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**SOCIETY OF  
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## **Society and its Reproduction: The Case of Wasukuma of Tanzania**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper discusses economic activities and their influence on the growth and development of human society in Usukuma. The specific objectives focused on firstly the significance of economic activities on the reproduction of human society from its evolution to the current stage. The paper dwelt on the transformation of the Sukuma society in the manner it has been evolving and the nature of economic activities it evolved. The other specific objective was to show how diverse economic activities developed by Wasukuma contributed to the growth and development of the society of Wasukuma. The paper concludes that economic activities are the product of human evolution in the struggle to tame the environment for sustainable growth and development. The paper applied the theory of social transformation to inform this study by situating the Sukuma society in the context of historical process from pre-colonialism through colonialism to post colonialism. It is revealed that during pre-colonial period the Sukuma evolved economic activities depending on the demands of the society, technological adaptation and what nature had in stock. Colonial superstructure transformed the Sukuma economic activities to the production of cash crops and minerals as demanded by colonial industries. Post colonial political system created dependency system whereby it inherited colonial economic activities. The main argument of this paper is that economic activities are invented by human beings who want to extract from nature the material life necessary for their existence and reproduction. The paper employed historical exploration utilizing qualitative approach and both primary and secondary historical sources for data collection. Data were collected by interviews, oral and generational histories, archives and documentary review from libraries.*

**Key words:** *Economic activities, Sukuma Society, Growth, Sustainable Development, Historical transformation, pre-colonial, colonial economy, postcolonial*

### **1. Introduction**

This paper picks up economic activities as an ingredient and means in the facilitation of sustainable development. The theory advanced to inform the study is that of human transformation which posits that labour created man. It argues that (Engels, 2010) unlike other primates who depended on nature as an object of labour by appropriating what nature possessed raw as they were. On the other hand human beings detached from other primates by using nature as a subject of labour by transforming what was provided by nature into use value. Evolution of economic activities is much more linked to the evolution of mankind. Labour created man by separating himself from other primates. The breakthrough in the technological innovations was the neolithic revolution which went together with emergence of both domestication of plants and animals. This was further accelerated by the discovery of iron technology giving an impetus to the revolutionization of economic activities.

Economic activities are those conscious efforts using man's intellect and physical abilities which enabled them to harness nature in order to create material goods. This production process aimed at meeting the basic human needs and human security such as shelter, clothing, education, food, health and entertainments. These activities were influenced by geography, climate, soil, and rain pattern. To avoid environmental determinism in the evolution and development of economic activities as cautioned by (Njoku, 2014) this theory will look at the way every society in



turn influences its natural milieu. Indeed, (Maddox, et.al. 1996) argue that it is quite imperative to understand the interaction between human societies and environment at all historical epochs. Unlike the primitive Africa approach (Kimambo, et.al. 2017) which perceived pre-colonial societies as having inhabited hostile environment constantly facing famine, epidemics and demographic reversals before achieving somewhat greater security in the colonial period, the Merrie Africa approach to the other side was championed by (Kjekshus, 1996) who sees the pre-colonial Tanzania history as being dominated by smooth functioning society that is governance was good. Koponen (1988) suggests that the image which is created by Kjekshus is a country of milk and honey. For him, pre-colonial societies were permanently settled and sophisticated. Agricultural products were produced in surplus. Men had control of ecological system. The level of science and technology was quite good. Population was growing. People were content to work harder and were capable of feeding rising number of people. There was development of iron technology and irrigation. Kjekshus and Iliffe (1996; 1979) saw stable African societies living in harmony with nature before suffering from depopulation, natural disasters and economic exploitation under colonial rule.

Both Primitive Africa and Merrie Africa do not reveal the reality which (Kimambo, et.al. 2017) should be that all human societies have continuously utilized the economic, political, moral and cultural resources at their disposal to make strides and prosper in an ever-changing environmental circumstance. It is the effort of man through centuries to earn and satisfy his basic needs is also part of study about economic activities. How man through the ages has fought with his surroundings and economized resources at his disposal to satisfy his material wants for simple food, shelter and clothing. Generally, we can say that all activities we do to earn living are economic activities. The rest of activities such as religious, charitable, social, patriotic, and recreational ones are non-economic activities done for emotional concern of other people.

The primitive Africa and Marrie Africa are both extremes. History shows that there had been variations in economic activities which were determined by human development as they struggle for economic growth and development by appropriating the environment. Environment poses challenges to human progress; in return the human beings develop new and sophisticated science and technology which improve production and productive forces by designing new economic activities. Changing demands and testes called for changing economic activities. They had stability and problems, but the problems were manageable.

