

**THE IMPACT OF MULTINATIONAL TEA COMPANIES ON THE SOCIO-
ECONOMIC EVOLUTION OF SMALL-SCALE TEA FARMERS OF
KERICHO DISTRICT, 1954-2010**

BY

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DEDICATION

To My Parents Mr. Samwel Ruto and Mrs. Grace Ruto,

To My Beloved Wife, Friend and Companion-

Mrs. Winny Koech,

To our Daughter Hazel Pauls,

To My Brother Jacob & family and Sisters Josephine and Tabitha,

To My Late Sister in Law Joice Koech,

and

To Our Little Ones Jael, Jearim, Joy and Jemo.

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I do acknowledge that on my own, this work would not have been this way. Thanks to God, the Almighty Father whose love for us is steadfast and endless.

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ABSTRACT

The importance of tea in Kenya and more so in rural household economy cannot be over emphasized. For over five decades now, the people of Kericho County have been involved in tea growing yet this enterprise has failed to fundamentally transform their socio-economic condition. Could this scenario of socio-economic stagnation be explained by their relationship with the Multinational Corporations involved in tea production in the County? This study was inspired by the need to seek an answer to this question by examining the relationship between the Multinational Corporations engaging in plantation agriculture and how it affects the socio-economic activities of small-scale farmers of Kericho County, Kenya during the period 1895-2010. The study was guided by three objectives; first, to examine the socioeconomic organization of the Kipsigis before the coming of colonialists and introduction of tea, second, to assess the origin, evolution and impact of Multi-National Corporations and plantation agriculture in general on the local people, and finally, to examine the measures that Multi-National Corporations have put in place to assist the rural community. The study spanned through three phases. 1895 – 1924 saw the establishment of colonialism. 1924 – 1963 witnessed the articulation of tea farming with local systems of production, while the period 1963 – 2010 was crucial to the evolution and propagation of the small-scale tea sub-sector in Kericho County. Unilever Kenya (formerly Brooke Bond) and James Finlay Company (formerly African Highlands Produce Corporation) operating in Kericho County, were used as case studies. The main sources of data used were oral interviews, archival material and questionnaires. Secondary data included books and articles on the subject. The study used a sample size of twenty eight informants who were selected using Snowball Sampling Technique and Stratified Sampling Method. Underdevelopment theory was used in the study to measure the impact of capitalist forces whereas the articulation of modes of production theory was employed in analysing the interaction between Multinational Corporations and indigenous smallholder production systems. The study was based on the premises that, first, there exists a negative impact of the Multinational Corporations on the community, and second, that the Multinational Corporations have attempted to put in place effective measures to assist the tea farmers. The study established that there initially existed exploitative relationship between Multinational Corporations and the people of Kericho County. Further, the study found out that the relationship that exists between the Multinational Corporations and the residents of Kericho cannot fully be considered as entirely negative since the measures that have been put in place by the Multinational Corporations have considerably improved the relationship between the two parties. However, the study holds the view that the Multinational Corporations need to do much more so as to positively impact the life of the community. A closer working relationship between the Multinational Corporations and the local community especially in the conception stages of the intended measures should be initiated so as to help minimize mistakes such as imposing projects on the people.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND MEANING OF WORDS

E.A.P	– East African Protectorate.
IBEACO	– Imperial British East Africa Company.
K.T.D.A.	– Kenya Tea Development Authority: A government’s agency that manages the tea factories.
<i>Kipande</i>	– A Kiswahili word for Identity Cards.
N.T.Z.D.C.	–Nyayo Tea Zones Development Corporation.
<i>Nyayo</i>	– A Kiswahili word for Footsteps. A term used to refer to the political slogan under the leadership of President Daniel Toroitich Arap Moi, the 2 nd president of Kenya (1978-2002).
P.S.M.	– Purposive Sampling Method.
R.S.T.	– Random Sampling Technique/Method.
S.S.M.	– Stratified Sampling Method.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the Study

Tea is grown as a bush in its natural habitat and unpinned. It attains a height of 25 feet and bears small white flowers and round seeds. An individual tea bush has a life span of between 50 to 100 years. These shrubs need a warm climate with rainfall of not less than 50 inches and an acidic soil. They are pruned to form low bushes on the plantations, and so spread into bushy plants with apple foliage.¹

