Bugisu region. Before its establishment, Lumasaba was not taught in the secondary schools of the Bugisu. It was only taught by Gishu specialists (who were not professional teachers of Lumasaba) in a few primary schools such as Elgon Primary School.⁸⁶ The language was developed as an academic discipline in 2010 during the reign of *Umukuuka* Wilson Wamimbi. The *Umukuuka* then sensitized the Bagisu about the advantages of teaching it in schools and encouraged most schools to adopt it.⁸⁷ The language was then approved by the Ministry of Education and added to the secondary school curriculum in 2011.⁸⁸

According to Gimono⁸⁹, *Umukuuka* Bob Mushikori himself taught Lumasaba in primary schools such as Nkokonjeru Primary School and Grace Primary School between 2016 and 2018. Many Bagisu were urged to take courses in Lumasaba to become teachers of the language.⁹⁰ It was then made compulsory among the Bagisu pupils of lower primary in some schools such as Elgon Primary School and Wanale Primary School.⁹¹ By 2020, Lumasaba was taught in most of the secondary schools of Bugisu, and many students; even the non-Bagisu studied it and excelled in Uganda National Examination Board (UNEB).⁹² This was primarily made a success through the efforts of *Inzu ya Masaba*. The introduction of Lumasaba in the education system was significant to the Bamasaba because it enabled them promote the language to other communities.⁹³

The cultural institution also encouraged the Bamasaba to take their children to school in order to improve their communities. Wakoko⁹⁴ says that many families in Bugisu, most especially in the villages did not take formal education seriously prior to the establishment of *Inzu ya Masaba*. Through his tours in the villages of Bulambuli, Namisindwa, Sironko and Bududa, *Umukuuka* Wilson Wamimbi urged the Bamasaba in the villages to take their children to schools.⁹⁵ Many of

them were taking their children to farms right from a tender age and the children would grow up with only knowledge about farming.⁹⁶ Even the level of school drop out in the village areas was so high.⁹⁷ He advised them that these children were to be the protagonists of Bugisu's development in the subsequent years and therefore needed to be taken to school.⁹⁸ By 2020, the level of school drop out in the villages of Bugisu had reduced and this was also partially accredited to *Inzu ya Masaba*.⁹⁹

Inzu ya Masaba was also credited for advocating for the improvement of the infrastructures in most of the government schools of Bugisu. Mwambu¹⁰⁰ asserts that many schools such as North Road Primary School, Nabumali Primary School, Namatala Primary School had become so old and had poor infrastructures like classrooms, main halls and libraries. For example in Namatala Primary School, there were no books in the libraries, classrooms did not have enough furniture and the iron sheets of some classrooms were leaking.¹⁰¹ In 2017, *Umukuuka* Bob Mushikori lobbied to the government to intervene in that situation and it donated 50 million shillings to the school. This money was used to renovate some old classrooms and buy some text books¹⁰²

Further more, *Inzu ya Masaba* also secured scholarships for needy students in some private schools in Mbale District. Mukamba¹⁰³ emphasises that there were some students in the villages of Bududa and Manafwa who desired to acquire secondary education after excelling in their 2016 Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE) but could not afford it. Their parents therefore called for the intervention of *Umukuuka* Bob Mushikori. The *Umukuuka* also wrote to the principals of some private schools in the region requesting them to provide scholarships to some of these children.¹⁰⁴ Mukamba Robert, the then principal of Mbale Progressive Secondary School gave annual scholarships of 10 students per year on the request of *Inzu ya Masaba* as way of heading to *Umukuuka*'s request.¹⁰⁵

The cultural institution also organised fundraising events for university students who could not complete their tuition. For instance, in November 2015, Umukuuka Bob Mushikori received five cases of students in Islamic University in Uganda (IUIU) who could not complete their tuition for their first semester. *Umukuuka* Bob Mushikori himself spearheaded the process of fundraising for these students' tuition fees and by 11th November 2015, over 15 million shillings were collected by the cultural institution hence enabling the five students to do their examinations.”¹⁰⁶

Thus, the *Inzu ya Masaba* played a key role in promoting girl-child education in Bugisu region. The situation was worse when it came to education of a girl child. To emphasise this, Nandudu¹⁰⁷ stresses that, for generations, education of girls and women wasn't seen as a paramount aspect of many societies in Bugisu. The vast majority of the Bamasaba believed that women were just 'child bearers' who therefore did not need to go to school.¹⁰⁸ Right from a tender age, the girl child in many societies among the Bamasaba was prepared for marriage; how to be an obedient wife and responsible mother.¹⁰⁹ However, when *Umukuuka* Wilson Wamimbi came to power, he advocated for girl child education to be taken seriously in the region.¹¹⁰ He argued that women were also capable of achieving what men could achieve; or even more. He therefore advised parents to take their girls to schools. He even appointed some women as ministers on his cabinet such as Nabukwasi Patience and Nakayenze Suzan to illustrate to the people that even women had a significant role to play in society.¹¹¹

4.2.5 *Inzu ya Masaba* and Understanding of Natural Calamities in Bugisu

Bugisu region was struck by a lot of natural calamities between 2010 and 2020. These calamities included landslides and floods; most especially in the hilly areas of Bududa.¹¹² They claimed the

lives of a multitude of people. It is estimated that over 800 people died in either landslides or floods in Bugisu between 2010 and 2020.¹¹³ Mudebo¹¹⁴ discusses how *Inzu ya Masaba* played a great role in combating the effects of such natural calamities through organizing fundraising events to support the affected families, lobbying for donations from both Government and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), and lobbying for the creation of new areas where the affected families could be resettled. In these fundraising events, people were not only urged to bring money but also clothes, mattresses, utensils to mention but a few.¹¹⁵

On 1st March 2010, a major landslide occurred in Bumayoka Sub County in Bududa District. It was caused by heavy rains which had lasted for over three months hence burying the three villages of Nametsi, Kubehwo and Namakansa. This landslide led to the loss of lives of over 400 people.¹¹⁶ When *Umukuuka* Wilson Wamimbi came to power in that very year, he advocated for the creation of free land in Bulucheke Sub County where the affected families could be resettled.¹¹⁷ By January 2011, over 5000 people were relocated from the affected villages of Bumayoka Sub County to a camp which was established in Bulucheke Sub County.¹¹⁸ *Umukuuka* Wilson Wamimbi then organized a fundraising rally in which donations were provided for the displaced people from the government, NGOs and the local people of Bugisu sub-region.¹¹⁹

In 2019, another disaster of floods occurred in Bugisu region and destroyed over twenty bridges on many roads which connected the six districts of the region. This left many travellers in Bugisu stranded and also claimed the lives of over 50 people¹²⁰. These floods led to the bursting of the banks of several rivers such as Namatala, Nabuyonga and Manafwa. The bridges which were broken included Buwagogo Bridge in Manafwa and Kufu Bridge in Namisindwa.¹²¹ *Inzu ya Masaba*, under *Umukuuka* Bob Mushikori organized a fundraising campaign to support the

families of the people who had lost their lives. Some funds were raised and the victims were eventually given some relief in form of food, medicine and shelter.¹²²

The *Umukuuka* also urged the Uganda National Road Authority (UNRA), Mbale Branch to provide an immediate short term solution for the broken bridges as they planned to revamp them.¹²³ UNRA quickly responded through its spokesperson Mark Ssali and promised to immediately embark on the construction of a temporary bridge which was to be used by the travellers and they were also installing culverts; which they did.¹²⁴ They subsequently reconstructed the bridges with stronger materials which could not easily break in case of another flood. *Inzu ya Masaba* was partially credited for pressurizing UNRA to take immediate action towards solving that problem¹²⁵. This means that in addition to restoring the cultural element of the Bamasaba, *Inzu ya Masaba* has played a leading role in humanitarian activities and advocacy for the vulnerable in Bugisu.

4.2.6 *Inzu ya Masaba* and Land among the Bamasaba

In 1902, Semei Kakungulu arrived in Bugisu region and settled in Gangama, Mbale district.¹²⁶ He was rewarded over twenty square miles of land in Mbale by the British colonial regime as a token of appreciation for the enormous role he played in the imposition of colonial rule in Eastern Uganda.¹²⁷ According to Kibuuka,

Kakungulu also requested the British colonial regime to reward his subordinate chiefs with additional land in the region. Siliman Kaggwa, one of Kakungulu's right hand men was granted over 8 square miles which stretched from Namatala to Kabwangasi, and then to Jami, Abed Kiyingi was granted 5 square miles which stretched from Nakaloke to Busajjabwankuba, Paulo Tomusange was granted 6 square miles which stretched from Bugema to Musoto among others.¹²⁸

This land was forcefully grabbed from the Bagisu natives who swore to reclaim and regain it in the subsequent years. The Bagisu for many years became squatters on their own land, something which frustrated them a lot.¹²⁹

When *Inzu ya Masaba* was established in 2010, it embarked on a mission to restore the land which was grabbed from the Bagisu by Kakungulu and his Baganda surbordinate chiefs.¹³⁰ According to Wakhweya¹³¹, *Umukuuka* Wilson Wamimbi took the ‘Kakungulu land case’ to Mbale High Court on a number of occasions but it kept on being postponed during his reign. His reign therefore didn’t achieve much in that regard. His action however played a big role of reawakening the Bamasaba families which initially lived on that land to stage a number of demonstrations in order to vacate the Kakungulu family from the land.¹³²

During the reign of *Umukuuka* Bob Mushikori in January 2018, over 200,000 families in Mbale district were mobilized by *Inzu ya Masaba* to protest for the returning of the 20 square miles of land to them by the Kakungulu family.¹³³ However, it was impossible for the Kakungulu family to give up the land because they had legal land titles which proved that the land belonged to them.¹³⁴ *Inzu ya Masaba* then requested the Ugandan government to buy the land from the Kakungulu family and return it to the Bagisu natives whose ancestors owned it initially.¹³⁵ This process was spearheaded by Francis Mashate, the then prime minister of *Inzu ya Masaba*.¹³⁶ President Museveni heard their outcry and promised to intervene in the matter in order to ensure that the land would be given back to its natives.¹³⁷ Although this was not achieved by 2020, it gave the Bagisu some hope of their land being returned to them in the near future.¹³⁸

Another group of people who had settled in Bugisu sub-region during the pre-colonial period was a group of Arab families that arrived in the region as early as 1840 from the coast of East Africa.¹³⁹ According to Gadir,

These families included the Jaffar family, the Ahmed family, the Hajji Muzungu family and the Sheikh Kaali family. They were Oman Arabs who had migrated with Sayyid Said's delegation from Muscat to Zanzibar in the 1830s. After reaching Zanzibar, they continued into the interior of East Africa and eventually settled in Bugisu. These families arrived in Bugisu before Ahmad Ibn Ibrahim's arrival in Buganda in 1844; which meant that Bugisu received Islam before Buganda. They were credited for introducing Islam in Bugisu region. However, these Arab families didn't forcefully grab the land of the Bagisu; they instead acquired it from them through barter trade. Most of them settled in Mbale.¹⁴⁰

The latter generations of the Bagisu however were not happy with the manner in which these Arabs had acquired land in Bugisu. For instance, the Bagisu blamed them for cheating their ancestors using mirrors and beads in exchange for large pieces of land.¹⁴¹ When *Inzu ya Masaba* was installed in 2010, it demanded for this land from the *bakyootara* (half cast) families, which emerged as a result of the intermarriages between the Arabs and the native Bagisu.¹⁴² A series of land disputes between *Inzu ya Masaba* and the *bakyootara* were settled in Mbale High Court between 2010 and 2020 and the Bagisu regained some land in the Busamaga Sub-County in Mbale.¹⁴³

It should be noted that the Uganda railway was constructed by the Indian coolies between 1895 and 1929 linking the port of Mombasa to the interiors of Kenya and Uganda.¹⁴⁴ When the construction of the railway was completed in 1929, many Indians decided not to return to their motherland and settled in Uganda.¹⁴⁵ According to Patel¹⁴⁶, Mbale was one of the districts which attracted a multitude of Indians. When they arrived in Mbale, they bought pieces of land from the

native Bagisu and settled there. However, they were forced to vacate that land in 1972 when President Idi Amin Dada expelled all Indians from Uganda in his 'economic war.'¹⁴⁷

The Bagisu then took back the land which had been vacated by the Indian families.¹⁴⁸ However, when the NRM regime came to power in 1986, it permitted the return of the Indian families which had initially been expelled from Uganda.¹⁴⁸ This caused land disputes between the Indian families and the Bagisu families. The Indians claimed they had acquired that land legally and it belonged to them while the Bagisu claimed the land belonged to their ancestors.¹⁴⁹ One of the cases which was settled in court was the case of 'Patel Vs Matanda' in which the Matanda family was compensated with Plot 11, Republic Street in Mbale District.¹⁵⁰ Bob Mushikori, the then Umukuuka of *Inzu ya Masaba* supported the claims of the Bagisu and urged the Indians to return to their motherland.¹⁵¹

Inzu ya Masaba also played a major role in settling land disputes among the Bagisu in the villages of Manafwa and Bulambuli between 2010 and 2015.¹⁵² *Umukuuka* Wilson Wamimbi solved over 15 cases of land in the two districts. Most of these cases were within families especially after the death of the father.¹⁵³

4.3 Conclusion

The above discourse examined the organisation of *Inzu ya Masaba* and its significance to the Bamasaba. It starts by describing the political organisation of the cultural institution. Under that, it discussed the functions of the *Umukuuka* and also gives some details in the biographies of Wilson Wamimbi and Bob Mushikori, the first two heads of *Inzu ya Masaba*. In the socio-economic analysis, it discussed the various ways in which *Inzu ya Masaba* has been significant to the people of Bugisu and Bukusu such as the promotion of unity, the preservation of Gisu

culture, promotion of the tourism sector of Bugisu, its role in the education sector, its role in combating natural calamities in the region and how it helped in the settling land disputes among the Bamasaba between 2010 and 2020. The chapter is significant to this study in a way that it brings out some of the achievements of *Inzu ya Masaba* as a cultural institution and the various ways in which the Bamasaba find it beneficial to them in terms of not only defining their culture but also improving their standards of living to a smaller extent. The next chapter will talk about the controversies within *Inzu ya Masaba*.

4.4 Endnotes

¹Phillip A. Shero, *Embedded Leadership: The Role of Gisu Clan Elders in Uganda in Supporting and Limiting Executive Authority*, Phd Thesis, (Regent University, 2014), 46-67

²Ibid., 51.

³Ibid., 62.

⁴Joanna R. Quin, *Traditional Cultural Institutions on Customary Practices in Uganda*, Africa Spectrum, (Hamburg University Press, 2014), 29-54

⁵Paul Ndiho, *The Significance of Cultural Institutions in Uganda*, (Ndiho Media, 30th May 2019), 1-3

⁶Florence Lukosi, *Gisu Cultural Chief to be Installed*, (New Vision, 11th November 2010), 38

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid.

⁹Joseph Wanzusi, *Bamasaba elect Cultural leader*, (New Vision, 2nd August 2010), 29

¹⁰Ibid

¹¹Ibid

¹²Ibid

¹³Bridget Nanteza, *Biography: What you didn't know about fallen Umukuuka Bob Mushikori*, (The Tower Post, 5th January 2021), 1-4

¹⁴Ibid., 1.

¹⁵Ibid., 2.

¹⁶Ibid., 3-4.

¹⁷Fred Wambede, *New Bamasaba Cultural Leader Installed*, (Uganda Radio Network, 16th November 2015), 1-3

¹⁸Ibid., 1.

¹⁹Ibid., 1-2.

²⁰Ibid., 2.

²¹Ibid., 3.

²²Samuel Ssebuliba, *Bugisu Cultural Leader To Be Installed Today*, (93.3 KFM website, 15th November 2015), 1-3

²³Ibid., 1.

²⁴Ibid., 1-2.

²⁵Ibid., 2.

²⁶Ibid., 3.