The population was relatively stable and steadily expanding. This was reflected by the distribution and settlement pattern. Shifting cultivation was not the overall system of East African agriculture. Wildlife was becoming managed in the 1870s. Presence of domestic animals like cattle in large numbers was a proof of absence of tsetse in East African villages. The production of iron, salt, cloth in many areas of the country was already developed. Trade had also developed between two areas, that is productive and non productive areas. All these are indicators of dynamism of people producing and reproducing themselves.

Economic activities are the prerequisites of human existence and reproduction of the society no matter the stage of development has been reached by a particular society. That is why there are diverse economic activities to different societies with different levels of development. The society constantly struggles to transform itself by appropriating the environment. In his process man improves productive forces by advancing science and technology by comprehending laws governing nature. Consequently, diverse economic activities are invented hence increase mastery of nature and diverse and quality products are produced. The lives and wellbeing of individuals and the entire society got improved both quantitatively and qualitatively. Wasukuma as a case study are used to demonstrate how economic activities are part of the transformation of any society as they struggle to appropriate what nature has in stock. This necessitated improvement of Wasukuma ability to control environment from pre-colonialism, colonialism and post-colonialism.

## **2. Pre colonial Economic activities among the Sukuma of Tanzania**

### **2.1 Pre-colonial Sukumaland**

In Africa pre-colonial period is one of the longest periods than the others beginning from 3000 years ago. For Sukuma the discussion will start from around 1500 AD when movement towards the current settlements was so intense. But much focus will be put on the 19<sup>th</sup> century when the interaction and movements were so widespread due to some historical and environmental factors. Population growth, improvement of productive forces after discovery



of iron and search for resources forced the Sukuma to migrate from their homes of origin to venturing in the wilderness where Ntemi chiefdom had been opened by pioneering columns.

## **2.2 Origin of the Sukuma people**

Wasukuma are the largest single tribal group who live in the southern shore of Lake Victoria in North West of Tanzania covering current Mwanza, Shinyanga, Simiyu, Geita and Tabora regions. The Usukuma has altitude varying between 3,700 feet and 4,200 feet above sea level rising to higher altitudes in both east and west. The main area consists of undulating plains with scattered ridges of low mountain ranges composed of granite outcrops. The Sukumaland has an average rainfall of about 965 mm which varied geographically and cyclically with occasional droughts. Sukumaland has hardly any perennial rivers as a result it has no trees in the inhabited areas.

According to (Gores, 2017) in the 1957 official census the Sukuma was the largest ethnic group with a population of 1,245,908 people in the districts of Kwimba, Maswa, Manza, Geita and Shinyanga. In 1967 census the Sukuma numbered 1,529,917. The number of the Sukuma has been increasing despite poor climate and soil because the birthrate has been increasing. They number close to 7.5 million and increasing despite poor soil and hostile climate. The census data of 2002 {National Bureau of Statistics {NBS}, 2012) showed the population of Wasukuma was 5,963,689 people and that of 2012 showed the population was standing at 7,631,004 people who were living in the regions of Shinyanga, Mwanza, Simiyu, and Geita (NBS and OCGS 2013).

Cattle represent wealth for Sukuma (Roth, 1961) but they are primarily agriculturalists with cereal grains as their staples and cotton as their cash crop. Sukuma the people of the north are the largest tribe in Tanzania around Lake Victoria in the southern shore. Sukuma are related to the Nyamwezi the people of the south or Dakama or people of the moon Nyamwesi. Many theories are advanced to explain the Sukuma settlement in this area. The Sukuma ancestors (Milambo, 2004) are believed to have migrated from Sudan to the interlacustrine region of Uganda and Rwanda and entered Usukuma in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. This is Hamitic Myth or diffusionist theory advanced by some scholars like the missionaries, anthropologists and colonial scholars.

Another theory advances that the Bantu migrated from the Congo basin through two routes. The first went as far as northern part of Lake Tanganyika to the interlacustrine region of Burundi then Kigoma to Usukuma. The second route claims that the Sukuma passed through the southern part of Lake Tanganyika and the northern part of Lake Nyasa through Sumbawanga, Mpanda and Tabora to Usukuma.

Synthesis of the theories relating to the origin of Sukuma can be made thus. Given the different explanations on the origin of the Sukuma it is safe to conclude thus Sukuma are the Bantu people from their dispersal point in Cameroun. Bantu (Kimambo, et.al. 2017) is sub-sub group of the Niger Congo who emerged in the savanna region eastern of Nigeria and Cameroun. The Bantu spread south and east into the equatorial zone and from there into the savanna areas of central and east Africa by 1000 BC.