The tea bush is not indigenous to Africa. It was introduced to East Africa around 1900 but the first large-scale planting dates from the middle 1920s and from then to the outbreak of the Second World War, progress was slow but steady.² Maxon and Ochieng' observe that the years 1895-1923 were formative in the evolution of settler agriculture. It was a period when land alienation and experimentation in agriculture occurred.³

Tea was introduced to Kenya and experimented by G. W. L. Cane in 1903 when he planted seedlings in a Limuru farm. Cane had planted tea in Manipur, India. He called his variety 'Manipur Tea.' The first tea seed was planted in Kericho as early as 1906 by the then acting District Commissioner, Mr. Dobbs near the site of the present day Kericho G.K. Prison. Cara Buxton planted tea on Kapkorech Estate (near Chepsir) in 1916. Then in 1919, Mr. J. Butterfield put down tea nurseries at Ngoina, and later at Jamji Estate. These estates later on came under the Brooke Bond Group. In 1924, Captain T. N. Derby, who came to Kenya with British East Africa Development

¹ Brook Bond (1971), *The Story of Tea in East Africa*. Nairobi, 6.

² Ibid.

³ Maxon R. M. and Ochieng' W. R (1992), *An Economic History of Kenya*. Nairobi, East African Educational Publishers Limited, 115.

Company, planted the first tea bushes in Kericho Estate (behind Kericho Primary School) on behalf of Messrs. Brooke Bond and Company Limited. About that time, Messrs. James Finlay and Company cleared the land for tea planting and formed the company known as African Highlands Produce Company. The Buret Tea Company came into being in early 1925 followed closely by the Mau Forest Tea Estate and Kaisugu Limited.⁴

By 1925, tea was doing very well in Kericho. The most important producers were large-scale estates with British capital, although small-scale settler groups also became involved in production when it became evident that the crop provided wider profit margins than most alternatives. The largest of the tea-growing companies then were Brooke Bond and Liptons, while among the smaller ones was the Twinings Tea Company. By 1955, there were 75 licensed tea farms in Kenya. The size of holdings ranged from 10,000 acres to less than 5,000 acres.⁵

The main feature characterizing the marketing of agricultural products during the period of the Second World War was the establishment of marketing control boards. These boards were created by the colonial government to control the prices of agricultural products so as to avoid the effects of price fluctuations in the international market. However, the prices offered for agricultural products from African areas were not equivalent to those offered for products purchased from the white settlers. The reasons advanced for this disparity was first that, high prices would lead to inflation in the colony. That is, Africans would possess too much money yet the colony was given

⁴ East African Women's League (n.d): *They Made it Their Home*. 'Kericho.'

⁵ Maxon and Ochieng', *An Economic*, 120.

quotas as to what she could import. The other reason given was that agricultural products in African areas were not expensive.⁶

After the Second World War, however, the large plantations extended their acreages. Tea was the most important settler export commodity in Kenya until the period 1964-1973 when it emerged as the second most important export commodity after coffee. However, through years of depression and restriction, the industry gradually broadened its base to the extent that by the 1950s; British owned tea companies in Kenya had achieved the highest production rates. Great technological advances were being made too, setting the pace for future achievements. Indeed to date, Kenya's tea has earned an enviable reputation in the world market.⁷

The government of Kenya under President Moi moreover introduced new policies that increased Kenya's tea production but also divided ranks of producers, decreasing the effectiveness of farmer's associations. In 1984, the president launched an effort meant both to enhance soil conservation and to increase tea production. The idea was to provide funds for Kenyans to plant narrow strips of tea adjacent to gazetted forests with the multiple expectations of limiting soil erosion when trees were cut, and bolstering the country's tea production. An important undertaking of the government during the Nyayo era was the creation of Nyayo Tea Zones Development Corporation in 1987 as a means of expanding tea cultivation on small farms. Established at the initiative of President Moi, the demarcation of Nyayo Tea Zones was followed by planting, improved communication and the construction of factories. A parastatal, the Nyayo Tea Zone Development Corporation (NTZDC), was set up to foster production

⁶ Tanui P. J., "Agriculture in Nandi District Under Colonial Rule: 1895-1963" M. Phil. Thesis, Moi University.

⁷ Hayes C. (n.d), *Tea In Kenya*. Nairobi, African Life Publications Limited, 7.

in the newly planted areas throughout the country. By the end of 1980s, the N.T.Z.D.C. had established tea zones in 15 districts, mostly in the Kalenjin and Luhya areas of Western provinces but alongside the K.T.D.A.-run plots in Central Province. Tea is now regarded as a cash crop of major importance by the Kenyan government which has since, set up small holder tea growing schemes which are controlled by the K.T.D.A.