²⁷*President Hails New King of the Bamasaaba*, (Red Paper, 19th November 2015), 40

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰*Elders resolve to disband Masaba Cultural rival leaders*, (The Independent, 29th May 2023), 36

³¹Ibid.

³²Interview, Robert Magomu, a lecturer at Uganda Christian University (UCU), Mbale Compass, 43 years old, 3rd February, 2023

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Interview, James Wanendeya, an elder in Namisindwa District, 70 years old, 6th November, 2022

³⁹Interview, Maani Asinaani, an elder in Namisindwa District, 68 years old, 6th November, 2022

⁴⁰Interview, Job Namugoowa, an elder in Sironko District, 72 years old, 7th November, 2022

⁴¹Interview, Muhammad Khaukha, an elder in Sironko District, 73 years old, 7th November, 2022

⁴²Jude Isabirye, *Uganda Shifts Towards Teaching Students in Local Languages*, (The Daily Monitor, 8th October 2010), 45

⁴³Christine Nawire, *The Role of Cultural Institutions in Tourism Development: A Case Study of Inzu Ya Masaba in Mbale district*, Dissertation, (Makerere University, 2021), 46-57

⁴⁴Paul Ndiho, *The Significance of Cultural Institutions in Uganda*, (Ndiho Media, 30th May 2019), 1-3

⁴⁵Interview, Enock Mafabi, an elder in Bulambuli District, 67 years old, 8th November, 2022

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸David Mafabi, *Minister drawn into Bamasaba Kingdom row, clarifies legitimate board*, (PML Daily, 9th June 2020), 1-3

⁴⁹Ibid., 2.

⁵⁰Ibid., 3.

⁵¹Interview, Michael Wabwala, an elder in Bulambuli District, 70 years old, 8th November, 2022

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Interview, Umar Nangoli, the former RDC of Mbale District, 54 years old, 6th December, 2022

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹*Unveiling the Cultural Heritage Treasures of Bugisu*, (Cross Cultural Foundation of Uganda, 2021), 1-7

⁶⁰Ibid., 3.

⁶¹Ibid., 6.

⁶²Christine Nawire, *The Role of Cultural Institutions in Tourism Development: A Case Study of Inzu Ya Masaba in Mbale district*, Masters Dissertation, (Makerere University, 2021), 56-84

⁶³Ibid., 60.

⁶⁴Ibid., 65.

⁶⁵Ibid., 71.

⁶⁶Ibid., 74.

⁶⁷Interview, Cristine Nawire, former researcher on *Inzu ya Masaba*, 34 years old, 30th January, 2023

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁷⁰Interview, Johan Wamboga, an elder in Mbale District, 76 years old, 4th December, 2022

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³*Top rated Museums in Mbale, Uganda*, (Top-Rated.comOnline, 3rd November 2022), 1-6

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, 2.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*, 3.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, 4-5.

⁷⁷*Mbale Bull Fighting Traditions*, (E and J Tourism Consultants, 2023), 1-4

⁷⁸Interview, Cristine Nawire, former researcher on *Inzu ya Masaba*, 34 years old, 30th January, 2023

⁷⁹*Ibid.*

⁸⁰*Ibid.*

⁸¹*Mbale Bull Fighting Traditions*, (E and J Tourism Consultants, 2023), 3-7

⁸²*Ibid.*, 3.

⁸³*Ibid.*, 4-5.

⁸⁴*Ibid.*, 6.

⁸⁵*Ibid.*, 7.

⁸⁶Jude Isabirye, *Uganda Shifts Towards Teaching Students in Local Languages*, (The Daily Monitor, 8th October 2010), 32

⁸⁷*Ibid.*

⁸⁸*Ibid.*

⁸⁹*Ibid.*

⁹⁰Interview, Hadija Gimono, a teacher at Nkokonjeru Primary School in Mbale, 53 years old, 10th December 2022

⁹¹*Ibid.*

⁹²*Ibid.*

⁹³*Ibid.*

⁹⁴Interview, Anthony Wakoko, an elder in Bududa District, 66 years old, 18th December, 2022

⁹⁵*Ibid.*

⁹⁶*Ibid.*

⁹⁷*Ibid.*

⁹⁸Ibid.

⁹⁹Ibid.

¹⁰⁰Interview, Jonathan Mwambu, a teacher at Nabuyonga Primary School in Mbale, 40 years old, 11th December, 2022

¹⁰¹Ibid.

¹⁰²Ibid.

¹⁰³Interview, Robert Mukamba, former principal of Mbale Progressive Secondary School in Mbale (also former LC3 of Bukasacha Division in Mbale), 44 years old, 17th December, 2022

¹⁰⁴Ibid.

¹⁰⁵Ibid.

¹⁰⁶Interview, Godfrey Mabonga, current Secretary General of Inzu ya Masaba, 41 years old, 1st February, 2023

¹⁰⁷Interview, Sumaya Nandudu, a teacher at Nkoma Secondary School in Mbale, 50 years old, 3rd December, 2022

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

¹⁰⁹Ibid.

¹¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹¹Ibid.

¹¹²Lynn M. Atuyambe, *Land slide Disaster Eastern Uganda: Rapid Assessment of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene situation in Bulucheke camp, Bududa District*, (BioMed Central, 2011), 3-21

¹¹³Ibid., 5.

¹¹⁴Interview, Masaba Mudebo, former LC1 of Doko Cell, Namatala Ward in Mbale District, 61 years old, 5th December, 2022

¹¹⁵Ibid.

¹¹⁶Atuyambe, *Land slide Disaster*, 15-20.

¹¹⁷Ibid., 17.

¹¹⁸Ibid., 19.

¹¹⁹Ibid., 20.

¹²⁰Yahudu Kitunzi, *Floods wash away bridges in Bugisu*, (The Daily Monitor, 12th December 2019), 16

¹²¹Ibid.

¹²²Ibid.

¹²³Ibid.

¹²⁴Interview, Edmond Wakoko, an elder in Bududa District, 64 years old, 18th December, 2022

¹²⁵Ibid.

¹²⁶Fred Wambede, *Residents seek takeover of Semei Kakungulu land*, (The Daily Monitor, 2nd January 2018), 50

¹²⁷Ibid.

¹²⁸Interview, Sirage Kibuuka, an elder in Bugema sub county in Mbale, 70 years old, 3rd December, 2022

¹²⁹Ibid.

¹³⁰Ibid.

¹³¹Interview, Peter Wakhweya, a teacher in Namatala Primary School in Mbale, 56 years old, 4th December, 2022

¹³²Ibid.

¹³³Ibid.

¹³⁴Ibid.

¹³⁵Interview, Francis Mashate, an elder in Manafwa District, 77 years old, 19th December, 2022

¹³⁶Ibid.

¹³⁷Ibid.

¹³⁸Ibid.

¹³⁹Ibid.

¹⁴⁰Interview, Ahmed Gadir, an Arab elder in Mbale, 79 years old, 8th December, 2022

¹⁴¹Interview, Shafar Khauka, an elder in Manafwa District, 76 years old, 19th December, 2022

¹⁴²Ibid.

¹⁴³Ibid.

¹⁴⁴Interview, Henry Lubega, *History of Uganda Railway*, article in Daily Monitor, 9th January 2021

¹⁴⁵Ibid.

¹⁴⁶Interview, Diiya Patel, an Indian elder in Mbale District, 78 years old, 8th December, 2022

¹⁴⁷Malay N. Desai, *Revisiting the 1972 Expulsion of Asians from Uganda*, (Wiley Online Library, 2012), 1-8

¹⁴⁸Christine Mungai, *15 facts about Indian diaspora in Africa*, (World Economic Forum, 25th June 2015), 2-4

¹⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁵⁰The Case of “Patel Vs Matanda (HCT-04-CV-CA 66 of 2013) [2017] UGHCCD 57 (21 April 2017)”, MHC.2024.124, box 4, file 6, Mbale High Court Archives and Special Collections, Mbale High Court, Mbale City

¹⁵¹*Ibid.*, 2.

¹⁵²Interview, Jacob Wanduulu, former Deputy Speaker of *Inzu ya Masaba*, 57 years old, 1st February, 2023

¹⁵³*Ibid.*

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CONTROVERSIES WITHIN *INZU YA MASABA* FROM 2010 TO 2020

5.0 Introduction

The previous chapter analysed the organisation and significance of *Inzu ya Masaba* to the people of Bugisu and Bukusu. This chapter examines the various controversies which emerged among the Bamasaba after the establishment of *Inzu ya Masaba*. Most of the cultural institutions in Uganda, especially those that have emerged in the NRM/A era such as the *Emorimor* Institution of the Itesos, the *Ikumbania* Institution of the Bagwere, *Inzu ya Masaba* of the Bamasaba, to mention but a few, have faced a number of controversies right from the time of their formation. These controversies are mainly characterized by administrative differences which emerge as a result of selfish interests among the various political players in the cultural institutions. From the time it was established in 2010 up to the end of *Umukuuka* Bob Mushikori's reign in 2020, *Inzu ya Masaba* has faced a lot of controversies. These controversies were concerned with the type of administration of *Inzu ya Masaba*, its true headquarters, which criteria was to be followed when choosing the *Umukuuka*, the mode of succession, its role in partisan politics, regional differences and the question of Babukusu as part of *Inzu ya Masaba*. By doing so, it looks at the two reigns of Wilson Wamimbi, the first *Umukuuka* and Bob Mushikori, his successor specifically concentrating on the challenges of the two administrations.

5.1 *Inzu ya Masaba* as a Kingdom, Chiefdom or just a Cultural Institution

Since the pre-colonial period, the Bamasaba had always struggled with the issue of the structure of their administration. The ethnic groups in Uganda were either centralised or non-centralised. The centralised societies were kingdoms such as Buganda, Toro, Bunyoro and Ankole while

most non-centralised societies were chiefdoms such as Busoga, Acholi and Teso. The Bamasaba were also a non-centralised society which was neither a kingdom nor chiefdom. This was so because of their loose political structure which was based on clan leadership¹.

When the Bamasaba formed the *Ubuhinga* in 1963, some of them such as the Bangokho and Basano claimed it was a *kingdom* and tried to refer to it as one². Other members of the Bamasaba community such as the Bakonde and the Bafumbo called it a *chiefdom*. However, those two administrative categorisations were given to it from an ‘excited’ point of view. *Ubuhinga* did not qualify to be either of the two because it was so disintegrated and was composed of only seven clans out of the twenty six clans of the Bamasaba.³ It also did not have the basic characteristics which define a kingdom or chiefdom such as a palace and royal regalia. Therefore, the *Ubuhinga* was also neither a kingdom nor chiefdom. It was just a cultural unit which had been formed by amalgamation of a few clans.⁴

When *Inzu ya Masaba* was established in 2010, the Bamasaba still struggled to find a specific administrative categorisation to call it. The Bamasaba in the village areas of districts such as Sironko, Bududa and Manafwa referred to it as a kingdom while those in the urban centers of Mbale called it chiefdom. However, although it united all the twenty six clans of the Bamasaba, had an anthem and a flag, there were some people in Mbale who still defined it as a mere ‘Association’, ‘Club’ or ‘Organisation’ such as the Rotary Club⁵. This was so because they emphasized that it wasn’t at the level of cultural institutions such as Buganda and Bunyoro both economically and politically⁶.

When the NRM regime came to power in 1986, they discovered the controversies in the way most of Uganda’s ethnic groups categorised themselves administratively. To erase these

controversies, the regime therefore referred to all of them (whether kingdom or chiefdom) as *cultural institutions*. The 1995 constitution in its Article 246 (1) did not refer to them as kingdoms nor chiefdoms; it referred to them as *cultural institutions*. This was a new name which put all of them in the same bracket, irrespective of their capacities.⁷ *Inzu ya Masaba* was therefore neither a kingdom nor chiefdom but a cultural institution.

However, Wanzala⁸ emphasizes that there were still those defiant ones who did not see it as a reform for the better; they saw the new name as a ‘diabolical’ machination by the NRM government to gradually eradicate the cultural heritage of the people of Uganda. They therefore stuck to calling themselves as a kingdom and refused to define themselves as a cultural Institution. This was mainly the group of Bagisu from Bududa who were led by Joseph Kanyanya, who crowned himself as the *king of Babukusu kingdom*, established his headquarters in Bududa and unsuccessfully attempted to secede from *Inzu ya Masaba*.⁹ This negatively affected *Inzu ya Masaba* in a way that it made it hard for the cultural institution to unite the Bamasaba due to the differences which had emerged among them on what administrative categorization they would give to the cultural institution.

5.2 The Question of the Headquarters of *Inzu ya Masaba*

From the pre-colonial period, the Bamasaba did not have specific headquarters where their political matters would be discussed. This was so because they were disintegrated and each clan was on its own. Mutoto cultural grounds was often used for cultural matters such as circumcision ceremonies, however, it was not used as the political headquarters of their leadership. Each clan managed its affairs independently and homestead of the clan head became the administrative

centre for that particular clan. The clan heads had big trees in their homesteads whose sheds were used as the meeting centers.¹⁰

When the *Ubuhinga* was established in 1963, it also did not have specific headquarters. The *Umuhinga* Yonasani Mungoma used his own home in Bubuulo as the ‘palace’.¹¹ The people who pledged allegiance to him such as the Basano, Bangokho, among others would go to his home to seek counsel, report their grievances and settle disputes.¹² One of the reasons why Yonasani Mungoma was chosen as the *Umuhinga* was his wealth. He was so wealthy and had a very magnificent home with a large compound which could accommodate over 1000 people.¹³ Therefore, his home acted as the palace of the *Ubuhinga*.

In 2010 when *Inzu ya Masaba* was formally established, there was a heated debate among the Bamasaba about where the headquarters of the cultural institution would be. Some people suggested that it should be Mutoto Cultural Grounds because of its rich history in the culture of the Bamasaba.¹⁵ It was the circumcision center where the *grand Imbalu* (the general male circumcision ceremony) was conducted in every ‘even’ year.¹⁶ The circumcision season was the only period when all the 26 clan heads would come together. The Mutoto Cultural Grounds therefore acted as a converging center for all the 26 clans of the Bamasaba. Therefore, it was seen as the perfect headquarters for *Inzu ya Masaba*.