The Wasukuma settled in areas with moderate and unreliable rainfall, with variation in the total amount between the southern and northern parts. The historical irregularity of the rainfall (Matunda, 2019) made drought almost a normal part of the agricultural routine in the area and just enough to support drought resistant crops. The system of life of Sukuma demanded them to frequently move to newer and uncultivated areas a practice popularly known as shifting cultivation. The grasslands were sufficient to support animal keeping hence another economic activity that is mixed farming evolved.

Environmental changes occurred in Usukuma society because the population cleared bushes for human settlement. Clearing of forests transformed the people of Usukuma from being hunters-gatherers to agriculturalists, while others practiced skilled elephant hunting, fishing and trade. Under agricultural production the Sukuma farmed a small area of land for the purpose of obtaining food. Thus, (Little, 1989) these people produced food crops such as sorghum, millet, sesame, cowpeas, peanuts and sweet potatoes.

## **2.3 Evolution of Diverse Economic Activities among the Sukuma**

Pre-colonial Sukuma activities were influenced by geography, climate, soil, and rain pattern. During the pre-colonial period, (Benadeta, 2019; Itandala, 1992a) the Sukuma were involved in collection of wild products. Sukuma women gathered mushrooms, of which there were many varieties in the bush near their homes. They as well (Blohm, 1931;



Rodger, 1954) gathered vegetable leaves and dug some tubers. Termites and other insects were also collected and formed one of the most favorite Sukuma foods. This work was essentially rainy season activity and the products were often dried for future use. Wasukuma (Rodger, 1954) engaged in dry-season expedition into the bush trip for the purpose of collecting wild honey and bees wax. The trip of weeks in the bush had dangers including contracting sleeping sickness. These dangers (Rodger, 1954) were not sufficient deterrent to the Wasukuma men however, since the profits from a successful expedition can be very high as the products were in high demand by traders.

Wasukuma were primarily farmers who continually cultivated their fields during the rainy season in permanent settlements established in the seventeenth century. The implements they used were the hand hoe and other locally made tools. Agriculture was the dominant economic activity in Usukuma. A wide variety of food crops, grain or cereal crops included bulrush millet, sorghum and maize were produced. When rice was first introduced in 19<sup>th</sup> century (Massawe, 2019) it was regarded as a crop for exchange as the indigenous were less interested in using it as a staple food. Rice was exchanged locally with animals such as cattle, goats and sheep. Cassava and sweet potatoes (Hosea, 2017) were the major root crops; and peas, beans, groundnuts and chickpeas were the main legumes. The cultivation of food crops was carried out in small scale (Little, 1991) since production was just for subsistence economy.

One of the distinctive features during the pre-colonial period in Usukuma was the keeping of animals namely chicken, domestic pigeons, ducks and guinea-fowl. Cattle were unevenly distributed throughout the region due to tsetse fly and shortage of water. Cattle (Gores and Kapinga, 2020) were used in bride wealth and dowry transaction and for exchange with grains which was common among the people who had insufficient food crops. Cattle acted as reserves during the difficult times and for payment of fines and other customary dues. Cattle were in a whole the most important heritable property and a status symbol in Usukuma (Benadeta, 2019; Abrahams, 1967). Goats and sheep were evenly distributed than cattle. Their main economic value laid in their meat and skins. They were also used for bride wealth transactions and in the payment of court fines. Goats were often used as sacrificial victim in the ancestral religious party, sheep only being used for special types of sacrifice (Malcom, 1953).

Trade was another economic activity conducted by the people of Usukuma during the pre-colonial period. Wasukuma had evolved local barter trade within their society based on diversity of economic activities. They also (Senior, 1938) evolved caravan trading among themselves and between themselves and distant areas such as northeastern Tanzania at Lake Eyasi where salt was the main trade article. Another caravan (Kimambo, et.al. 2017, Speke 1864) was organized to northwestern areas of Karagwe, Bukoba as far as Buganda and regions to southwest and west such as Katanga. Both local and long-distance trade (Speke, 1864) was organized and carried out by indigenous inhabitants of Usukuma who were existing independently of and to some extent in competition with trading activities of Arabs and other outside traders. It is informed (Hosea 2017) that during the nineteenth century long distance trade penetrated to the shore of Lake Victoria. There were number of caravan routes which were made by Arab and Swahili coastal traders to the Lake Victoria areas and the great lakes in general. It is reported that in every year during the dry season, organized groups of Sukuma traders travelled between Usukuma and the coast of East Africa (Hosea 2017). There were also Arab and Swahili traders who crossed from the central caravan route to the shores of Lake Victoria. Porters from Usukuma (Hosea, 2017) took various local goods to the coast including ivory, goats, hoes and oxen. From the coast, they brought calico, strings of beads, china wares, copper wires, clothes, gun, gun powder and trade goods of Asia.