However, in Kenya, apart from Kericho, tea is also grown in Nandi, Limuru, Kiambu, Nyeri, Meru and Kirinyaga among others. At least 80 % of the produce is exported and sold to most countries of the world particularly Canada, United States of America, Great Britain, Germany, Holland, Sudan, Somalia, Pakistan and Australia.⁸

It is against the foregoing background analysis that this study seeks to find out and further analyse the impact that tea farming has had on the social and economic aspects of the small-scale tea farmers of Kericho district. The study took a special bias to the Multinational Corporations' operations in the tea sector since these Corporations are the major players in tea farming.

1.1 Study Area

The study focused on Kericho District, one of the districts of the former Rift Valley Province. Kericho District is situated in the Southern part of the province. It lies between longitudes $35^{\circ} 02'$ West and $35^{\circ} 40'$ East and also between the Equator and latitude 023° South. The district is bordered by Kipkelion to the North, Molo to the Northeast, Nandi South and Nyando to the West, Nyamira and Rachuonyo to the Southwest and Bureti and Bomet to the South. The district has an area of 1,125.1 km². It has five administrative divisions namely, Ainamoi, Soin, Belgut, Sigowet and

⁸ Brook Bond, *The Story*, 7.

Kabianga. It is also divided into two parliamentary constituencies namely Belgut Constituency which covers Belgut, Sigowet and Kabianga Divisions, and Ainamoi Constituency which covers Ainamoi and Soin Divisions.⁹ The district is inhabited by the Kipsigis, a sub tribe of the Kalenjin group.

The central part of the district rises eastward to 3,000m above sea level along Mau ridge and it is for this reason that the District enjoys a cool climate throughout the year. The Kericho Plateau forms the central part of the district sloping gently from about 2,500m to about 1,800m above sea level. It is well drained by four rivers namely Kiptaret, Tumbilil, Maramara and Chemosit. Some of these rivers are characterized by rapid falls, which can be harnessed for hydroelectric power generation.¹⁰

The settlement pattern is determined by soil fertility, availability of rainfall, infrastructure development, availability of social amenities, job opportunities among others. Concentration of population is high where these factors are favourable and lower in the less endowed areas. Kericho District is characterized by undulating topography. The overall slope of the land is towards the west hence general drainage is in that direction. The district forms a hilly shelf between the Mau escarpment and the lowlands of Nyando District.

Generally, the area of study is one of the strategically located areas in the Kenya Highlands. The Kenya Highlands constitute a series of higher plateaus and volcanic landscapes, possessing tremendous physical diversity but unified by virtue of its

⁹ Republic of Kenya (2009), *The District Development Plan – Kericho District. 2008-2012*. Nairobi, Government Printer, xvi.

¹⁰ Republic of Kenya (1984), *The District Development Plan – Kericho District. 1984-1988*. Nairobi, Government Printer, viii.

regional great height.¹¹ Nearly all the Kenya Highlands receive an average rainfall ranging from 1000 mm to 1400 mm per year with the more exposed highland slopes getting over 2000 mm per year. Kericho district receives a very reliable and evenly distributed relief rainfall which together with the year round warmth makes it ideal for the growth of tea.¹² The district experiences two rainy seasons, short and long rainy seasons, which occur between October to December and April to June respectively every year. Day temperatures are cool, pleasant and fresh, while nights may be chilly. The temperature ranges from a minimum of 16°C to a maximum of 20°C.¹³ The mean wind speed is 9 Knots and the relative humidity is about 70 percent. The modified tropical climate of the Kenya Highlands is enjoyable and is the best climate in the country. Some of the richest soils in the country, including those derived from volcanic material, metamorphic rocks of the basement system and granites are found in the Kenya Highlands.¹⁴

The Highland forest and grassland ecological unit of the Kenya Highlands can support large populations, and some of the most commercially important agricultural undertakings in Africa. The rich soils of the Highlands, especially those of the volcanic origin, are most suitable for cash crops such as tea, coffee, wheat, maize, pyrethrum, wattle trees, sisal, pineapples and a wide range of horticultural crops.¹⁵ Kericho district lies in this category within the Kenya Highlands hence tea is grown in most areas within the district thus making it a suitable area for this study.

¹¹ Maxon and Ochieng', *An Economic*, 5.