However, the Mutoto Cultural Grounds did not have any infrastructure that would accommodate the *Inzu ya Masaba* and its activities. It was just an empty field where various Bamasaba would camp in for a few days and return to their respective homes after the ceremony. On other days, it was just a play field for children and sports activities.¹⁷ In addition, it was not also possible to quickly construct administrative offices in Mutoto which could be used for the smooth running

of the affairs of the cultural Institution. This was so because the Bamasaba claimed that *Inzu ya Masaba* did not have enough funds for that purpose. Therefore, Mutoto remained just a circumcision center, although its residents still considered it as the headquarters of *Inzu ya Masaba*.¹⁸ There was however an initiative by the administration of the *Umukuuka* Bob Mushikori to lobby for funds from the central government and other sponsors to construct an administrative post at Mutoto which would act as the headquarters of *Inzu ya Masaba*. However, that was not achieved.¹⁹

Umukuuka Wilson Wamimbi lobbied to the local government of Mbale district in 2010 to provide *Inzu ya Masaba* with an administrative post.²⁰ Through a series of discussions among the councilors of Industrial Division in Mbale district, the building in Maluku which was comprised of the District Administration (DA) offices was given to *Inzu ya Masaba* as their provisional headquarters.²¹ The DA building was initially headed by the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), the technical head of all civil servants in Mbale district. The CAO's office was then transferred to the District Regional Block, the building where the Resident District Commissioner's (RDC) office was. The former DA offices in Maluku, Mbale acted as the headquarters of *Inzu ya Masaba* upto 2020, when the reign of *Umukuuka* Bob Mushikori came to an end.²²

The location of *Inzu ya Masaba* headquarters of DA's office was opposed by most of the Bamasaba in various parts of the region, especially the residents of Mutoto and Bubulo because Maluku town had no historical attachment to the cultural heritage of the Bamasaba.²³ They wanted the headquarters of the cultural institution to be at a place which was historically significant to their culture.²⁴ They therefore insisted on either Mutoto or Bubuulo. Bubuulo Sub County was significant because that's where *Umuhinga* Yonasani Mungoma's home was.²⁴

Since he was the first leader of the Bamasaba, his home area would be significant in hosting the headquarters of the newly formed cultural institution.²⁵ This was mainly advocated for by his family members such as Charles Mungoma, his son and Priscilla Mungoma, his granddaughter.²⁶ The protests towards using Maluku as the headquarters of *Inzu ya Masaba* started right from the first administration of *Umukuuka* Wilson Wamimbi till the end of *Umukuuka* Bob Mushikori's reign.²⁷

The headquarters of *Inzu ya Masaba* in Maluku were opposed by most Bamasaba from other districts, especially Bududa because they were frustrated with the domination of Mbale in most of the social, political and economic sectors of Masabaland.²⁸ These residents of Bududa wanted to reduce the influence of Mbale in the cultural matters of the region by advocating for the establishment of the headquarters in a different district in order to create regional balance.²⁹ Even the Babukusu of Kenya wanted an alternate headquarter in Bungoma County in order to have a feeling of belonging towards the Institution.³⁰ This was so because they wanted the *Umukuuka* to once in a while travel to his other headquarters in Kenya in order to visit his people on the other side of the border.³¹ Although Maluku was greatly opposed, it remained as the headquarters of *Inzu ya Masaba*. This therefore affected the progress and the activities of the cultural institution in a way that those who opposed Maluku, especially the people of Bududa started boycotting some cultural activities such as *Imbalu* and coronation of the new *Umukuuka*.³²

5.3 The Leadership Question in *Inzu ya Masaba*

During the creation of *Inzu ya Masaba*, the Bamasaba differed on what was to be the specific criteria which was to be followed when choosing their leader. A small group of the Bamasaba preferred a hereditary system of leadership; one where the son of the chosen *Umukuuka* would

succeed him upon his demise.³³ They wanted the *Umukuuka* to come from the family of Yonasani Mungoma, the former *Umuhinga* between 1963 and 1966.³⁴ Charles Mungoma, the son of Yonasani Mungoma was proposed to be the *Umukuuka*.³⁵ This meant that the Mungoma family was to be the ruling family of the Bamasaba for the latter generations. However, this was greatly opposed by many Bamasaba because they wanted the *Umukuuka* to be democratically elected in an organised election.³⁶ They therefore proposed to Mungoma to contest for the position if he really wanted it. However, he declined the offer and did not contest. The idea of establishing a hereditary system was therefore rejected and the position of *Umukuuka* was subjected to an election.³⁷

The *Umukuuka* was to be elected by the 26 clan leaders of the Bamasaba. Each of these leaders would converge in an organised venue and cast their ballots upon which candidate they desired for the position.³⁸ The election would be organized by an electoral commission within the cultural institution which would be supervised by the Ministry for Gender, Labor and Social Development.³⁹ The victorious candidate would then be coronated in an organized function at Mutoto Cultural Grounds.⁴⁰ His office was established in Maluku, at the former DA building.⁴¹

The idea of democratically electing the *Umukuuka* was adopted and developed as a policy of *Inzu ya Masaba*.⁴² However, a section of the Bagisu, especially those from Bududa who were led by Joseph Kanyanya opposed the idea of election of *Umukuuka* because they strongly believed in a hereditary system of government.⁴³ They saw elections as a move by the central government towards infiltrating into the affairs of *Inzu ya Masaba*.⁴⁴ It was further argued that those who were advocating for a hereditary *Umukuuka* were great admirers of Buganda which did not involve elections in determining who became the *Kabaka*.⁴⁵ That explains why Joseph Kanyanya imposed himself as *king* in 2012 and established an alternate *palace* in *Bududa*. Despite this

being shortlived, it was cherished by a section of Bamasaba, especially those who resided in Bududa and Bubulo.⁵⁰

The other controversy about *Umukuuka* was circumcision. To majority, circumcision was a pre-condition for one to become the leader of *Inzu ya Masaba*. This is best illustrated by Mulekwa who emphasizes that,

The *Umukuuka* was supposed to be a man. Not just any man; but an elderly *Mumasaba* man who was circumcised, married, with children and grandchildren. He had to be circumcised because circumcision was the most integral and significant subculture of the Bamasaba. Circumcision was the first aspect which defined them and their culture. Any male who had attained adulthood and wasn't circumcised was regarded as a 'boy' and he wouldn't even be allowed to marry anyone's daughter. In fact, he was not even regarded a *Mumasaba*. Additionally, by circumcision they meant the '*imbalu*', the traditional circumcision ceremony of the Bamasaba which involved drumming and dancing.⁵¹

Therefore, anyone who was circumcised in any other mode which was not *imbalu* did not qualify to contest for the position of *Umukuuka* because it was perceived that he and his family did not respect the culture of the Bamasaba.⁵² During his circumcision ceremony, he must have been brave and fearless while 'facing the knife'.⁵³ If it was discovered that he expressed any element of fear, he also did not qualify to contest for the position of *Umukuuka* because it was perceived that he was a 'coward' and would not protect his people.⁵⁴ Therefore, the aspect of circumcision was taken very seriously as far as qualifying to contest for the position of *Umukuuka* was concerned. However, this idea was opposed by some Bamasaba, most especially the Muslims who got circumcised in Islamic ways because their religious beliefs were against exposing their private parts to the public. They perceived it as a move to eliminate Muslims from contesting for the position of *Umukuuka*.⁵⁵

The *Umukuuka* had to be an elderly married man who was a grandfather. This was so because it was perceived that married men were more responsible and organised than unmarried ones. The Bamasaba also believed that married men could make better leaders since they were already leaders in their families.⁵⁶ According to Makowe:

Any man who wasn't a grandfather did not qualify to contest for the position of *Umukuuka*. Since the name comes from the word '*kuuka*' which means grandfather, the *Umukuuka* was perceived to be the grandfather of all the Bamasaba. The Bamasaba respected elders a lot because they believed that the older one grew, the wiser he became. Therefore, they wanted someone old enough to be a grandfather. They also emphasized the factor of age because it would make it easier for the people to accord him the respect that he deserved unlike a young leader, it was believed that he did not have an overwhelming ambition that would make him develop selfish interests and he would treat them with passion because grandfathers were perceived to be loving and caring.⁵⁷

Although, this idea was embraced and incorporated into a policy, a section of the Bamasaba opposed it because, especially those from Bududa. They argued that even the young men, unmarried elderly men or elderly men who were not grandfathers could also make good leaders. The proponents of this view argued that it was wrong to alienate them from the position of *Umukuuka*.⁵⁸

The *Umukuuka* was supposed to administer the cultural institution for a term of five years until the next election.⁵⁹ According to Article 8.4 of the constitution of *Inzu ya Masaba*, his term was non-renewable and he was not allowed to contest again for another term. Upon the end of his term, he could only play an advisory role towards the institution.⁶⁰ The Bamasaba still had to accord him the respect they initially gave him.⁶¹ He was to be consulted by his successor on various matters concerning the institution because he was believed to be more knowledgeable about its affairs. It was also his role to handover the instruments of power to his successor during the latter's coronation.⁶²

To Mulelenge, the idea of ruling for one non-renewable term was proposed because the Bamasaba wanted to give other clans a chance to be represented, they wanted to eradicate the vice of greed, selfish desires and self-entitlement among the ruling clans, they believed that the *Umukuuka* would be too old by the time he handed over power and therefore didn't have enough vigor to continue ruling the cultural institution, they wanted diverse and dynamic leadership and they also believed that it was the best form of democracy. Although this idea was accepted by the majority of the Bamasaba and incorporated into a policy, those who opposed it claimed that it was not supposed to be a question of 'who' but rather a question of 'what'. In other words, they had to stop concentrating on who was the leader and instead concentrate on his service delivery. Therefore, some Bamasaba were fine with the idea of one *Umukuuka* ruling for more than one term.⁶³

Since the 26 clans of the Masaba were divided into three categories; the descendants of Wanale, the descendants of Mubuuya and the descendants of Mwambu, the *Umukuukas* would be alternating from one category to another. The first term would be ruled by a descendant of Wanale, the second term would be ruled by a descendant of Mubuuya and the third term would be ruled by a descendant of Mwambu.⁶⁴ This explains why Wilson Wamimbi, a member of the *Bangkokho* clan which fell under the descendants of Wanale was the first *Umukuuka* from 2010 to 2015⁶⁵ and Bob Mushikori, a member of the *Babumbo* clan which fell under the descendants of Mubuuya became the second *Umukuuka* from 2015 to 2020.⁶⁶ It automatically meant that the third *Umukuuka* would come from any of the clans which fell under the descendants of Mwambu.⁶⁷ This was done to create 'clan balance' in the leadership of *Inzu ya Masaba*; so that each clan would feel represented.⁶⁸ However, this criterion was opposed by some Bamasaba who

wanted the elections to be free to any category each time they were organized. This however became the resolution and it was accepted by the majority of Bamasaba in the region.⁶⁹

During the vetting of the candidates who had shown interest in contesting for the position of *Umukuuka* in 2010, Joseph Wash Kanyanya was one of the candidates who were disqualified. He failed to qualify because he was 39 years old and therefore not old enough to be *Umukuuka*. Secondly, he was not a grandfather yet it was paramount for the *Umukuuka* to have grandchildren. Thirdly and most importantly, he was not circumcised through the *imbalu* ceremony; he was circumcised in a hospital while living in United States America in his younger days. Therefore, the vetting committee nullified his candidature. However, he had hundreds of supporters who criticized the vetting committee for being biased and unfair. It therefore propelled him to establish a parallel cultural institution in Bududa in 2012 which he referred to as the *Babukusu Kingdom*. This caused a lot of controversy and division among the Bamasaba.⁷⁰

The Influence of Partisan Politics was another matter which caused controversy among the Bamasaba during election of the *Umukuuka*. As much as it was paramount for the cultural institution to have a good working relationship with the central government and the local government respectively, there were supposed to be limits to that relationship.⁷¹ Article 246 (1) of the 1995 constitution of Uganda emphasised that the newly restored cultural institutions were prohibited from taking part in partisan politics. The state also had to have a limit on the extent to which it intervened in the cultural affairs of the institutions.⁷² However, the influence of partisan politics was realised in *Inzu ya Masaba* right from the installation of the *Umukuuka*. Political parties like National Resistance Movement (NRM) and Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) openly showed interest in fronting candidates who subscribed to their political agenda.⁷³

Even the local politicians from both the central and local government would campaign for their candidates to the clan leaders. This caused division among the clan leaders because it meant that they had to pick a political side.⁷⁴ It was alleged that both Wilson Wamimbi and Bob Mushikori, the first and second *Umukuuka* respectively were cadres of NRM and were financed by the political party to ‘bribe’ their way to power.⁷⁵ It explains why they both faced a lot of opposition from the Bamasaba who subscribed to other political parties; most especially FDC, the most dominant political party in the region at the time.⁷⁶ It also explains why a section of the Bamasaba from Bududa led by Joseph Kanyanya attempted to secede away from *Inzu ya Masaba* and form their own cultural institution in 2012. It should be noted that Joseph Kanyanya was a strong supporter of FDC and could not stand being led by an *Umukuuka* who belonged to NRM.⁷⁷

The Babukusu of Kenya had a different agenda concerning the matter of ascension to power and succession of the *Umukuuka*. According to Wotunga:

Since the Babukusu were the minority, they would be under-represented in most of the affairs of the cultural institution. They therefore suggested that *Umukuukaship* should alternate between the Bagisu of Uganda and the Babukusu of Kenya. That meant that if the Bagisu produced the *Umukuuka* who ruled the first term, the Babukusu would also produce the *Umukuuka* who was to rule the second term. That was the only way that a Kenyan could also rule the cultural Institution. It also explains why they suggested that the cultural institution should have a parallel headquarter in Bungoma, Kenya.”

However, this idea was strongly rejected by the Bagisu who saw it as a dividing factor. It should be noted that one of the core aims of *Inzu ya Masaba* was to promote unity among the Bagisu and Babukusu by eradicating the idea of them thinking they were different despite belonging to two different countries.⁷⁹ Many Babukusu in Bungoma and Trans-Nzoia were dissatisfied with this analogy and therefore viewed the Bagisu as greedy and selfish.⁸⁰

5.4 The Question of Bagisu and Babukusu

The Bagisu are the Bamasaba of Uganda while the Babukusu are the Bamasaba of Kenya.⁸¹ The Bagisu belong to the six Ugandan districts of Mbale, Bududa, Namisindwa, Bulambuli, Sironko and Manafwa⁸² while the Babukusu belong to the three Kenyan counties of Bumgoma, Trans-Nzoia and Uasin-Gishu.⁸³ The two nationalities of the Bamasaba emerged after the partition of Africa in the late 20th century. The borderline that was drawn in 1894 by the British colonial Administration separating the ‘Uganda Protectorate’ (current Uganda) from the ‘East African Protectorate’ (current Kenya) passed through Masabaland and divided the Bamasaba into two different nationalities.⁸⁴ Those on the Ugandan side came to be known as the Bagisu and those on the Kenyan side were known as the Babukusu. It should be noted that, despite belonging to two different nations, they were ‘brothers and sisters’ of each other who shared the same land, ancestry origin, language and culture.⁸⁵

Due to their polygamous nature, the Bamasaba were greatly affected by the borderline which divided Uganda and Kenya. To Watila, this was a challenge to Inzu ya Masaba in the following terms;

If a *Mumasaba* man had two families; one family on the Ugandan side of the border and another family on the Kenyan side of the border, he was both a Ugandan and a Kenyan which automatically made him both a Mugisu and a Mukusu. Additionally, his children on the Ugandan side were Bagisu while the ones on the Kenyan side were Babukusu. This caused some confusion in the true identity of the Bamasaba. On top of that, he had to go through a lot of unnecessary ‘bureaucracy’ when crossing the border to see his other family.⁸⁶

The difference in nationality psychologically affected the Bamasaba in a way that they gradually ceased to see themselves as ‘brothers and sisters’ and started referring to themselves as different nations.⁸⁷ That’s how the general name, ‘Bamasaba’ was undermined and the specific names, ‘Bagisu’ and ‘Babukusu’ were emphasized.⁸⁸ Gizamba adds that:

Most of the Bamasaba in Uganda completely lost track of their relatives in Kenya and vice versa. The borderline ‘added salt to the wound’ of the Bamasaba as far as unity was concerned. This was so because before the borderline was drawn, the Bamasaba were already a disintegrated society whose clans did not work in unanimity. The borderline therefore made many of them, most especially on the Kenyan side to lose track of their ancestral origin, give up on their culture and adopt new cultures such as the western culture of the British colonialists and the cultures of their neighboring societies.⁹⁰

Divisions between the Bagisu and Babukusu intensified further when Bugisu was intruded by Semei Kakungulu. He was a Muganda colonial agent who helped the British to extend colonial rule to Eastern Uganda.⁹¹ After a series of colonial expeditions in the regions of Busoga, Bukedi and Teso, Semei Kakungulu finally settled in Bugisu in 1902.⁹² He established his home in Gangama, Mbale district and lived among the Bagisu till his death in 1928.⁹³ While living in Mbale, Semei Kakungulu introduced the kiganda culture to the Bagisu; many of whom adopted it hence undermining their Masaba culture.⁹⁴ This culture included the Luganda language, *Ganda* dress code such as ‘gomesi’ and ‘kanzu’, kiganda foods such as ‘matooke’, kiganda way of greeting such as kneeling of girls while greeting, kiganda ceremonies such as ‘kukyala’, ‘kwanjula’ etc.⁹⁵

The Bagisu, especially those in Mbale district therefore amalgamated their culture with that of the Baganda by reaching the extent of introducing some Luganda words into their Lugisu dialects. Words such as *mulamu* (in law), *mulimba* (liar), among others were added to Lugisu hence slightly changing it and making it sound like Luganda.⁹⁶ Even the Babukusu mixed up their culture and dialects with their neighbouring Kenyan ethnic groups, most especially the Kalenjins, Masai and Nandi.⁹⁷ It reached a point where a Mugisu found difficulty while communicating with a Mukusu.⁹⁸ This also further led to division between the two groups of the Bamasaba.