As it was in most parts of Africa and Tanganyika in particular, (Rockel, 1997) the only means of transport used in pre-colonial period and early days of colonialism in transporting commodities was largely human portorage. However, in some areas which were located along the shores of seas, lakes, or banks of rivers waterway was also used to carry goods and passengers. It is reported (Ochieng & Maxon, 1992) that importance of head portorage increased in Tanganyika, for instance, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century as the result of the expansion of local and long-distance trade. Arabs and Swahili traders employed large number of porters who carried a variety of imported goods from the coast areas of East Africa to the market places (interior towns), and returned back with local goods obtained from the interior through the portorage system. There were water transport facilities in Lake Victoria developed in the form of rafts made of papyrus stalks, bamboos or logs of one piece of floats. However, (Mingari, 1983) the most spectacular facility was the permanent rafts lashed together by papyrus fibers and where cross pieces were added to the end to hold the structure in shape.



Fishing activity was invented and went on in the Sukuma region; (Abrahams, 1967; Hosea, 2017) it was extensively carried only in the northern Usukuma and south –west. The fish was either sold fresh or else it was reserved by drying. Occasionally preservation was carried out by fishermen themselves, but sometimes by the traders. Fishing was done by using artisanal traditional fishing gears including locally made nets, the use of hooks, poison, weir baskets and traditional fish traps.

The structure of the social formation of Wasukuma was capable of sustaining the level of development they had reached by creatively utilizing what the environment had endowed them. Human ingenuity among the Sukuma people was very instrumental in manipulating the endowment of the environment for their advantage. Iron technology was discovered at Geita (Barongo) and Usumbwa, (Iliffe, 1979) it was very important discovery in improving productive forces by making better iron tools for production. Iron arrows, axes, hoes, spears were often (Abrahams, 1969) made by Sukuma blacksmiths. Crafts were among the innovations and inventions by the Sukuma whose products included wood and bark works, bedsteads, ladles and spoons. There was close and logical linkage and relationship between the diverse economic activities and society on the one hand and the nature of environment on the other.

### **3. Colonial Economic Activities**

#### **3.1 European Agents of Colonialism in Sukumaland**

Sukumaland was annexed by the Germans (1885-1918) and later the British (1919-1961) colonialists. Colonial occupation in Sukumaland was preceded by the activities of colonial agents namely missionaries and explorers such as Speke 1858 and Stanley 1878. Berlin Conference 1885 was unable to fix boundaries between two spheres in the north of Lake Victoria Nyanza region. Hence intense competition ensued between the British and German agents. These agents (Itandala, 1992b) vigorously competed for occupation of this region apparently because of its rich human and natural resources and its strategic position at the head-waters of the Nile River. This race for the lake (Austen, 1968) was initiated by the representatives of GEAC on the one hand and the BEAC on the other. The diplomats of the two nations met to sign the Heligoland Treaty 1890 to agree on settling their squabble amicably.

#### **3.2 Sukumaland under German Rule**

By 1890 Anglo-German Treaty Usukuma fell under the German rule. Earlier coastal traders, European missionaries and explorers had come peacefully but Germans came forcefully. A good example was Emin Pasha invaded Masanza militarily to stop slave Arab traders with their slaves and trade goods were confiscated and slave trading in Usukuma was put to an end.

Emin Pasha's expedition on lake region established two military stations – Bukoba by Emin at the end of 1890 and Mwanza by one of his non-commissioned officers Sergent Hoffmann. There was expansion of output of indigenous products to sell to the Indian merchants of Mwanza who sold them to trading area of Indian Ocean area. Between 1903 and 1904 (Iliffe, 1969) the value of Mwanza exports raised from marks 71185 to 423246 marks, by 1907 it had reached 2,408,965 marks.

German District officer Gunzert used indirect rule in Usukuma between 1907 and 1916 to preserve chief's authority in developing the Sukuma economy. He strengthened the authority of the traditional tribal organization by reviewing their old powers. The old system of Mwanza was that tax had to be collected directly from the people by touring Europeans.

#### **3.4 German Colonial Economic Activities in Sukumaland**

The Sukuma society was confronted with the capitalist economy since the arrival of Germans and later the British. The existing subsistence economy operated under pre-colonial period was intact. In most cases they were the source of accumulation by the colonial authority at the start of their administration. Collecting economy (Iliffe, 1979) involved the companies collecting natural and locally produced commodities in Usukuma included ivory, beeswax, honey, local cotton, minerals, cow hides, wild cotton and food crops.