¹² Horrobin F. D. (1971), *A Guide to Kenya and Northern Tanzania*. Nairobi, East Africa Publishing House, 167.

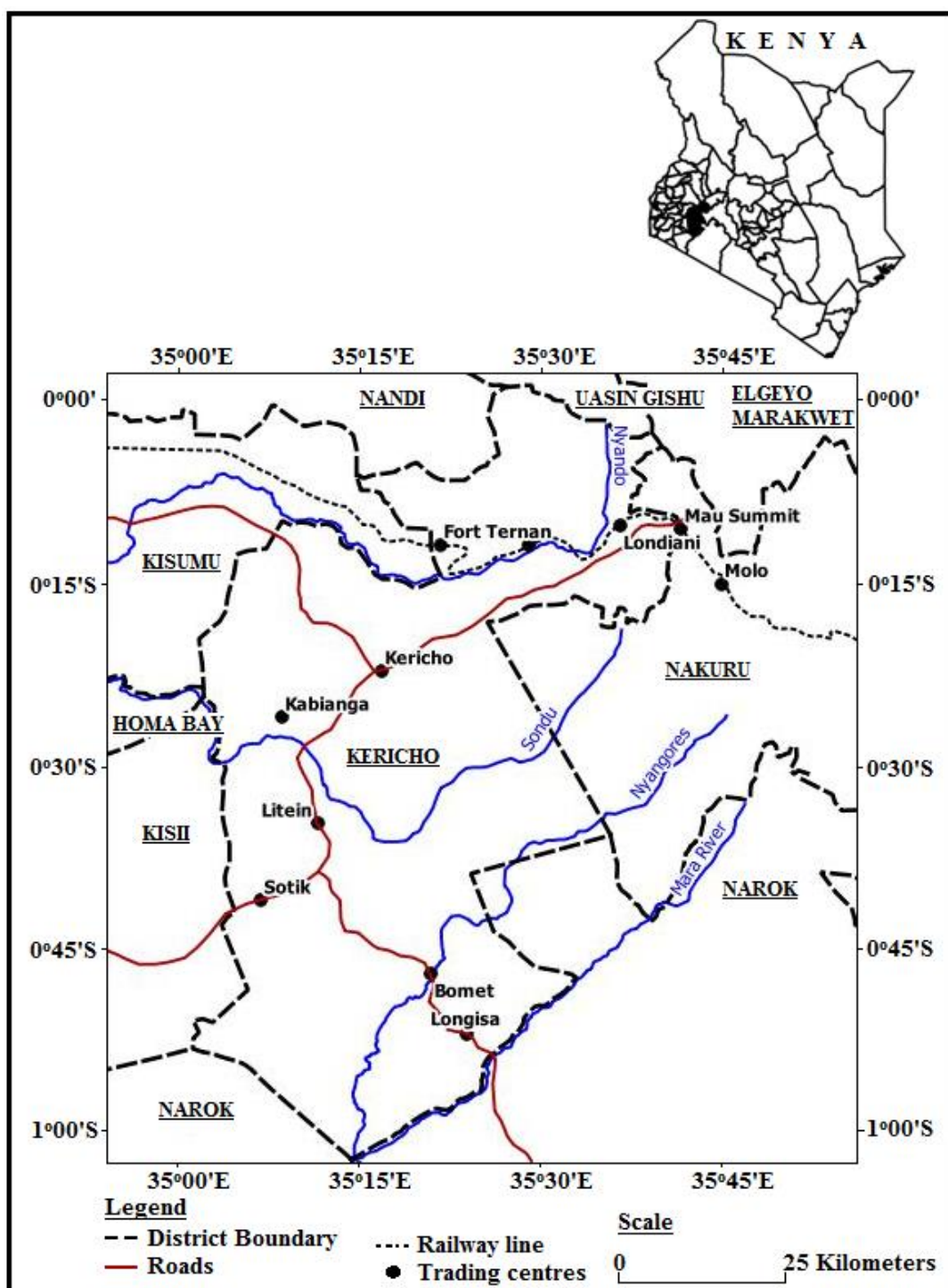
¹³ *Daily Nation*, 12th January, 2012. Nation Media Group, Nairobi.

¹⁴ Horrobin, *A Guide*, 6.

¹⁵ *Ibid*.

The Kipsigis practice mixed farming that is, they keep animals and plant crops. Among the crops grown are maize, beans, potatoes, sorghum, millet, vegetables, bananas and tea. In Kenya, tea is grown in Kericho, Nandi, Kisii, Limuru, Kiambu, Nyeri, Meru and Kirinyaga among others.