In the 1970s, during the regime of President Idd Amin Dada, many Bagisu fled to exile in Kenya in order to escape the atrocities which were being committed by Amin's regime.⁹⁹ Many of them settled in Bungoma and reconnected with their Babukusu relatives.¹⁰⁰ This enabled them to introduce the new lugisu dialects which had emerged after the infiltration of the Luganda language.¹⁰¹ They got comfortable and permanently settled there. Even when Amin was overthrown in 1979, they refused to return to Uganda. This helped to gradually bridge the gap which had existed between the Bagisu and Babukusu.¹⁰²

Inzu ya Masaba was established in 2010 in order to bridge the gap between the Bagisu of Uganda and the Babukusu of Kenya.¹⁰³ They were all recognized as one society, one ethnic group and one nation; irrespective of the 'colonial boundaries.'¹⁰⁴ Masole stresses that:

To achieve this aim, the first attempt of the cultural institution was to erase the titles; 'Bagisu' and 'Babukusu' and emphasize the general title, 'Bamasaba'. They would from that time onwards only refer to themselves as the Bamasaba. This attempt failed because the two groups were used to calling themselves Bagisu and Babukusu respectively.¹⁰⁵

A section of the Bagisu in Uganda actually claimed that 'Bamasaba' was just another term to mean the 'Bagisu' and it did not include the Babukusu of Kenya.¹⁰⁶ The Babukusu in some areas of Bungoma County also distanced themselves from the term 'Bamasaba' and agreed to the claim that it was another title for the Bagisu of Uganda which they were not part of.¹⁰⁷ More confusion was caused when the Bamasaba of Bududa referred to themselves as the 'real' Babukusu, not the ones living in Kenya.¹⁰⁸ That explains why when Joseph Kanyanya established an alternate cultural institution in Bududa in 2012, he named it *Babukusu Kingdom*.¹⁰⁹

It is explained by Maka¹¹⁰ that the term 'Mugisu' came from the Masai word 'Nkisu' which means a bull. One day, Masaba's cows were raided by the Masai who constantly used the word

nkisu. A few days later, he narrated the incident to his neighbors and he mispronounced the word 'Nkisu' by instead saying 'Mugisu'. They then nicknamed him 'Mugisu'. According to Muduwa¹¹¹, the term 'Mugisu' was a nickname given to Mwambu, the eldest son of Masaba by Masaba's brother in law who was a Masai. Nakayenze¹¹² stresses that the clans which emerged from Mwambu such as Bayobo, Bahugu, and Baginyanya claimed that they were the 'real' Bagisu. Most of these clans resided in Sironko and Bulambuli. As for the Babukusu, they got their name because they settled on the slopes of Bukusu Hill.¹¹³ However, although the idea was opposed by some, it should be noted that both the Bagisu and Babukusu descended from Masaba; therefore they all qualified to be referred to as the Bamasaba.¹¹⁴

Some sections of the Babukusu of Kenya, especially those on Trans-Nzoia aligned themselves more to the Luyia ethnic group of Kenya than to the Bagisu of Uganda. Their belonging to the Luyia took precedence over their belonging to the Bamasaba.¹¹⁵ This was a problem that *Inzu ya Masaba* attempted to solve right from its establishment; to form a united cultural institution of the Bamasaba in which they all recognized themselves as 'brothers' and worked in unanimity.¹¹⁶

5.5 Government Intervention in the Cultural Affairs of *Inzu ya Masaba* and Vice Versa

Although it was significant for cultural institutions to have a good working relationship with the central government and the local government respectively, there were supposed to be limits to that relationship. Article 246 (1) of the 1995 constitution of Uganda emphasized that the newly restored cultural institutions were prohibited from taking part in the political affairs of both the central government and the local government.¹¹⁷ The state also had to have a limit on the extent to which it intervened in the cultural affairs of the cultural institutions. However, the intervention

of the government in the affairs of *Inzu ya Masaba* was realized in the cultural institution right from its establishment.¹¹⁸

From the installation of *Inzu ya Masaba* in 2010, many local politicians in Bugisu region were enthusiastic towards asserting their influence over the newly formed cultural institution. These included Members of Parliament, Councilors of local government, Resident District Commissioners (RDCs), Mayors, among others.¹¹⁹ Manana explains that these politicians wanted to use the cultural institution as their means of consolidating political power.¹²⁰ Since the cultural institution upheld the sacred traditional beliefs of the Bamasaba, most of the Bagisu wholeheartedly respected it and pledged allegiance to it. This meant that the orders of the *Umukuuka* were greatly respected and followed. If the *Umukuuka* made a declaration, the vast majority of the Bagisu acted upon it without question. Therefore, whoever controlled the *Umukuuka*, controlled the Bamasaba general population.

During the 2010 election of the first *Umukuuka*, the local politicians in Bugisu actively participated and took sides hence dividing the masses into two antagonistic camps; the government side and the opposition side.¹²¹ On one hand, Makyese notes that;

FDC was the most dominant political party in Bugisu region. The then Members of Parliament (MPs) such as Nandala Mafabi of Budadiri West constituency in Sironko and Jack Wamamga Wamai of Mbale Municipality constituency in Mbale District mobilized the Bamasaba to support Canon Codova Wakiro, a fellow member of FDC. They convinced the 26 clan heads to vote Wakiro because they expected him to implement their political agenda upon coming to power. They also wanted an *Umukuuka* who would convince the Bamasaba to vote for them in the forthcoming parliamentary elections of 2011. Therefore, they wanted to bring an *Umukuuka* to power who would serve both their selfish and partisan interests.¹²²

On the other hand, Mukhwana states that;

The NRM politicians such as Bernard Mujasi, the then Local Council (LC) Chairman V of Mbale district and Michael Werikhe Kafabusa, the then MP of Bungokho South constituency in Mbale district also supported Wilson Wamimbi, an NRM cadre. They campaigned for him among the 26 clan heads so that he could become the *Umukuuka* of *Inzu ya Masaba*. The 26 clan heads were allegedly ‘bribed’ by the NRM secretariat to elect Wilson Wamimbi to power. This was because the regime couldn’t stand a cultural leader who belonged to the ‘opposition’ as it would be disastrous to their political agenda and their general support among the masses. As a result, Wilson Wamimbi defeated Canon Wakiro in the election and became the *Umukuuka* in 2010.¹²³

The political factor is one of the reasons why the reign of Wilson Wamimbi (2010-2015) was full of controversy.¹²⁴ When Wilson Wamimbi became *Umukuuka*, he used his position to campaign for Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, the NRM candidate in the 2011 presidential election. He also campaigned for NRM cadres such as James Mutende and Nakayenze Connie Galiwango in the 2011 parliamentary elections.¹²⁵ Although he claimed to support NRM as a means of acquiring funds which would develop *Inzu ya Masaba*, he became so unpopular among most of the Bagisu, especially those who supported FDC. This was so because FDC was the most popular political party in Bugisu region.¹²⁶ Many Bagisu therefore lost hope in him and saw him as a ‘puppet’ of the NRM regime.

The ascension of Bob Mushikori to power as the second *Umukuuka* of *Inzu ya Masaba* was also attributed to the influence of partisan politics. Unlike the 2010 election which had only two candidates (Wamimbi and Wakiro), the 2015 election had four candidates. They were; Bob Mushikori, Walimbwa Peke, Gimui Kiboma and Gregory Mafabi. The two strongest candidates were Bob Mushikori and Walimbwa Peke.¹²⁷ The NRM party supported Mushikori, an NRM cadre while FDC supported Walimbwa who was their member. Their competition was too intense that Mushikori defeated Walimbwa by a range of only two votes.¹²⁸

After the election, Walimbwa Peke refused to concede defeat and petitioned for a re-election claiming that ‘the ground was not leveled’. He claimed that some delegates were abducted, detained and forced to vote for Mushikori through threats and bribes.¹²⁹ However, his claim was not substantiated in court and he lost the case miserably hence conceding to Bob Mushikori as the second *Umukuuka* of *Inzu ya Masaba*. Omar Njofu, who had initially been a candidate for the seat and later withdrew his candidature, was also criticized for having been bribed by NRM to leave the seat and support Bob Mushikori. However, he denied the claims and attributed his withdrawal to personal reasons.¹³⁰

Umukuuka Bob Mushikori was a loyalist of the NRM regime and his reign was full of controversy due to that factor. He on many occasions referred to President Museveni as his ‘brother’. He strongly campaigned for NRM candidates in the 2016 presidential and parliamentary elections respectively.¹³¹ In 2017, he was influenced by the NRM regime to support the removal of the ‘Presidential Age Limit’ law from the Constitution of Uganda. He mobilized and convinced his subjects to support the controversial constitutional amendment; something which made him very unpopular among the vast majority of the Bamasaba.¹³² He also attempted to amend the constitution of *Inzu ya Masaba*, specifically the article which emphasizes that each *Umukuuka* was rule for only one non-renewable term. This was because he wanted to hold on to power. However, he was greatly opposed and failed to achieve it.¹³³

5.6 The Corruption Scandal of Wilson Wamimbi’s Reign

When *Inzu ya Masaba* was established in 2010, one of its core aims was to foster the economic development of Bugisu¹³⁴. This could only be achieved by diversifying its sources of revenue. Some of the ways in which the cultural institution earned its revenue was through collecting

money from circumcision events, receiving grants from the government, local politicians, NGOs, local tycoons and well-wishers.¹³⁵ Between 2010 and 2014, the NRM government donated over 200 million to *Inzu ya Masaba* to finance various projects of the Bamasaba.¹³⁶

However, the masses of the Bamasaba could hardly notice any economic development within the institution¹³⁷. *Inzu ya Masaba* even failed to construct an Administrative Post which could act as its headquarters.¹³⁸ It was instead granted an old building which initially belonged to the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO).¹³⁹ *Inzu ya Masaba* also failed to invest its revenue by setting up financial projects which would generate more revenue and also employ the vast majority of Bamasaba who were unemployed.¹⁴⁰

At the zenith of *Umukuuka* Wamimbi's reign in 2015, the institution was bankrupt. It could not even finance the next election.¹⁴¹ Many Bamasaba were flabbergasted by this discovery and could only wonder where all the collected funds had disappeared to. They then demanded for accountability. This therefore called for an audit into the treasury of the institution in order to ascertain to the whereabouts of such funds. As a result of this, a committee which was led by Bob Mushikori, the then Minister of Culture in charge of diaspora and other seven members was assigned to carry out an audit into the finances of *Inzu ya Masaba*¹⁴². Investigations were thoroughly done by interrogating the cabinet ministers of *Inzu ya Masaba*, some previous sponsors of the institution clan heads and some key informants among the masses. Bob Mushikori and his committee discovered that some cabinet members within *Inzu ya Masaba* would solicit for funds from various sponsors without declaring the funds to the treasury of the institution.¹⁴³ It was thus discovered that the cultural institution had corrupt leaders who embezzled most of its funds and used it for personal benefit and to serve their selfish interests; instead of working for the general good of the community¹⁴⁴. Consequently according to Wambi,

the corruption exhibited by the leaders of *Inzu ya Masaba* led to a lot of criticism of *Umukuuka* Wilson Wamimbi and his ministers. His reign was accused of being corrupt and ‘fruitless’.¹⁴⁵ The Bamasaba also considered him to have been a weak leader who did not do much to uplift the standards of life among his people. Bob Mushikori’s role in unveiling the corruption of Wamimbi’s regime made him popular among the vast majority of the Bamasaba and partially contributed to his rise to power as the second *Umukuuka* of *Inzu ya Masaba*.¹⁴⁶

Further more, when Mushikori came to power on 15th November 2015, he described his predecessor and his team as ‘selfish people with selfish interests’ and promised to make financial reforms and fight corruption. He argued that;

Instead of focusing on the general growth of Bugisu, my predecessors centralised power upon few individuals. This gave them the latitude of withdrawing the cultural institution’s funds without accountability.¹⁴⁶

He therefore embarked on building an inclusive cultural institution for the benefit of all the Bamasaba. Although his reign was also characterized by many controversies, its levels of corruption were not as overwhelming as during Wamimbi’s reign.¹⁴⁷

5.7 The Bududa Secession Crisis

In 2012, a section of the Bamasaba from Bududa established an alternate cultural institution which they referred to as *Babukusu kingdom*.¹⁴⁸ The *Babukusu kingdom* was at times referred to as the *Ibududa Cultural Kingdom*.¹⁴⁹ This group of people did not refer to themselves as the Bamasaba but rather called themselves the ‘Babukusu’. This was an alternate version of the Babukusu different from that of the Bamasaba of Kenya¹⁵⁰. They seceded away from *Inzu ya Masaba* and distanced themselves from its activities. They greatly opposed the principles upon which it was established and embarked on creating a ‘better’ cultural institution¹⁵¹. They wanted

to make Bududa District the headquarters of all the Bagisu in the region and end the domination of Mbale District in most of their cultural affairs. They also claimed that their new *kingdom* was composed of seventy seven clans as opposed to the twenty six clans of *Inzu ya Masaba*. However, their so called seventy seven clans emerged as a result of referring to even the sub-clans as clans.¹⁵²

The *Babukusu* were led by Joseph Wash Kanyanya. He declared himself as the king of *Babukusu kingdom* and was sworn in on 11th August 2012 by the Grade One magistrate of Bududa District as the *Umukhungu*, a new title which meant ‘the grand noble’ or ‘noble of nobles’.¹⁵³ His coronation however was condemned by the High Court Order of Bududa District.¹⁵⁴ The *Babukusu* of Bududa refused to attend the *Imbalu* festivals which were organized in Mutoto, Mbale and decided to organize parallel *Imbalu* festivals in Bududa. In 2014 and 2016, *Umukhungu* Joseph Kanyanya attempted to organize parallel *Imbalu* festivals in Bududa as opposed to those which were organized at Mutoto Cultural Grounds, Mbale by *Inzu ya Masaba*.¹⁵⁵ However, both his attempts were unsuccessful because they were suppressed by the local police. On Monday August 2016, police surrounded his home in Bulucheke Sub County in Bududa District and held him at ‘house arrest’ for 12 hours in order to prevent him from organizing the event.¹⁵⁶

Before these divisions, Joseph Kanyanya had initially declared his intention of becoming *Umukuuka* of *Inzu ya Masaba* in 2010. However, he was dismissed by the vetting committee which claimed he did not have the necessary qualifications to contest for the position.¹⁵⁷ One of them was that he was not a grandfather and the other reason was that he was not circumcised through *Imbalu* (he was circumcised in hospital).¹⁵⁸ This frustrated him and his followers who ridiculed the ‘unfair’ criteria of choosing the *Umukuuka*. It was one of the factors which

motivated him to establish the *Babukusu Kingdom*, a parallel cultural institution in Bududa District.¹⁵⁹

In 2018, *Umukhungu* Joseph Kanyanya attempted to organize another parallel Imbalu festival in Bududa as opposed to the one of Mutoto. This time it was successful; the police didn't stop him. The ceremony was successfully made and 20 young men were circumcised.¹⁶⁰ However, this greatly disappointed the Bamasaba who subscribed to the leadership of *Inzu ya Masaba*. Some of them perceived this as a political move by the NRM regime to 'divide and rule' the Bagisu, most of whom were supporters of FDC.¹⁶¹ For instance, Mushikori described that festival in the following terms;

The Imbalu festival being organized in Bududa is illegal. Joseph Kanyanya is an imposter and a boy whose primary intention is to disorganize the Bamasaba.¹⁶²

Kanyanya on the other hand was unbothered by Mushikori's claims.¹⁶³ He replied to him that; “

I am not concerned about what is happening in *Inzu ya Masaba* because I am not a Mugisu, but a Mukusu. So, Mushikori also does not have to be concerned about the affairs of *Babukusu Kingdom* because he is not a Mukusu but a Mugisu.¹⁶⁴