Introduction of cotton and rubber by plantation system was started, later the introduction of cash crops cultivation by peasants specifically cotton for the Sukuma started the export economy. In Usukuma (Iliffe, 1969) cotton was introduced in the Nera chiefdom as a peasant cash crop in 1902. Two agents a German farmer-cum-businessman called Wiegand and the White Fathers Missionaries (Tambila, 1996) were involved in the introduction of cotton





growing in Usukuma. The farmers settled on their land, received free cotton seeds but sold their cotton cheaply. The settlers then exported the cotton to Europe along the Uganda railway (Tanzania National Archives {TNA} 21032). Around 1906 the Sukuma were tired of this unprofitable system, instead DC Gunzert compelled the people to grow cotton as peasant crop. Iliffe, (1979) reported that by 1910 cotton was introduced in Nassa Chiefdom and was the first to benefit, and then (Bowles, 1976) other chiefdoms in Usukuma started cotton production. Gunzert (TNA, Maswa District Book 1931) brought seeds to Simba the chief of Nassa and ordered him to distribute it and force every able-bodied man to plant certain acreage. People in other chiefdoms (Cory, 1960) started to demand seed and were distributed to them the following year. By 1910, (Kimambo & Temu, 1969) cotton production was about to be abandoned because of unprofitability and administrative compulsions to cotton production.

However, by 1910 cotton started gaining acceptance in Usukumma region. Output doubled in 1910, it did again in 1911 when Mwanza exported 163334 pounds of raw cotton. Cotton was overwhelmingly peasant occupation. Besides Wiegand, (Tambila, 1996) two more European planters opened up cotton plantations in Usukuma in 1908. These planters were Kohler Plantation with 30 hectares and Brunnhof Plantation with 100 hectares.

Surprisingly, Usukuma cotton growing spread smoothly, although elements of force were also used by the state. Governor Rechenburg fearing another uprising (TNA, RKA 119/96) he refrained from using force and recommended that Sukumaland should concentrate on groundnuts and rice cultivation and not cotton. This was so because the Sukuma peasants were also engaged in growing other crops including rice, peanuts and sesame. However, the DC Gunzert (TNA, Memoirs of DC) defied the order of the governor by concentrating on the production of cotton and not groundnuts and rice as the order of governor insisted. Gunzert introduced more suitable American upland variety by government funds.

The DC encouraged the Sukuma to grow groundnuts and rice as means of earning cash and at the same time they could be used as food. It was easy for these farmers to accept this (Masawe, 2019) because they were used to these crops before the onset of the Germans with their cotton. Sukuma could utilize these crops even if there could be no market for rice and groundnuts. Groundnuts and rice used little time compared to cotton in terms of planting and harvesting. In order to achieve this project, the DC arranged that, for every indigenous to be fixed an annually increasing area for the cultivation of cash crops.

Problems of food supply in Usukuma (Little, 1991) have become rampant because of cotton production. Famines were experienced in 1890s, in most cases was claimed due to shortage of rainfall but evidence show that the spending of most time in cotton farms amounted to less time in food production. Hence outbreak of famines such as what happened in 1919, 1934, 1938, and 1944. Constraints in marketing, bottlenecks in transport and erratic marketing organizations made the situation even worse.

This resulted to the cruel treatments and unjustly exploitation in which; robbing of indigenous land, their freedom and often wantonly and cruelly of their wives by the colonial adventurers. On top of that, (TNA, 1733/1) the Germans introduced different agricultural policies with the intention of increasing production. For instance, in Kwimba, Germans introduced land policy in which went hand in hand with clearing bushes. They introduced this policy with the aim of expanding production areas for crops such as cotton and rice.

### **3.5 The British Colonial Rule in Usukuma, 1919 to 1961**

Through the Versailles Peace Treaty Tanganyika was mandated to Britain. By default, Sukumaland became a British possession. The economy was still based on production of raw materials as it was under the German rule. The British from the first stop until Cameroun rule was preoccupied primarily with reparation of spoil created by disease and war. Basing on (Native Authorities Ordinance 1925) Cameroun introduced indirect rule in 1926 which applied local institutions to administer. British authorities held that the Sukuma society could only be developed through the unity of the chiefs together with the representative councils. Since the main aim was development of agriculture, the idea was accepted after the Second World War. Thus, in October 1946, The Sukuma Chiefs Federation was formed; (TNA Acc. 215 File 2237, 1948) uniting all the chiefs of Sukumaland and from that moment they met twice a year at Malya in Kwimba.

The local African Sukuma authorities and their community were suspicious of the motives of the British, for they had not yet learned to make any distinction between former and present colonial masters. Under these circumstances



the task of those British concerned with economic development was especially hard and all prospects pointed to a long agonizing recovery (Little, 1991).