As we had already noted earlier, Kanyanya had spent most of his 'younger days' in the United States of America (USA). As such he was seen by many Bamasaba as a 'nominal' Mugisu (just a Mugisu by name but not in action) who did not entirely comprehend the cultures and norms of the Bamasaba¹⁶⁵. He responded to such claims in 2004 by proclaiming that,

One of the reasons which motivated me to return to Uganda, specifically my homeland Bugisu is to liberate the Bagisu from a constant state of slumber which they had been in for generations and take them to the 'Promised Land'. I received a revelation from *God* through a dream commanding him to become the *King* of the Bagisu. I am just like Moses of the Holy Bible who liberated the Israelites from the diabolical Pharaoh of Egypt.¹⁶⁶

It should be noted that this was not the first time that Joseph Kanyanya's was proclaiming himself as a *king* of the Babukusu in 2012; it was actually the second attempt. In the first instance, he declared himself as the *king* of the Bagisu was in 2005.¹⁶⁷ After his so called *revelation* from *God* in 2004, he returned from USA and attended the *Imbalu* festival of that year. While at the festival, he acquired contacts of some cultural leaders. He then embarked on a series of meetings with them on how he could establish *Bugisu Kingdom* and impose himself as *king*. On 10th August 2005, Kanyanya declared Bugisu as a *Kingdom* and proclaimed himself as *King*.¹⁶⁸

He then organized a coronation ceremony at Mutoto Cultural Grounds.¹⁶⁹ He was 34 years at the time.¹⁷⁰ He had acquired hundreds of supporters whom he convinced that he was going to make Bugisu the strongest kingdom in Uganda.¹⁷¹ However, the vast majority of the Bamasaba, most especially the clan elders opposed him and his kingship was nullified in 2009.¹⁷² Most of the Bamasaba emphasized that Bugisu had never been a kingdom and the Bagisu had never had a king before. So his kingship was regarded illegal.¹⁷³ He then decided to transfer to Bududa where most of his supporters lived and he established the *Babukusu Kingdom* in 2012.¹⁷⁴

His *kingdom* however, was not recognized by the Constitution of Uganda and was therefore regarded illegal.¹⁷⁵ On December 1st 2020, his *palace* in Bulecheke Sub County in Bududa district was raided by the local authorities who confiscated most of his belongings.¹⁷⁶ The items were kept at the Sub County headquarters. Wilson Watira, the then LC V of Bududa District denied the claims that Bududa was a *kingdom*. He emphasized that Bududa was part of *Inzu ya Masaba* and that Joseph Kanyanya just a deluded fellow who needed to stop living in denial.¹⁷⁷ The '*Inzu ya Masaba Vs Babukusu Kingdom*' controversy played a key role in dividing the

Bamasaba into two different factions¹⁷⁸. This greatly affected the activities of *Inzu ya Masaba* such as *Imbalu* because it was hard to mobilise people who were divided in two factions.

5.8 Conclusion

The above discourse examined the controversies within *Inzu ya Masaba* from the time of its installation in 2010 upto the end of Bob Mushikori's reign in 2020. It specifically looked at *Inzu ya Masaba's* question of identity, its true headquarters, the mode of ascension to power and succession, the controversy between the Bagisu of Uganda and Babukusu of Kenya, the influence of Partisan politics in cultural affairs, the corruption scandal of *Umukuuka Wamimbi's* reign and the 'Bududa secession crisis'. These controversies partially explain why *Inzu ya Masaba* has had little progress in terms of developing as a cultural institution. The controversies within *Inzu ya Masaba* also explain why the cultural institution spent three years without a cultural leader from 2010 when Bob Mushikori left office up to 2023 when Mike Mudoma came to power. The challenges that have affected *Inzu ya Masaba* as a result of these controversies are the same challenges affecting other cultural institutions in Uganda, especially the new cultural institutions. The next chapter will look at the general conclusion of the study.

5.9 End notes.

¹Godfrey Mwakikagile, “*Ethnicity and National Identity in Uganda: The Land and Its People.*” (New Africa Press, 2009), 81

²Interview, Titus Wegulo, an elder in Bulambuli District, 70 years old, 3rd December 2022

³Ibid.

⁴Interview, Paul Wanamama, an elder in Namisindwa District, 6th December 2022

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

⁷*Constitution of the Republic of Uganda*, Article 246, 1995

⁸Interview, Derrick Wanzala, an elder in Manafwa District, 78 years old, 8th December, 2022

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Gideon S. Were, *The Bagisu And Their Past: Some Notes on Their Legends About Creation, The Origins of Death, The Economy of Their Ancestors and The Phenomenon of Kintu*, Transafrican Journal of History, Vol. 11, (Gideon Were Publications, 1982), 184-195

¹¹Interview, Charles Mungoma, son of Yonasani Buyi Mungoma (the former *Umuhinga*), 64 years old, 8th January 2023

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Interview, John Wasikye, a radio presenter at Signal FM and a former cabinet minister of *Inzu ya Masaba*, 44 years old, 10th January 2023

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Interview, Brian Mutsaka, an elder in Bulambuli District, 68 years old, 3rd December 2022

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid.

- ²⁴Interview, Joel Mwidu, an elder in Manafwa District, 76 years old, 8th December, 2022
- ²⁵Interview, Francis Wasagami, a former journalist of New Vision, 46 years old, 20th November 2022
- ²⁶Ibid.
- ²⁷Ibid.
- ²⁸Interview, Hassan Mangobe Magomu, current LC3 of Namabasa Division in Mbale City, 40 years old, 13th December 2022
- ²⁹Ibid.
- ³⁰Interview, Eric Gudoi, an elder in Namisindwa District, 77 years old, 6th December, 2022
- ³¹Ibid.
- ³²Ibid.
- ³³Interview, Charles Mungoma, son of Yonasani Buyi Mungoma (the former *Umuhinga*), 64 years old, 8th January 2023
- ³⁵Ibid.
- ³⁶Ibid.
- ³⁷Ibid.
- ³⁸Ibid.
- ³⁹Interview, John Wasikye, Interview, John Wasikye, a radio presenter at Signal FM and a former cabinet member of *Inzu ya Masaba*, 44 years old, 10th January 2023
- ⁴⁰Ibid.
- ⁴¹Ibid.
- ⁴²Ibid.
- ⁴³Ibid.
- ⁴⁴Ibid.
- ⁴⁵Interview, Rebecca Kakayi, teacher at Mbale Secondary School, 49 years old, 8th December, 2022
- ⁴⁶Ibid.
- ⁴⁷Ibid.
- ⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Ibid.

⁵¹Interview, Herbert Mulekwa, former LCV of Sironko District, 58 years old, 17th December 2022

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Interview, Peter Mafabi, an elder in Mbale District, 80 years old, 5th December 2022

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Interview, Mark Makowe, former LC1 of Budama Cell in Mbale, 4th November 2022

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Interview, Abigail Muleenge, an elder in Mbale District, 78 years old, 5th December, 2022

Ibid.

Ibid.

²¹ Interview, Suzan Nakayenze, teacher of Lumasaba in Mbale Progressive SS, 47 years old, 4th November 2022

Ibid.

Ibid.

Ibid.

⁷⁰Interview, Stephen Madanda, an elder in Sironko District, 67 years old, 7th December, 2022

⁷¹*Constitution of the Republic of Uganda*, Article 246, 1995

⁷²www.parliament.go.ug, *Institution of Traditional or Cultural Leaders Bill*, 2011

⁷³Interview, Stella Nagudi, Former Minister of Inzu ya Masaba, 55 years old, 14th November 2022

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸Interview, Charles Wotunga, an elder in Bududa District, 81 years old, 4th December 2022

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹Vincent G. Simiyu, *The Emergence of a Subnation: A History of Babukusu to 1990*, *Transafrican Journal of History*, Vol. 20, (Gideon Were Publications, 1991), 125-144

⁸²Ibid., 130.

⁸³Peter W. Wekesa, *History, Identity and the Bukusu- Bagisu Relations on the Kenya and Uganda Border*, (Cambridge University Press, 2023), 44-56

⁸⁴Ibid., 45.

⁸⁵Ibid., 48.

⁸⁶Interview, John Watila, an elder in Bududa District, 79 years old, 4th December 2022

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹Ibid.

⁹⁰Interview, Paul Gizamba, an elder in Sironko District, 73 years old, 7th December 2022

⁹¹Michael Twaddle, *Kakungulu and the creation of Uganda*, (Ohio University Press, 1993), 92-104

⁹²Ibid., 94.

⁹³Ibid., 95.

⁹⁴Aisha Aiseta, *The Legacy of Semei Kakungulu on the Cultural History of Bugisu*, Masters Dissertation, (Islamic University In Uganda, 2011), 37-60

⁹⁵Ibid., 43.

⁹⁶Ibid., 51.

⁹⁷Wekesa, *Bukusu- Bagisu Relations*, 63-65.

⁹⁸Ibid., 64.

⁹⁹Gideon S. Were, *Futher Thoughts on the Early History of the Bagisu*, Journal of Eastern African Research & Development, Vol. 1, (Gideon Were Publishers, 1971), 99-109

¹⁰⁰Ibid., 101.

¹⁰¹Ibid., 104.

¹⁰²Ibid., 107.

¹⁰³Interview, Peter Masole, an elder in Bungoma County, 85 years old, 16th December 2022

¹⁰⁴Ibid.

¹⁰⁵Ibid.

¹⁰⁶Ibid.

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

¹⁰⁸*Self Styled Babukusu 'king' installed Despite Court Injunction*, (Uganda Radio Network, 29th August 2013), 1-2

¹⁰⁹Ibid., 2.

¹¹⁰Interview, Gideon Maka, an elder in Bungoma County, 72 years old, 16th December 2022

¹¹¹Interview, Catherine Muduwa, a radio presenter at Elgon FM and cabinet member of *Inzu ya Masaba*, 48 years old, 11th January 2023

¹¹²Interview, Suzan Nakayenze, teacher of Lumasaba at Mbale Progressive SS, 47 years old, 4th November 2022

¹¹³Simiyu, *History of Babukusu*, 97-106.

¹¹⁴Ibid., 99.

¹¹⁵Ibid., 102.

¹¹⁶Ibid., 105.

¹¹⁷*Constitution of the Republic of Uganda*, Article 246, 1995

¹¹⁸Interview, Hashim Manana, a teacher at Nabuyonga Primary School, 37 years old, 11th December 2022

¹¹⁹Ibid.

¹²⁰Ibid.

¹²¹Ibid.

¹²²Interview, Emmanuel Makyese, former Town Clerk of Nakaloke Town Council in Mbale, 60 years old, 6th November 2022

¹²³Interview, Wycliffe Mukhwana, former Chief Whip of Inzu ya Masaba, 47 years old, 18th November 2022

¹²⁴Interview, Agnes Nambafu, teacher at Namabasa Secondary School in Mbale, 51 years old, 12th November 2022

¹²⁵Ibid.

¹²⁶Ibid.

¹²⁷Ibid.

¹²⁸Fred Wambede, *New Bamasaba Cultural Leader Installed*, (Uganda Radio Network, 16th November 2015), 1-3

¹²⁹Ibid., 2.

¹³⁰Ibid., 3.

¹³¹Samuel Ssebuliba, *Bugisu Cultural Leader To Be Installed Today*, (93.3 KFM website, 15th November 2015), 1-2

¹³²Ibid., 2.

¹³³*Why Bamasaba clan heads say they have 'impeached' Umukuuka*, The Independent Magazine, May 5th 2019

¹³⁴*Inzu ya Masaba Embroiled in Corruption Scandal*, (Uganda Radio Network, 17th March 2015), 1-4

¹³⁵Ibid., 1.

¹³⁶Ibid., 1-2.

¹³⁷Ibid., 3.

¹³⁸Ibid., 3-4.

¹³⁹Ibid., 4.

¹⁴⁰*New Bamasaba King promises reforms*, (Sunrise News Ug, 20th November 2015), 1-3

¹⁴¹Ibid., 1.

¹⁴²Ibid., 1-2.

¹⁴³Ibid., 2-3.

¹⁴⁴Ibid., 3.

¹⁴⁵Interview, Benard Wambi, former treasurer of *Inzu ya Masaba*, 43 years old, 17th November 2022

¹⁴⁶*Video of Bob Mushikori in his inaugural speech addressing the corruption of Wilson Wamimbi's corrupt regime*, Recorded by Wangota Emmanuel on 15th November 2015, DVD, 00:34:18, Shelf 3, Digital Section, Mbale Records Centre, 16th August 2024

¹⁴⁷Ibid.

¹⁴⁸Baron Kironde, *Bugisu Cultural Leader vows to hold onto the throne as infighting escalates*, (Grapevine News, 13th October 2020), 1-4

¹⁴⁹Ibid., 1.

¹⁵⁰Ibid., 2.

¹⁵¹Ibid., 3.

¹⁵²Ibid., 4.

¹⁵³*US-based man named king*, (The New Vision, 20th June 2005), 35

¹⁵⁴Ibid.

¹⁵⁵*Bugisu Elders Urge Museveni to Resolve Stalemate over Self-Styled king*, (allAfrica.com, 13th May 2013), 1-3

¹⁵⁶Ibid., 2.

¹⁵⁷Ibid., 3.

¹⁵⁸*Self Styled Babukusu 'king' installed Despite Court Injunction*, (Uganda Radio Network, 29th August 2013), 1-3

¹⁵⁹Ibid., 2.

¹⁶⁰Ibid., 3.

¹⁶¹*Babukusu 'King' launches parallel Imbalu Festival*, (Daily Monitor, Friday 3rd August 2018), 41

¹⁶²*Audio of Bob Mushikori criticising Joseph Kanyanya's declaration of a parallel Imbalu Ceremony in Bududa*, Recorded by Waikama Ronald on 12th July 2018, Flash Disk, 00:35:16, Shelf 3, Digital Section, Mbale Records Centre, 9th August 2024

¹⁶³Ibid.

¹⁶⁴*Audio of Joseph Kanyanya's retaliation to Bob Mushikori's criticism over organizing a parallel Imbalu ceremony in Bududa*, Recorded by Woniala Michael on 16th July 2018, Flash Disk, 00:40:02, Shelf 3, Digital Section, Mbale Records Centre, 9th August 2024

¹⁶⁵*Babukusu Cultural Institution plans Parallel Imbalu Ceremony*, (Uganda Radio Network, 29th July 2014), 1-4

¹⁶⁶*Video of Joseph Kanyanya in his inaugural speech assuring the people of Bududa that he was chosen by God in his dream*, Recorded by Mututa Benard on 11th August 2012, DVD, 00:52:19, Shelf 3, Digital Section, Mbale Records Centre, 14th August 2024

¹⁶⁷Ibid.

¹⁶⁸Ibid.

¹⁶⁹Ibid.

¹⁷⁰Francis Wasagami, *The Bagisu never had a king*, (The New Vision, 18th November 2008), 18

¹⁷¹Ibid.

¹⁷²Ibid.

¹⁷³Ibid.

¹⁷⁴David Mafabi, *What does new 'King' mean to Bugisu?*, (The Daily Monitor, 21st September 2013), 27

¹⁷⁵Ibid.

¹⁷⁶Ibid.

¹⁷⁷*Babukusu self-styled king thrown out of palace*, (The Independent Magazine, 1st December 2020), 1

¹⁷⁸Ibid.

CHAPTER SIX

GENERAL CONCLUSION

This study was aimed at examining the history of *Inzu ya Masaba* in the Bugisu sub-region in Eastern Uganda. To achieve this, the study adopted three objectives namely; to examine the evolution of *Inzu ya Masaba*, to examine its significance to the Bamasaba community and to analyse the controversies it was associated with. The objectives were achieved through a qualitative study that involved the analysing of historical materials and the conducting of interviews. The interviews were carried out by meeting the respondents face-to-face and at times over the phone. The respondents were identified by the researcher through purposive sampling and snowball method. The study was conducted in Mbale, Sironko, Bududa, Manafwa, Namisindwa, and Bulambuli which are the six districts of the Bugisu sub-region in eastern Uganda.