### **3.6 British Colonial Economic Activities in Usukuma**

When Tanganyika became a British protectorate in 1919, (Wisjen & Tanner, 2002) Sukuma farmers increased their cotton production substantially. Introduction of poll and hut taxes payable in form of kind and cash forced the Sukuma to join the British cash economy. The intention of introducing taxes (Gores & Kapinga, 2020) was because the colonial government forced the local people to engage effectively in the production of different cash crops such as cotton, rice and groundnuts. Thus, cotton was then grown on an ever-increased scale until cotton became one of the principal export produce of Tanzania, with Sukuma its chief producer.

Therefore, Grow-More Crop Campaigns of 1930s involved an increase of the number of agricultural extension staff which should advice, supervise and force cultivators to grow more cash crops. More pressure was exerted through the native authorities and by “judicious propaganda” and “education” efforts of agricultural officers. With this attempt, about 160 agricultural instructors were employed by the native authorities in the Lake Province during the 1930s. The campaigns (McCall, 1977) met with spectacular success in cotton production in the entire Lake Province. Production increased from about 3 million pounds/lbs in 1929 to 10.6 million pounds in 1934 and 18 million pounds in 1936, with the major proportion coming from the Sukuma Districts.

When one of the rural development projects of post-war colonial Africa was initiated in Sukumaland, production further climbed rapidly. (McCall 1977) shows it reached 100,000 bales in 1955; 235,000 bales in 1963 and 350,000 in 1970. Since then the trend of cotton production began to decline. Due to the efforts the Sukuma Development Scheme became the main thrust for the production of crops in Sukuma society during the early 1950s. Many rules and regulations were promulgated to ensure success of the scheme.

Rice was very much marketable, (TNA, File No. 40922) the colonialists wanted more rice to be produced in Sukumaland. They decided not to disturb the producers but rather to give them space in which they will control everything concerning rice production, except the issue of price and market. They gave them this chance so as they may be convinced that they were part and parcel of colonial economy. They pointed out rice and groundnuts which were very important to continue being produced because, apart from a cash crop, rice could be used by the settlers as a food crop and groundnuts could provide oil to the processing industries which could be established in the colonies.

For example, (Little, 1991) when rice was introduced in the lake shore, some places such as Kwimba produced it in small amount but as time went on especially during British period, production picked up though it obviously suffered extremely during drought season. Rice gained popularity as a commercial crop since the Sukuma did not eat rice at this time.

The whole processing of rice was largely in the hands of Asians who operated small mills near the lake shore. However, as a sidelight it is interesting to note (Masawe, 2019) that Carl Jungblut a man who had done so much to develop the rice industry during German times, but unfortunately he did not succeed, he came back during British times so as he could renew his efforts with this administration so as he can accomplish what he aimed. Rice production since it was introduced, it was especially well appreciated during the 1942 season when virtually everything else failed but to this crop it was a blessing, something which forced the producers do supplement income to other cash crops so as to rescue them.

Together with that it was as well recognized that, gum Arabic was good for the source of income to the farmers so as to assist them when other crops failed. For example, in 1938 it was reported that the sale of gum in Kwimba and Maswa had provided the people with the bulk of their tax money when the other crops could not do so because of bad years in production activities. (Little, 1991)

In order to produce more crops, (Hyden, 1980) British introduced different policies for instance the Sukuma Development Schemes in Kwimba society. This scheme was to be based on the ideas of W. D. Malcolm who was a government agricultural specialist. He conducted different researches on land use in Sukuma area during 1930s. Furthermore, he observed that the arable land was being over populated as it was not being fertilized and on top of that there was overgrazing which caused soil erosion. Resettlement policy was also introduced by the British



colonialist (TNA, File No. 2/9) to the indigenous people of Sukuma society. This policy was introduced because there was a need for more areas for investment so as to increase production. Also, the policy was established because the colonialists intended to intensify the land of local people through production of both cash crops and food crops.

Therefore, it was believed that in the early 1930s the local people had started moving to new areas on their own account. The administration became aware of these movements in the late interwar period but did not attempt to control them in any way. The major movements (TNA, 1946, File No. 215/2070) went to “Buzinza” and the eastern part of Maswa but also within the Mwanza, Shinyanga and Kwimba Districts. Nevertheless, (TNA, Mwanza District Report) the indigenous farmers who moved into the new areas cleared bushes, started cultivation and herded their stock. After World War II the British colonial state (Masawe, 2019) established irrigation system and oppressive regulations to enable production of large quantity and good quality of rice.