The study was primarily motivated by previous studies on ethnic groups in Uganda from scholars such as Apter, Semakula-Kiwanuka, and Ingham who have written about the history of ethnic groups such as the Baganda, Banyoro, and Batoro among others. However, these scholars dwelled so much on the centralised societies and gave little focus to the non-centralised societies that existed in different parts of the country such as the Bamasaba. A few scholars have explored the history of the Bamasaba such as Were and Simiyu. However, they only look at the society of Bamasaba in terms of their origin and social organization with the biggest emphasis being put on their sub-culture of circumcision.

A knowledge gap was therefore discovered by the researcher due to the little scholarship with empirical evidence on the deeper history of the socio-political institution of *Inzu ya Masaba* and

how it has transformed over time. That is what resulted into this study. This research therefore is an attempt to re-construct a history of *Inzu ya Masaba* and to also inform the various studies on traditional cultural institutions in Uganda. The study unearthes a number of key findings;

In the origin of *Inzu ya Masaba*, the study unveils the fact that Bugisu has never been a kingdom nor chiefdom. It was a non-centralised society which was composed of twenty six clans and each of them administered itself independently. *Inzu ya Masaba* was established in 2010 as a result of the amalgamation of the twenty six clans of the Bamasaba. The cultural institution developed a constitution which emphasised that the *Umukuuka* would be elected by the twenty six clan heads and would administer for a non-renewable term of five years. *Umukuuka* Wilson Wamimbi administered from 2010 to 2015. He was then succeeded by *Umukuuka* Bob Mushikori who administered from 2015 to 2020. The cultural institution includes even the Babukusu of Western Kenya because they are also part and parcel of the Bamasaba community.

In the significance of *Inzu ya Masaba*, the study uncovers the fact that the cultural institution was instrumental in the revival and preservation of the Masaba culture and identity among the Bamasaba, most of whom had adopted the kiganda culture which was introduced by Semei Kakungulu. It further made enormous contributions in the tourism sector of Bugisu by promoting various tourist attractions in the region. *Inzu ya Masaba* also made contributions in the education sector through securing academic sponsorships for needy students in Bugisu and advocating for the renovation of old buildings in the government schools in the sub region. It also played a big role in combating natural calamities in Bugisu such as landslides and floods through securing new settlements for the affected families and raising funds for them. This study also reveals that the cultural institution helped in the settling land disputes among the Bamasaba families, most especially those in the villages.

However, the study discovers that *Inzu ya Masaba* faced a multitude of controversies between 2010 and 2020. Many Bamasaba differed on whether it was a kingdom, chiefdom or just a cultural institution. There were other people in Bugisu who viewed it as a mere Community Based Organisation, especially those in the town areas of Mbale. The Bamasaba also differed on where its administrative offices should be. They opposed Maluku because it had no historical attachment to their culture. Mutoto was preferred as the best destination for the administrative headquarters of *Inzu ya Masaba* because it was the historical circumcision centre of the Bamasaba. The Bamasaba also questioned the mode in which the *Umukuuka* ascended to power. Some of them were fine with elections while others preferred a hereditary system of governance.

Another issue that the study unveils is that of the Babukusu of Kenya. There were debates among respondents on whether the Babukusu are part of *Inzu ya Masaba* or not. As much as the Babukusu of Kenya are recognised as part of the cultural institution, their participation in the activities of *Inzu ya Masaba* is so limited. Even the cultural institution itself pays more attention to the Bagisu of Uganda when administering the sub-region through its activities. It was stressed by some of the respondents that *Umukuuka* Wilson Wamimbi visited the Babukusu of Kenya just once in his entire administration of five years. This explains why most of the Babukusu that the researcher encountered in Bungoma County were even clueless about *Inzu ya Masaba* and its activities.

Additionally, the Bamasaba were frustrated by the endless intervention of the local politicians into the affairs of the cultural institution. Although the 1995 constitution emphasizes that the cultural institutions should limit their administration to cultural affairs, the leaders of *Inzu ya Masaba*, especially the *Umukuukas* were influenced by the NRM government to campaign for NRM candidates in the region. However, the biggest controversy within *Inzu ya Masaba* was the

attempted secession of Bududa which was also established as a parallel *kingdom* led by Joseph Wash Kanynya. These controversies caused a lot of divisions among the Bamasaba and weakened the cultural institution.

These findings bridge the knowledge gap on non-centralised societies in Uganda which have been understudied by previous scholarships. Most of the previous studies that have been made on cultural institutions in Uganda primarily concentrate on the centralised societies such as Buganda, Bunyoro and Toro which were traditional Kingdoms. However, the non-centralised societies such as Teso, Acholi and Bamasaba have not had a fair share of scholarship. This has left the vast majority of learners in the field of History uninformed about the origin, evolution and transformation of cultural institutions such as *Inzu ya Masaba*. The study therefore bridges that knowledge gap and uncovers vital information on the history of the cultural institution which will contribute to the debate on the significance of traditional cultural institutions to the people of Uganda, Africa and the world at large.

There are some areas of knowledge that this study did not tackle. They can be a basis for future researchers to investigate in order to come up with additional information on *Inzu ya Masaba*. First of all, the research did not dig deep into the relationship between *Inzu ya Masaba* and its neighbouring cultural institutions such as the *Emorimori* institution of Teso, the *Ikumbania* institution of Bugwere, *Owasehulu* institution of Bunyole among others. This study did not also investigate the post-Mushikori period of three years which was experienced by a political vacuum and succession conflicts among the Bamasaba. Bob Mushikori left power in 2020 but the institution had no legitimate leader until 2023 when Mike Mudoma was elected as the new *Umukuuka*. The study did not investigate that period because it was limited to 2020 as per the time scope. However, it is an area for further study by future researchers.

This study does not also investigate the impact of Covid 19 on *Inzu ya Masaba*. The Covid 19 pandemic changed the course of history and affected every sector of the world. It had many negative consequences on *Inzu ya Masaba* in a number of ways to the extent that it was rumoured to have claimed the life of *Umukuuka* Bob Mushikori in 2020, shortly after he had left power. Although most reports claimed that he had succumbed to diabetes, there were rumours in the general public of Bugisu that he had acquired Covid 19. Therefore, Covid 19 and its impact on *Inzu ya Masaba* should be studied by future researchers.

This study therefore suggests to future scholars of history to further investigate and come up with new knowledge on the traditional cultural institutions, most especially those which were non-centralised in nature. This will help to bridge the gap between such institutions and the centralised institutions such as Buganda and Bunyoro which previous researchers over dueled on. These non-centralised institutions have a very rich history which could be significant to the broader history of Uganda and therefore should be studied more. This study also suggests to researchers to debate further on the ethnic groups on the borders of Uganda because most of them share the same ancestral origin with the ethnic groups on the other side of the borders. The information produced by this study also suggests to the policy makers of Uganda to pay more attention to cultural institutions and try to deal with the challenges that come with them.

It should be noted that since the restoration of cultural institutions by the NRM/A government, various cultural institutions have been established in different parts of Uganda. Even those that didn't initially exist prior to the abolition of cultural institutions by president Obote in 1967 such as *Inzu ya Masaba* of the Bagisu and Babukusu, the *Emorimor* Institution of the Iteso, the *Inkubania* Institution of the Bagwere among so many others that are yet to be established. The influx of cultural institutions in Uganda is an issue of interest that needs to be studied more by

future scholars. Following this trajectory, there will come a time when almost every ethnic group in Uganda has a cultural institution which manages its cultural affairs. That makes this area of study historically significant.

Since there have been controversies on the mandate of the cultural institutions in Uganda, there is need for massive sensitisation of the people on the legal provisions that govern the operation of the cultural institutions such as *Inzu ya Masaba*. Therefore, where there are identified laws which objectively suppress the operation of the cultural institutions, technical people should be involved in addressing such issues. Most of the people in Uganda, such as the Bamasaba are not aware of the Constitutional provisions, let alone the Traditional Leaders' Bill. Therefore, for the effectiveness of the cultural institutions and their activities, the subjects should be aware on the legal provision.

The cultural institutions of Uganda should foster unity and transparency among themselves in order to create more room for appreciation of each other's efforts and joint programs to provide better service delivery for the development of their societies. Cultural institutions such as *Inzu ya Masaba* should appreciate and work with other Cultural Institutions, especially the older and more developed ones such as Buganda and Bunyoro in order to learn key socio-political aspects from them. It would enable *Inzu ya Masaba* to effectively administer the Bamasaba people. This can be done through organising programs such as work shops and seminars with the key stakeholders of kingdoms such as Buganda and Bunyoro, organising periodic visits to such kingdoms and inviting their leaders to Bugisu for cultural activities.

There is also need for clarification on the roles of Cultural Institutions and their boundaries and limitations. There is need for defined cultural roles that cultural leaders such as the *Umukuuka*

and their subjects should adhere to in order to ensure order not only in their societies, but also in the nation at large. Although the 1995 Constitution of Uganda tries to spell out the boundaries for cultural institutions and their subjects, the Constitution addresses that issue in general terms. There is therefore need for specific terms governing the operation of the cultural institutions in Uganda. This should be made public and where need be, translated into the different local languages of Uganda so that people can understand the jurisdiction under which cultural institutions operate, rather than being swayed by those who lack the spirit of national interest.

There is also need for the establishment of a forum mandated to mitigate conflicts within and between the cultural institutions of Uganda. This forum should include religious leaders, political leaders, technocrats, civil society, and development partners. This forum can as well design programs which are geared towards reconciliation. Further, since there is already the forum for Cultural Leaders namely, the Uganda King's and Cultural Leader's Forum, this should be made functional to enhance the dialogue in the mainstream forum. It would be very significant in solving challenges facing cultural institutions such as *Inzu ya Masaba* for example the succession disputes which occurred for three years after the end of *Umukuuka* Bob Mushikori's reign.

In conclusion therefore, the study of cultural institutions is beyond a national and continental but also a global phenomenon. Cultural institutions play a significant role in the social, political and economic way of life of people across the globe. Due to that reason, it is paramount for scholars of history to study the evolution, significance and controversies within cultural institutions such as *Inzu ya Masaba*. Exploring and historicising them leads to the discovery of new knowledge in the field of history. It also enables scholars to realise that the challenges facing *Inzu ya Masaba* are related to the challenges facing other 'young' and rising cultural Institutions in the different

areas of Uganda such as Teso, Lango and Acholi. It can therefore trigger the policy makers to take affirmative action towards developing such cultural institutions to the 'heights' of Buganda and Bunyoro.

Cultural Institutions are a symbol of unity and that makes them important in the development and transformation of a society. Therefore, if this identity and common goal is translated into a national goal, then the country can move forward in the right direction. This then calls for the understanding of the legal provisions upon which cultural institutions should operate without compromising their values, but within the constitutional provision protecting the national interest. In respect to the common goal, which is to foster the development and socio-economic transformation of the society, the study of Cultural Institutions is as relevant to scholarship as any other studies in the field of history.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

Apter D.B, *The Political Kingdoms in Uganda: A Case Study of Bureaucratic Nationalism*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1967

Comely Pete, *Online Market Research: Methods, Benefits and Issues*, 2011

Creswell J.D & Creswell J.W, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 2017

Desai N, *Revisiting the 1972 Expulsion of Asians from Uganda*, 2012

Guthrie M, *The classification of the Bantu Languages*, Oxford University Press for the International African Institute, London, pg 43-45, 77, 1948

Heald Suzette, *Controlling Anger: The Sociology of Gisu Violence*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1989.

Ingham Kenneth, *The Kingdom of Toro in Uganda*, Kampala, 1975

Irving Seidman, *Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences*, 1991

John Paul II Justice and Peace Centre, *The State and Cultural Institutions In Uganda: Buganda and Bunyoro Kingdoms Perspective*, 2013

Krejcie R.V & Morgan D.W, *Determining Sample Size for Research Activities*, 1970

Mickey Rafa, D.M Jonathan, Xuantong W & S Paul, *Estimating District GDP in Uganda*, Fredrick S. Pardee Center for International Futures, Josef Korbel School of International Studies & University of Denver, 2017

Mutibwa P.M, *Uganda Since Independence: A Story of Unfulfilled hopes*. Africa World Press, Trenton, 1992

Mwakikagile Godfrey, *“Ethnicity and National Identity in Uganda: The Land and Its People.”* New Africa Press, 2009

Nzita Richard & Mbaga-Niwampa, *Peoples and Cultures of Uganda*, Kampala Fountain Publishers Ltd

Okello A. Henry, *History Texts of the Lake Region of East Africa*, Nairobi, Kenya: Kenya Literature Bureau, 1977

Ragab M. & Arisha A, *Research Methodology in Business: A Starter’s Guide*, 2018

Roscoe John, *The Bagesu and other tribes of the Uganda Protectorate*, The Mackie Ethnological Expedition to Central Africa, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1924.

Sejjaaka Samuel, *A political and Economic History of Uganda*, 2004

Semakula-Kiwanuka M.M, *A History of Buganda from the Foundation of the Kingdom to 1900*, Africana publishers, Kampala, 1972

Taylor Richard & Francis William, *Archives and Records*, Volume 43, Issue 2, 2022

Richard Taylor and Bogdan Robert, *Methodological Considerations in Qualitative Research*, 1984

Thompson B.P, *The Partition of Africa*, 1997

Twaddle Michael, *Kakungulu and the creation of Uganda*, 1993

Wafula Msaja, *A History of the Bukusu*, Kampala, 2011

Wafula Peter Wekesa, *History, Identity and the Bukusu- Bagisu Relations on the Kenya and Uganda Border*, Kampala, 2023

Wagner Gunter, *The Bantu of North Kavirondo*, London, Oxford University Press p. 23, 1949

Wotsuna Khamalwa J.P, *Identity, power, and culture: Imbalu initiation ritual among the Bamasaba of Uganda*, 2004

Articles from Journals

Amin M.E, *Social Science Research: Conception Methodology and Analysis*, Makerere University Press, 2005

Atuyambe L.M, *Landslide Disaster in Eastern Uganda: Rapid Assessment of Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Situation in Bulucheke Camp, Bududa District*, *A Journal on Environmental Health*, 2011

Khanakwa Pamela, “*Reinventing Imbalu and Forcible Circumcision: Gisu Political Identity and the Fight for Mbale in Late Colonial Uganda*”, *The Journal of African History*, Volume 59, Issue 3 Published online by Cambridge University Press, 2019

Memon A. Mumtaz, *A Review of the Methodological Misconceptions and Guidelines Related to the Application of Structural Equation Modeling: A Malaysian Scenario*, 2017

Orodho A.J & Kombo D.K, *Research Methods: Nairobi: Kenyatta University Open and E-Learning Module*, 2002

Purvis J.B, *Masaba And Its People*, *The Journal Of The Uganda Society*, vol no. 1, 175-178, 1946

Gideon S Were, *The Historical Origins of Circumcision Among the Bamasaba*, *Transafrican Journal of History*, vol.6/7, pp. 129-141, Gideon Were Publications, 1977

Quin J.R, *Traditional Cultural Institutions on Customary Practices in Uganda*, *Africa Spectrum Journal*, 2014

Rasul A. & Singh B, *The Role of Academic Libraries in Facilitating Postgraduate Students' Research*, 2022

Sheldon G. Weeks, *Where are all the Jobs? The Informal Sector in Bugisu, Uganda*, *A Journal of African Politics, Development and International Affairs*, vol. 3, No.1, pp. 111-132, Brill Publishers, 1973

Were S. Gideon, *A History of the Abaluyia of Western Kenya: 1500-1930*, Page 43, Gideon Were Publications, 1967

Were S. Gideon, *The Bagisu And Their Past: Some Notes on Their Legends About Creation, The Origins of Death, The Economy of Their Ancestors and The Phenomenon of Kintu*, *Trans African Journal of History*, Vol. 11, pp. 184-195, Gideon Were Publications, 1982

Were S. Gideon, *The Economy of Precolonial Bugisu*, *Journal of African Studies*, Vol.5, pp 12-17, 1978

Dissertations and Theses

Aiseta Aisha, *The Legacy of Semei Kakungulu on the Cultural History of Bugisu*, Masters Dissertation, Islamic University In Uganda, 2011

Nawire Christine, *The Role of Cultural Institutions in Tourism Development: A Case Study of Inzu Ya Masaba in Mbale district*, Masters Dissertation, Makerere University, 2021

Ojambo Robert, *"The Land Question in Socio-Political Conflicts in Bukedi and Bugisu in Eastern Uganda"*, PhD Thesis, University of Dar es Salaam, 2017

Shero A. Phillip, *"Embedded Leadership: The Role of Gisu Clan Elders in Uganda in Supporting and Limiting Executive Authority"*, PhD Thesis, Regent University, 2014

Articles from Newspapers and Websites

Babukusu 'King' launches parallel Imbalu Festival, article on 'Daily Monitor', Friday 3rd August 2018

Babukusu Cultural Institution plans Parallel Imbalu Ceremony, uploaded in 'Uganda Radio Network' website, 29th July 2014

Babukusu self-styled king thrown out of palace, article in 'The Independent Magazine', 1st December 2020

Bugisu Elders Urge Museveni to Resolve Stalemate over Self-Styled king, allAfrica.com, 13th May 2013

Edengu Daniel, *Bamasaba Cultural Leader Installed*, New Vision, November 15th 2010

Indian- Ugandans Accused of Grabbing Family Land In Mbale, article uploaded on 'Dobozi.com' website, 13th December 2017

Inzu ya Masaba Embroiled in Corruption Scandal, Uganda Radio Network, 17th March 2015

Isabirye Jude, *Uganda Shifts Towards Teaching Students in Local Languages*, article in ‘The Daily Monitor’, 8th October 2010

Kakungulu: King who died without a throne, Daily Monitor, 26th May 2021

Kironde Baron, *Bugisu Cultural Leader vows to hold onto the throne as infighting escalates*, Grapevine News, 13th October 2020

Kitunzi Yahudu, *Floods wash away bridges in Bugisu*, article in The Daily Monitor, 12th December 2019

Lukosi Florence, *Gisu Cultural Chief to be Installed*, article in ‘New Vision’, 11th November 2010

Mafabi David, *Minister drawn into Bamasaba Kingdom row, clarifies legitimate board*, article in PML Daily, 9th June 2020

Mafabi David, *What does new ‘King’ mean to Bugisu?*, article in ‘The Daily Monitor’, 21st September 2013

Mbale Bull Fighting Traditions, E and J Tourism Consultants, 2023

Mungai Christine, *15 facts about Indian diaspora in Africa*, article uploaded on the ‘World Economic Forum’ website, 25th June 2015

Nanteza Bridget, *Biography: What you didn’t know about fallen Umukuuka Bob Mushikori*, article on ‘The Tower Post’, 5th January 2021

Ndiho Paul, *The Significance of Cultural Institutions in Uganda*, Ndiho Media, 2019

New Bamasaba King promises reforms, Sunrise News Ug, 20th November 2015

President Hails New King of the Bamasaba, article in ‘Red Pepper’, 19th November 2015

Self-Styled Babukusu ‘king’ installed Despite Court Injunction, uploaded on ‘Uganda Radio Network’, 29th August 2013

SIL International, *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, 14th edition, Section on Masaba at <http://www.ethnologue.com/show language>, June 2003.

Ssebuliba Samuel, *Bugisu Cultural Leader To Be Installed Today*, article uploaded on the ‘93.3 KFM’ website, 15th November 2015

Tabu Butagira, *Uganda: Why Obote Abolished Federo*, The Monitor (Kampala), 11th October 2009

The cultural Institutions of Uganda, www.parliament.go.ug, Institution of Traditional or Cultural Leaders Bill, 2011

Top rated Museums in Mbale, Uganda, uploaded on Top-Rated.comOnline, 3rd November 2022

Unveiling the Cultural Heritage Treasures of Bugisu, uploaded on Cross Cultural Foundation of Uganda website, 2021

US-based man named king, The New Vision, 20th June 2005

Wambede Fred, *New Bamasaba Cultural Leader Installed*, article uploaded on the ‘Uganda Radio Network’ website, November 16 2015

Wambede Fred, *Residents seek takeover of Semei Kakungulu land*, article in The Daily Monitor, 2nd January 2018

Wanzusi Joseph, *Bamasaba elect Cultural leader*, article in ‘New Vision’, 2nd August 2010

Wasagami Francis, *The Bagisu never had a king*, article in ‘The New Vision’, 18th November 2008

Why Bamasaba clan heads say they have ‘impeached’ Umukuuka, The Independent Magazine, 5th May 2019

Archival Sources

Audio of Bob Mushikori criticising Joseph Kanyanya’s declaration of a parallel Imbalu Ceremony in Bududa, Recorded by Waikama Ronald on 12th July 2018, Flash Disk, 00:35:16, Shelf 3, Digital Section, Mbale Records Centre, 9th August 2024

Audio of Joseph Kanyanya’s retaliation to Bob Mushikori’s criticism over organising a parallel Imbalu ceremony in Bududa, Recorded by Woniala Michael on 16th July 2018, Flash Disk, 00:40:02, Shelf 3, Digital Section, Mbale Records Centre, 9th August 2024

Minutes of Meeting on the formation of Inzu ya Masaba, Written by Wasikye John on 9th June 2009, MRC.2013.004, box 1, folder 3, Cultural Records, Mbale Records Center, Mbale Town, 13th August 2024

Photograph of Former District Administrative Building, taken by Richard S. Holmes in 1955, MRC.1996.053, box 2, folder 4, Pictures Collection, Mbale Records Centre, Mbale City, 18th August 2024

Photograph of Umuhinga Yonasani Mungoma, taken by Masaba Jaberu in 1965, MRC.1996.054, box 2, folder 4, Pictures Collection, Mbale Records Centre, Mbale City, 18th August 2024

Photograph of Yonasani Mungoma, taken by Carl Thomas in 1941, MRC.1996.053, box 2, folder 4, Pictures Collection, Mbale Records Centre, Mbale City, 18th August 2024

The Case of “Patel Vs Matanda (HCT-04-CV-CA 66 of 2013) [2017] UGHCCD 57 (21 April 2017)”, MHC.2024.124, box 4, file 6, Mbale High Court Archives and Special Collections, Mbale High Court, Mbale City

Video of Joseph Kanyanya in his inaugural speech assuring the people of Bududa that he was chosen by God in his dream, Recorded by Mututa Benard on 11th August 2012, DVD, 00:52:19, Shelf 3, Digital Section, Mbale Records Centre, 14th August 2024

APPENDICES

Appendix I: List of Respondents.

1. Aiseta Aisha
2. Catherine Muduwa
3. Charles Mungoma
4. Diiya Patel
5. Francis Wasagami
6. Gadir Ahmed
7. Gimono Hadija
8. Gizamba Paul
9. Gudoi Eric
10. John Wasikye
11. Kakayi Rebecca
12. Khauka Shafar
13. Khaukha Muhammad
14. Kibuuka Sirage
15. Maani Asinaani
16. Mabonga Godfrey
17. Madanda Stephen
18. Mafabi Enoch
19. Mafabi Peter
20. Magomu Robert
21. Maka Gideon

22. Makowe Mark
23. Makyese Emmanuel
24. Manana Hashim
25. Mangobe Hassan Magomu
26. Masaba Mudebo
27. Masai Mudebo
28. Mashate Francis
29. Masole Peter
30. Muduku Job
31. Mukamba Robert
32. Mukhwana Wycliffe
33. Mulekwa Herbert
34. Mulelenge Abigail
35. Mutsaka Brian
36. Mwambu Jonathan
37. Mwidu Joel
38. Nabukwasi Patience
39. Nagudi Stella
40. Nakayenze Suzan
41. Nambafu Agnes
42. Namugoowa Job
43. Nandudu Sumaya
44. Nangoli Umar

45. Nawire Cristine
46. Peter Wafula Wekesa
47. Priscilla Mungoma
48. Wabwala Michael
49. Wakhweya Peter
50. Wakoko Anthony
51. Wakoko Edmond
52. Wambi Benard
53. Wamboga Asumani
54. Wamboga Johan
55. Wanamama Paul
56. Wanduulu Jacob
57. Wanendeya James
58. Wanzala Derrick
59. Watila John
60. Wegulo Titus
61. Wotunga Charles

Appendix II: Description of Respondents.

A. Elders

1. Wanendeya James, Namisindwa District, 70 years old, 6th November, 2022
2. Maani Asinaani, Namisindwa District, 68 years old, 6th November, 2022
3. Wabwala Michael, Bulambuli District, 70 years old, 8th November, 2022
4. Mafabi Enock, Bulambuli District, 67 years old, 8th November, 2022

5. Wakoko Anthony, Bududa District, 66 years old, 18th December, 2022
6. Khauka Shafar, Manafwa District, 76 years old, 19th December, 2022
7. Mutsaka Brian, Bulambuli District, 68 years old, 3rd December 2022
8. Namugoowa Job, Sironko District, 72 years old, 7th November, 2022
9. Wotunga Charles, Bududa District, 81 years old, 4th December 2022
10. Watila John, Bududa District, 79 years old, 4th December 2022
11. Gizamba Paul, Sironko District, 73 years old, 7th December 2022
12. Masole Peter, Bungoma County, 85 years old, 16th December 2022
13. Maka Gideon, Bungoma County, 72 years old, 16th December 2022
14. Wamboga Johan, Mbale District, 76 years old, 4th December, 2022
15. Wakoko Edmond, Bududa District, 64 years old, 18th December, 2022
16. Kibuuka Sirage, Mbale City, 70 years old, 3rd December, 2022
17. Gadir Ahmed, Mbale City, 79 years old, 8th December, 2022
18. Diiya Patel, Mbale District, 78 years old, 8th December, 2022
19. Wegulo Titus, Bulambuli District, 70 years old, 3rd December 2022
20. Wanamama Paul, Namisindwa District, 6th December 2022
21. Mwidu Joel, Manafwa District, 76 years old, 8th December, 2022
22. Gudoi Eric, Namisindwa District, 77 years old, 6th December, 2022
23. Mafabi Peter, Mbale District, 80 years old, 5th December 2022
24. Khaukha Muhammad, Sironko District, 73 years old, 7th November, 2022
25. Mashate Francis, Manafwa District, 77 years old, 19th December, 2022
26. Madanda Stephen, Sironko District, 67 years old, 7th December, 2022
27. Mulelence Abigail, Mbale District, 78 years old, 5th December, 2022

28. Wanzala Derrick, Manafwa District, 78 years old, 8th December, 2022

B. Teachers.

1. Gimono Hadija, Nkokonjeru Primary School in Mbale, 53 years old, 10th December 2022
2. Kakayi Rebecca, Mbale Secondary School, 49 years old, 8th December, 2022
3. Magomu Robert, Uganda Christian University (UCU), Mbale Compass, 43 years old, 3rd February, 2023
4. Manana Hashim, Nabuyonga Primary School, 37 years old, 11th December 2022
5. Muduku Job, Nkoma SS in Mbale, 40 years old, 4th November 2022
6. Mukamba Robert, Mbale Progressive Secondary School in Mbale, 44 years old, 17th December, 2022
7. Mwambu Jonathan, Nabuyonga Primary School in Mbale, 40 years old, 11th December, 2022
8. Nakayenze Suzan, Mbale Progressive SS, 47 years old, 4th November 2022
9. Nambafu Agnes, Namabasa Secondary School in Mbale, 51 years old, 12th November 2022
10. Nandudu Sumaya, Nkoma Secondary School in Mbale, 50 years old, 3rd December, 2022
11. Wakhweya Peter, Namatala Primary School in Mbale, 56 years old, 4th December, 2022

C. Current and former Political Leaders.

1. Makowe Mark, former LC1 of Budama Cell in Mbale, 4th November 2022
2. Makyese Emmanuel, former Town Clerk of Nakaloke Town Council in Mbale, 60 years old, 6th November 2022
3. Mangobe Hassan Magomu, current LC3 of Namabasa Division in Mbale City, 40 years old, 13th December 2022

4. Masaba Mudebo, former LC1 of Doko Cell, Namatala Ward in Mbale District, 61 years old, 5th December, 2022
5. Mukamba Robert, former LC3 of Bukasacha Division in Mbale, 44 years old, 17th December, 2022
6. Mulekwa Herbert, former LCV of Sironko District, 58 years old, 17th December 2022
7. Nangoli Umar, the former RDC of Mbale District, 54 years old, 6th December, 2022

D. Cultural Leaders and relatives of former Cultural Leaders.

1. Catherine Muduwa, cabinet member of *Inzu ya Masaba*, 48 years old, 11th January 2023
2. Charles Mungoma, son of Yonasani Buyi Mungoma (the former *Umuhinga*), 64 years old, 8th January 2023
3. Mabonga Godfrey, current Secretary General of Inzu ya Masaba, 41 years old, 1st February, 2023
4. Masai Mudebo, clan head of the Batiiru clan, 61 years old, 5th November 2022
5. Nabukwasi Patience, a cabinet member of *Inzu ya Masaba*, 39 years old, 3rd January, 2023
6. Nagudi Stella, Former Minister of Inzu ya Masaba, 55 years old, 14th November 2022
7. Priscilla Mungoma, granddaughter of Yonasani Buyi Mungoma (the former *Umuhinga*), 36 years old, 8th January, 2023
8. Wambi Benard, former treasurer of Inzu ya Masaba, 43 years old, 17th November 2022
9. Wamboga Asumani, clan head of the Batuta clan, 60 years old, 6th November 2022
10. Wanduulu Jacob, former Deputy Speaker of Inzu ya Masaba, 57 years old, 1st February, 2023

E. Journalists and Authors.

1. Aiseta Aisha, author of '*The Legacy of Semei Kakungulu on the Cultural History of Bugisu*' Dissertation, 2011
2. Catherine Muduwa, a radio presenter at Elgon FM, 48 years old, 11th January 2023
3. Francis Wasagami, a former journalist of New Vision, 46 years old, 20th November 2022
4. John Wasikye, a radio presenter at Signal FM, 44 years old, 10th January 2023
5. Nawire Cristine, author of '*The Role of Cultural Institutions in Tourism Development: A Case Study of Inzu Ya Masaba in Mbale district*' Dissertation, 34 years old, 30th January, 2023
6. Peter Wafula Wekesa, author of '*History, Identity and the Bukusu- Bagisu Relations on the Kenya and Uganda Border*' Book, 2023

Appendix III: Interview Guide.

Consent

Good Morning/Afternoon, I am GALIWANGO MIIRO ZUBAIRI from Kyambogo University, carrying out a study on the history of *Inzu Ya Masaba* cultural institution. This study aims to contribute to the growing literature about the Bamasaba. You have been selected to voluntarily participate in this activity due to your vast knowledge about the institution and the region. Please, feel free to express your opinion as all information you give will be kept confidential and will ONLY be used for study purposes.

A. The Evolution of *Inzu ya Masaba*.

1. How were the Bamasaba politically organized before the formation of *Inzu ya Masaba*?
2. How did the coming of the British colonial administration affect the political-cultural set up of the Bamasaba?
3. How did Uganda's acquisition of Independence affect the political-cultural organization of the Bamasaba?
4. To what extent did Obote's abolition of kingdoms affect the Bagisu of eastern Uganda?
5. How did NRM's revival of cultural institutions affect the Bagisu?
6. How was the *Inzu Ya Masaba* started?
7. Who were the individuals who started it?
8. When was it started?
9. Why did the Bamasaba establish it?
10. Why did it take long for them to establish it?