### **3.7 Infrastructure Construction during British Rule in Usukuma**

British were concerned about infrastructure in order to access raw material producing areas. Development of transport system in Usukuma in order that Mwanza town should be connected to other parts of Lake Province (Musoma, Bukoba, Shinyanga, Kwimba, and Maswa) and territory by roads, railway, marine, and air services. The main reason for the expansion of transport system in Usukuma was to promote production of cotton which had already been introduced by the Germans. The construction of transport system could also facilitate expansion of merchandise trade in Lake Province and Mwanza became a focus of Indian merchants who had arrived and settled in Mwanza since the German period. They undertook to build a railway line from Tabora to Mwanza which was accomplished in 1928 (Kimambo, et.al. 2017). The extension of this line opened the connection between Mwanza town and coastal areas and also liberated the town from dependence on the coastal rail link from Kisumu through marine services on Lake Victoria (Phillips, 2009).

Usukuma received two economic boosts in 1920s and 1930s which included the discovery of significant gold deposits in Southwest Mwanza, East Mwanza, and Musoma districts as well as diamond deposits at Mwadui. The discoveries of minerals benefited Mwanza town as headquarters for mining activities boosted commercial activities in the town. Furthermore, (Hosea, 2017) mining activities influenced the improvement of transport particularly roads connecting to the mines such as Mwabuki diamond mine and Geita Gold mine. The roads were important communication between cotton buying posts and ginneries particularly Mwanangwa/ Pambani/ Salawe and Pambani ginnery with almost the whole of their zone of Msalala in Geita district (TNA Acc, 250, A,3/18/77).

During colonial period the involvement of Sukuma people in cotton production, rice production, groundnuts production and other agricultural subsistence products enabled them to improve their living standard. Some people (TNA Acc. 250 A3/13) were able to buy bicycle, radio, cattle, take their children to school and roofing their houses with iron sheets. While others bought ox- ploughs and tractors. However, the colonial state was the one to decide according to the needs of the metropolitan bourgeoisie on what economic activities to be undertaken. This denied Wasukuma capacity to decide on what economic activities to be undertaken.

## **4. Post Colonial Sukuma Economic Activities**

### **4.1 Independence of Tanganyika and the Economic Aftermath**

Tanganyika became independent in 1961 but the independence was just political independence. The debate about achievement of growth and sustainable development lingered on very vehemently leading to several alternative suggestions. In Sukuma society the focus was on the increase of agricultural production of cotton (TNA, File No. 19080) something which resulted to the decrease of other crops such as rice, groundnuts and sisal.

During 1960s and 1970s, the household was the primary source of labour for farm work in Usukuma. The able-bodied family members within the household both men and women participated in the cotton production. Additionally, hired casual labour, communal mutual help groups (*Lubili or Luganda*) and some hired oxen plough supplemented household labour therefore, (Lupande, 1997) the communal mutual help groups to some extent reduced the labour costs among smallholders’ farmers.





#### **4.2 The Arusha Declaration and the economic activities**

The political and economic landscape of Tanzania changed dramatically after Arusha Declaration in 1967. Farmers under ujamaa villages received a good cooperative and support from political leaders of the Tanzanian government, the Regional Administration, officers of central government and local government officials. However, during the period of villagization, the Nyanza Cooperative Union handled all the purchases of cotton, rice, chickpea and maize. Production dropped sharply per hectare (Masanja, 2019) from 500 kilogram to 350 kilogram and even below because cotton crop was mostly affected by pests and diseases as well as soil fertility. Movement of peasants to the new ujamaa villages adversely affected the agricultural sector in Usukuma.

#### **4.3 Economic Crisis, Neoliberal Economic Policies and the Sukuma Economic Activities**

The Britton Woods sponsored Structural Adjustment Programmes and the late 1970s and early 1980s economic crisis influenced economic activities in Usukuma. Incidences (Limbu, 1995) including the war with Uganda in 1978/1979, the international oil shock crisis, the debt crisis as well as elimination of regional cooperative unions as well as reduction of aids from outside affected the economy. Due to this crisis (Limbu, 1995) importation of agricultural inputs dwindled and the cost of inputs for cotton farmers in Usukuma increased. The smallholder farmers had no cash money to buy hence cotton production and their output was adversely affected.

From 1980s to 2000 production of rice increased because of adopting new irrigation technologies in production. Tanzania government established various projects with the intention of supplying water in Usukuma rice farms. New areas for growing rice were opened and efforts shifted to rice than to cotton. Between 1985 and 1998 rice production in Usukuma society increased almost four-fold making rice the fastest growing cash and food crop.

Unfortunately, (Mbilinyi and Nyoni, 2000) liberalization policies removed government price supports for smallholder growers grain marketing was opened to private traders in competitive market. Public marketing agencies disengaged from the food trade due to lack of working capital and their inability to compete with private companies. Therefore, since private traders focused in investing on rice production in Usukuma, a lot of the local people ended up becoming labourers in trader's plantations.