B. The Significance of *Inzu ya Masaba*

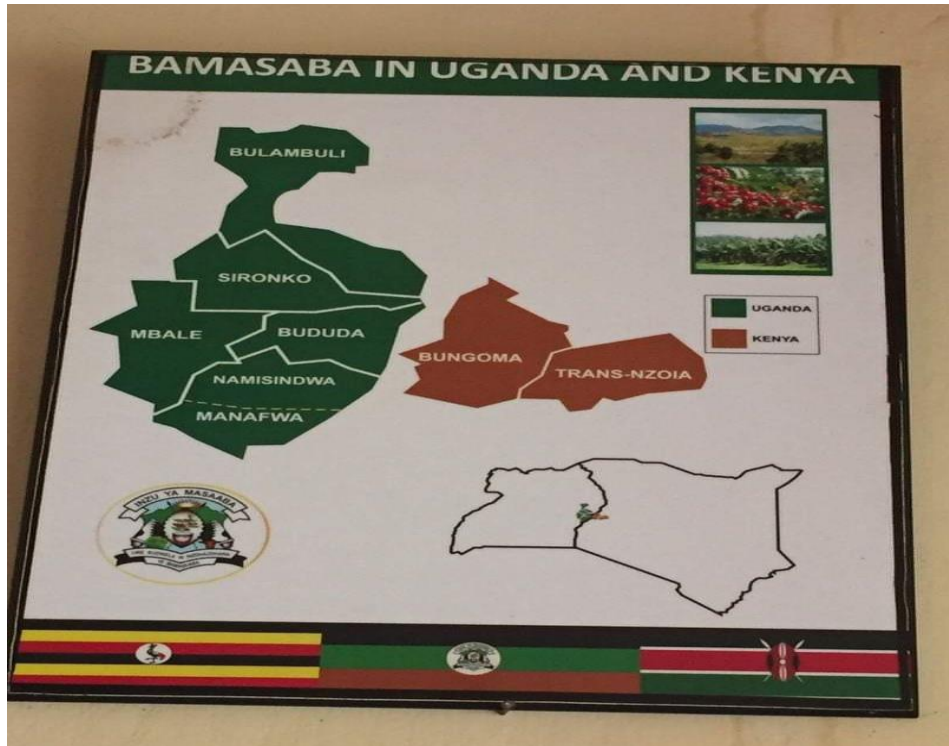
1. What is the Background of Umukuuka Wilson Wamimbi?
2. What was his cabinet?
3. What is the Background of Umukuuka Bob Mushikori?
4. What was his cabinet?
5. How important was the *Inzu Ya Masaba* to the Bamasaba from 2010 upto 2020?
6. What were the achievements of the cultural institution from 2010 up to 2020?

C. The Controversies within *Inzu ya Masaba*

1. Was *Inzu ya Masaba* a kingdom or chiefdom?
2. What were the true headquarters of *Inzu ya Masaba*?
3. What criteria were used to bring the *Umukuuka* into power?
4. Did *Inzu ya Masaba* include even the Babukusu of Kenya?
5. What was the relationship between *Inzu ya Masaba* and the local politicians of Bugisu?
6. Why was *Inzu ya Masaba* so bankrupt?
7. What did the people of Bududa secede away to form their own cultural institution?

Appendix IV: Field pictures

Figure 1: A Map of Masabaland



This map illustrates the geographical location of the Bamasaba in both Uganda and Kenya. In green are the six districts of Bugisu sub-region in Eastern Uganda and in red are the two counties of the Babukusu in Western Kenya.

Source: Field Photo taken by the Researcher at the entrance of the *Inzu ya Masaba* Administrative building in Maluku, Mbale Town on 9th August 2024.

Figure 2: A Picture of Semei Kakungulu.



Source: Semei Kakungulu- Alchetron, *the Free Social Encyclopedia*

Semei Kakungulu was the first to make an attempt towards uniting the clans of the Bamasaba to establish a unified cultural institution. His ambition was to transform Mbale into a kingdom and impose himself as king.

Figure 3: The Flag of Inzu ya Masaba



Source: Image by John Duncan McMeekin, 20th Feb, 2016

The black color illustrates the black race of the Bamasaba and their African heritage, the Green color represents the green nature of their land which is endowed with forests, grass, and fertile soils for agriculture while the Red color represents their brotherhood, solidarity and fraternity

Figure 4: Former District Administrative Building in Maluku Sub County, Mbale



It is the current headquarters of 'Inzu ya Masaba'. The offices of the 'Umukuuka' and his Cabinet members are found there. This building was constructed by the British Colonial government. During the colonial period, it was the office of the District Commissioner.

Source: Field Photograph taken by Researcher on 26th March 2021

Figure 5: The District Administrative Building in 1955



Source: Photograph taken by Richard S. Holmes in 1955, MRC.1996.053, box 2, folder 4, Pictures Collection, Mbale Records Centre, Mbale City, 18th August 2024

Figure 6: Yonasani Mungoma with his classmates in Nabumali Primary School in 1941



Yonasani Mungoma is the 4th on the right among the boys standing behind. He would later on become the Umuhinga of the Bamasaba between 1963 and 1966.

Source: Photograph taken by Carl Thomas in 1941, MRC.1998.014, box 5, folder 1, Pictures Collection, Mbale Records Centre, Mbale City, 18th August 2024

Figure 7: Umuhinga Yonasani Mungoma and his grandmother in 1965



Source: Photograph taken by Masaba Jaberu in 1965, MRC.1996.054, box 2, folder 4, Pictures Collection, Mbale Records Centre, Mbale City, 18th August 2024

Figure 8: A Picture of *Umukuuka* Wilson Wamimbi, the first *Umukuuka* of *Inzu ya Masaba* (2010-2015)



Source: Photograph taken by Leica Monochrom on 8th Feb, 2013

Figure 9: A Picture of *Umukuuka* Bob Mushikori, the second *Umukuuka* of *Inzu ya Masaba* (2015-2020)



Source: Extracted from the Independent Magazine on 11th December 2020

Figure 10: An Imbalu Festival in Masaba Ward, Mbale.



The man smeared with a white substance is ready to be circumcised in public. This was the most sacred and highly respected culture of the Bamasaba. 'Inzu ya Masaba' vehemently promoted it.

Source: Photograph taken by Sentongo Isaac on 8th March 2014

Figure 11: Umukuuka Bob Mushikori greeting footballers during a Bikuuka Football Tournament



These 'Bikuuka' tournaments played a great role in uniting the Bamasaba from all the 26 clans and the 6 districts of Bugisu Sub-region.

Source: Photograph taken by Gusita Peter on 19th October 2019

Figure 12: The Mt. Elgon Culture and History Museum in Mbale



Source: Field Photo taken by Researcher on 10th April 2022

Most of the cultural and historical artifacts of the Bamasaba were kept there. It was established by 'Inzu ya Masaba' and it attracted many tourists from whole over the world and students from Bugisu schools.

Figure 13: A Bull Fighting event in Bududa District



Source: Photograph taken by Mugasira Paul on 11th June 2012

Bull Fighting is an old tradition among the Bamasaba which attracted many tourists into the region. Bull fighting events are organised by 'Inzu ya Masaba' and Umukuuka also attends them.

Figure 14: Victims of a Land Slide in Bududa



Source: Photograph by Wabui Job on 6th November 2011

'Inzu ya Masaba' played a great role in the consolation of the affected families through establishing fundraising campaigns allover Bugisu. The collected funds were used to resettle them in other villages.

Figure 15: Mutoto Cultural Grounds in Bungokho-Mutoto Sub County, Mbale



Mutoto Cultural Grounds is the circumcision centre of the Bamasaba. When 'Inzu ya Masaba' was being installed in 2010, it was suggested by some members that Mutoto should be the headquarters of the Cultural Institution. However, the attempt to make it the headquarters of 'Inzu ya Masaba' was unsuccessful

Source: extracted from Wikipedia

Figure 16: President Museveni attending an Imbalu Festival in Mbale in 2020.



Source: Photograph taken by Walimbwa Anthony on June 24th 2020.

The NRM regime led by President Museveni was criticized for over intervening in the cultural affairs of 'Inzu ya Masaba' to the extent of dictating who was supposed to be the Umukuuka; that made the cultural Institution unpopular among some Bamasaba (mostly those who belonged to opposition political parties such as FDC).

Figure 17: Joseph Kanyanya, the Self-styled Umukhungu of Babukusu 'Kingdom' in Bududa District.



Source: Photograph taken by David Mafabi on 21st September 2013

Appendix V: A table showing the 26 clans of the Bamasaba

Ancestor	Clans	Sub-clans	Region
Mwambu	1. Muyobo	Bauma Baundu Bawambwa Bawaswa	Bulambuli Sironko Uasin Gishu
	2. Hugu	Bayaka Bayundo Bayemba	
	3. Ginyanya	Bausi Batura Bata Basonge	
	4. Lago	Baswuhu Basiombo Basimisi	
	5. Luganya	Bamahe Bayasere Batoboso Bamayoyo	
	6. Sulani	Bananyenje Bakhufwe Baburire	

		Babichachi	
	7. Tandiga	Bakoyabe Bachoe Bachesoli Basiabulili	
	8. Halasi	Babwoba Bachemayi Bacharia	
	9. Masifa	Bawandiambi Batukwiika Basonge	
Mubuuya	10. Bumbo	Bananjofu Bamufumi Bamuruna	Namisindwa Manafwa Bududa
	11. Mubuutu	Baluchwata Baliuli Balwonja Bakyeyana	Trans-Nzoia
	12. Mutiiru	Bakinisu Bakhali Bakhurwara Bakoyi	
	13. Mututa	Babuulo	

		Banakhulundu Bazikhonya Balishe
	14. Kigai	Bakimepuli Bakhanywinywi Bakamukongi Bamakhanga
	15. Lutsekhe	Baabangura Baholo Bailifuma Bafumbula
	16. Mushika	Bata Batindui Batakhwe Batinga
	17. Wakoko	Bayaya Bawele Bachango
	18. Wabwala	Babuya Babenge Babikala Baafu Baala

	19. Kobero	Baabasaba Bachambachi Babaamanga Bachoe	
Wanale	20. Mukonde	Bakhoma Bakwami Bakuunga Bameme Bamuuna	Mbale Bungoma
	21. Wafumbo	Basianaka Bamulundi Bamalicha Bamiiso Bamuruba	
	22. Siu	Basaya Basakali Basioya Basamo	
	23. Wangokho	Bakibeti Bakamutebi Bakhayabi Bakhekhe	
	24. Saano	Bakinisu	

		Bakhonjo Bakhobolo Bakhongolo	
	25. Musoba	Basituyi Basakwa Basefu	
	26. Shiyende	Bachesoli Batoya Bachemwile	

Source: Acquired from the Inzu ya Masaba headquartes, Maluku, Mbale.

Appendix VI: A table showing the Cultural Institutions which are recognized by the Government of Uganda as per the 2011 Institution of Traditional or Cultural Leaders Act.

Cultural Institution	Ethnic Group(s)	Region
1. Obwakabaka bwa Buganda	Baganda	Central Region
2. Obukama bwa Bunyoro	Banyoro	Western Uganda
3. Obukama bwa Tooro	Batooro	Western Uganda
4. Obwakyabazinga bwa Busoga	Basoga	Eastern Uganda
5. Obusinga bwa Rwenzururu	Bakonjo, Baamba	Western Uganda
6. Lango Chiefdom	Langi	Northern Uganda

7. Ker Alur	Alur	North Weestern Uganda
8. Ker Kwaro Acholi	Acholi	Northern Uganda
9. Buruuli Chiefdom	Baruuli	Central Uganda
10. Obwakamuswaga wa Kooki	Baganda	Central Uganda
11. Tieng Adhola Chiefdom	Japadhola	Eastern Uganda
12. Inzu ya Masaba	Bamasaba	Eastern Uganda

Appendix VII: The Inzu ya Masaba Anthem.

Khusiima Weele lwe sisyaalo Masaba

Silimo Umukuuka wefwe uwe siirifwa

Silimo imwanyi ni luukiingi Masaba

Silimo bibindu biyangisa babandu

Khusiime weele uwesiriifwa

Akwongele tsiikhabi khuniininiine

Fwe Bamasaba khube atwela

Ne khwombekhe sisyaalo syeefwe Masaba

Khusiime Mwambu, Mubuuya ni Wanale

Babbaareera bikuuka bye Bamasaba
Biikuuka byasala inzu ya masaba
Khusiime lwe liiswa ni bulamu bwefwe

Khusiime weele uwesiriifwa
Akwongele tsiikhabi khuniininiine
Fwe Bamasaba khube atwela
Ne khwombekhe sisyaalo syeefwe Masaba

Khuloomba weele alinde umukuuka
Amuwe kamakesi ni bulamu buleeyi
Akhuyeete khun'goone imbalu yeefwe
Khwitubaase khwiinyukhe bamasaba

Khusiime weele uwesiriifwa
Akwongele tsiikhabi khuniininiine
Fwe Bamasaba khube atwela
Ne khwombekhe sisyaalo syeefwe Masaba

Source: Inzu ya Masaba Headquarters in Maluku, Mbale

Appendix VIII: Umukuuka Wilson Wamimbi's Cabinet (2010-2015)

Umukuuka- Wilson Wamimbi

Prime Minister- Muniafu M Phillip

First Deputy Prime Minister- Richard Siango

Second Deputy Prime Minister- Modesta Watawunyi

Minister of Resource Mobilization and Cabinet Administration- Wakinya Sam

Minister of Global Strategic Partnerships and Internal Standards Audit- Banga Fiona
Minister of Works and Housing- Nabukwasi Patience
Minister of Planning and Finance- Catherine Muduwa
Minister of Diaspora- Bob Mushikori
Minister of Education and Scholarships- Nakayenze Suzan
Attorney General and Constitutional Affairs- Waningiro Joseph
Minister of Agriculture and Animal Industry- John Wasikye
Minister of Culture, Music and Tourism- Priscilla Mungoma
Minister of Youth and Sports Affairs- Welishe Richard
Minister of Umukuuka Youth Award Scheme and School Feeding Program- Jamin Kwanunsu
Minister of Information, ICT and Corporate Affairs- Abubaker Bin Sirage Kauka
Bungoma County Representative- Michael Jabbi
Trans-Nzoia County Representative- Wabomba Ronnie
Bulambuli District Representative- Wamakuyu Maziina
Namisindwa District Representative- Steven Nyukuri
Bududa District Representative- Nabutanyi Patrick
Manafwa District Representative- Wanyama Alfred
Mbale District Representative- Alozius Nakisali
Sironko District Representative- Naomi Lumutanda

Source: Extracted from the Inzu ya Masaba Headquarters in Maluku, Mbale.

Appendix IX: *Umukuuka* Bob Mushikori's Cabinet (2015-2020)

Umukuuka- Bob Mushikori

Prime Minister- Francis Nagimesi

First Deputy Prime Minister- Omar Basaule Njovu

Second Deputy Prime Minister- Mathias Nabutele

Minister of Resource Mobilization and Cabinet Administration- Michael Nataka

Minister of Global Strategic Partnerships and Internal Standards Audit- Sam W Watulatsu
Minister of Works and Housing- Allan Wasikye
Minister of Planning and Finance- Dr Alfred Wamurubu
Minister of Education and Scholarships- David Muwooya Wekhoola
Attorney General and Constitutional Affairs- Thomas Wodero Mwambu
Minister of Agriculture and Animal Industry- Stephen Wakama
Minister of Culture, Music and Tourism- Bazil Wanzira
Minister of Youth and Sports Affairs- Israel Koboi
Minister of Umukuuka Youth Award Scheme and School Feeding Program- Betty Mabonga
Minister of Information, ICT and Corporate Affairs- Eric Mukwana
Bungoma County Representative- Norbert Manyasi
Trans-Nzoia County Representative- Siiti Christine
Bulambuli District Representative- Wamakuyu Maziina
Namisindwa District Representative- Irene Mangali
Bududa District Representative- Nabutanyi Patrick
Manafwa District Representative- Prof Pius Mwalye Mungoma
Mbale District Representative- Charles Mungoma Natsye
Sironko District Representative- Namangala Mwambu

Source: Extracted from the Inzu ya Masaba Headquarters in Maluku, Mbale.