Challenges in cotton production, made Usukuma farmers to shift to production of rice. Furthermore, other crops such as chickpea, sorghum, cassava, beans and pulses were marketed outside the regular marketing system by local traders. In 1993 (Ngaruko and Mbilinyi, 2014) the government removed the fixed producer price system and the monopolies of the Regional Cooperative Unions and the Tanzania Cotton Authority were abolished. Private agents were allowed to enter the market in every stage from primary purchase to exports of lint, provided that licenses were obtained from the Cotton Board and in advance of each season (Ngaruko and Mbilinyi, 2014). This marked the beginning of liberalization as a national wide policy in cotton marketing in particular.

The practices of economic liberalization in Usukuma started with the operation of private companies as cotton buyers, ginner and exporters of cotton lint into the world market. With regards to the cotton regulations, the Tanzania Cotton Board was an authorized parastatal that provide license to the private companies to involve in cotton undertakings (S.M. Holdings Company [SMHC] 2007). Recently, there is no single cooperative ginner operating in Usukuma, this means that the Usukuma cotton marketing structure is monopolized by private companies (SMHC, 2007) as buyers, ginner and exporters marked the practices and operation of the liberalized free marketing system.

In the early 2000s to 2010, the Cotton Development Fund was established as tripartite input-provision system whose main function was to supplement the prices of agro-chemicals and cotton seeds for planting (Bargawi, 2008). Under this regulation, smallholder farmers, ginner and the government were required to contribute part of their income to allow for the purchase of cotton inputs for the next season. This attempt failed because the ginner to advantages of the farmer's ignorance to exploit them. Furthermore, the problems related to the costs of inputs and labour continued up to 2010s.

#### **4.4 The Economic Activities during Globalization**

The trend of cotton production in Usukuma since 2000s was faced with many challenges, the notable challenge was floods which occurred in 2000. In the period between 2010 and 2015 the trend of cotton production has continued to decline drastically as compared to the 1980s and 1990s seasons. There was much rush of peasants toward production



of maize that served for both food and cash crop earnings to offset the gap of cotton production which was becoming unprofitable due to low price. Observation (Sembuli, 2017) from the surveyed areas showed that, paddy, green gram and cassava have been the leading alternative crops against cotton which were used by many farmers as sources of income, food and livelihood.

Currently (Baffes, 2002) more than 90 percent of cotton is produced south of Lake Victoria in the Mwanza, Shinyanga, Mara, Tabora, Kigoma, and Singida regions, with Singida, Mwanza, and Shinyanga accounting for 80 percent of it while the rest is produced in the Eastern part of the country. However, (Kabissa, 2017) area under cotton tend to vary from as 0.4 hactres to as large as 40 hactres in some parts of the district such as Meatu, Bariadi and Bukombe. While rice production was replacing cotton as a dominant cash crop in Usukuma, peasants were systematically withdrawing from producing cotton as a cash crop.

## 5 Conclusion

Sukuma economic activities have been constantly changing given the changing material conditions both natural and human. In the course of that the Sukuma achieved economic growth as proved by the evidence presented in the preceding discussion and economic development of Wasukuma also improved qualitatively as case has been elaborated by the evidence discussed in this paper. However, the sustainability of the development would be determined by other conditions in as far as the political regime is capable of managing the economy.

Pre-colonial Wasukuma economic activities produced what the society demanded hence sustained their lives. Colonial economic activities strained the indigenous subsistence production system of the Sukuma people making it inclined to production of what the colonialists demanded. The colonial policies shifted labour from food production and attempted to create a surplus of labour-intensive non food cash crops such as cotton, rice and more agricultural products. British policies on agriculture in their colonies were not different from the ones instituted by the Germans. This is due to the fact that both policies were following their principles which (Brett, 1983) considered colonies as the source of raw materials and markets to their industries. In this case cash crops, mining economy were introduced in Usukuma and some traditional products were converted into export crops to cater for capitalist demands. Good examples include rice, groundnuts, sesame and peanuts though pre-colonial subsistence crops were at different points in Sukuma history served as export crops by colonialists. Colonial economic activities gravitated around meeting the colonial demands of cheap raw materials, labour and markets. Wasukuma were no longer involved in deciding what to produce and what to consume. The economic growth achieved did not contribute to the sustainable development of the Wasukuma.

Post colonial Tanganyika inherited the colonial economic activities though the superstructure underwent some changes. The state lacked capacity and will to transform the economic activities inherited from colonialism so as to bring sustainable development to Sukuma society. This is witnessed by the failure of post colonial state to protect Sukuma peasant during economic crisis 1970s and early 1980s. The advent of liberalization which adversely affected cotton growers in Usukuma was not abated by the state. Wasukuma were left to struggle on their own initiatives which apparently, they lost all the battles and finally the entire war. The war against poverty, disease and ignorance.

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