The justification for the choice of Kericho as the best fit study area is based on the grounds that it is the largest tea growing area in Kenya with the leading acreages planted on tea. This is attributed to the fact that Kericho has both geographic and climatic conditions that are suitable/favourable for tea growing. Furthermore, Kericho hosted (and still hosts) the multinational forerunners of colonial (and post-colonial) economy, it is the home to the huge tea estates Tea Research Institute headquarters and other prominent and giant MNCs such as Unilever and James Finlay's. This therefore provides the best information that would be needed for an ideal research on tea farming.



Map 1: Map of Kericho District as the Study Area.

Source: GIS Lab Geography Department Kenyatta University.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Tea produce is processed and sold by the Multi-National Corporations (MNCs) which buys from the small-scale farmers. The exchange relations that exist between the small-scale farmers and the corporations is that of a peculiar dependency in which one

party benefits more than the other. However, this enterprise has continuously gone through various adjustments as a response to altered circumstances. In particular the adjustments have been dictated “by a need to bring about a balance between the needs of the shareholders, workers, the general economy of the plantation as well as that of the host country and the world market.”¹⁶

The socio-economic impact of the plantation enterprise in exporting countries like Kenya is an issue of on-going debate. To some scholars, the enterprise has actual and potential contributions to the economic development of the areas of their operations. But to others, plantation economies have done more harm than good to their host countries. They see the presence of these enterprises as a manifestation of neo-colonialism. This latter attitude towards the plantation enterprise is as a result of the socio-economic relationship between these plantations and the communities living around them. The people of Kericho District have been involved in tea growing for over five decades now, it is out of a curious concern to find out if this enterprise has fundamentally transformed their socio-economic condition or there is a condition of socio-economic stagnation. Whichever the condition, can it be explained by their relationship with the Multinational Corporations involved in tea production in Kericho District? This study is inspired by the need to seek an answer to this question by detailing the relationship that exists between small scale tea farmers and the Multinational Corporations in Kericho District.

The study also evaluates the various measures that these Multinationals have put in place so as to assist the rural community in their socio-economic development as a way of developing a positive perception towards the economic activity. Moreover, the

¹⁶ Yegon E. (2005), “The Impact of Plantation Agriculture on Socio-economic Endeavors of a Rural Community” in *Maarifa: A Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*. Vol. 1 No. 1, 112.

study explores the present relationship between tea plantation agriculture and the socio-economic activities of the small-scale farmers of Kericho District, Rift Valley Province in Kenya.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study seeks to;

1. Examine the socioeconomic organization of the Kipsigis before the coming of colonialists and introduction of tea.
2. Assess the origin, evolution and impact of Multi-National Corporations and plantation agriculture in general on the local people.
3. Examine the measures that Multi-National Corporations have put in place to assist the rural community.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What was the nature of Kipsigis socio-economic organization prior to the entry of a tea plantation economy?
2. What role and impact have Multi-National Corporations had in integrating local production systems with tea plantation agriculture?
3. What measures have Multi-National Corporations put in place to assist the rural communities of Kericho?

1.5 Research Premises

There exist differing ideas about the impact of tea farming on the residents of Kericho District. This research, therefore, will proceed from the following premises:

- That tea farming activity has a strong influence on the socio-economic life of the farmers in Kericho District.

- That there exists a negative impact of the Multinational Corporations on the community.
- That the Multinational Corporations have attempted to put in place effective measures to assist the tea farmers.

1.6 Justification of the Study

The socio-economic impact of the plantation enterprise in exporting countries like Kenya is an issue of on-going debate. To some scholars, the enterprises have actual and potential contributions to the economic development of the concerned countries. But to others, plantation economies have done more harm than good to their host countries. They see the presence of these enterprises as a manifestation of neo-colonialism. This latter attitude towards the plantation enterprise is as a result of the socio-economic relationship between these plantations and the communities living around them.

It is based on the above arguments that this research employed, as a case study, the plantation corporations in order to explore some of the historical antecedents that underlie or underpin the relationship between plantation agriculture and the neighbouring communities. Later, an attempt was made to evaluate the efficacy of the measures that the corporations have adopted as a way of addressing this problem.

This study, therefore, hopes to serve as a guide to the management of the Multinational Companies on how to deal with the negative impacts and even improve their efficiency and relevance in the areas of operation.

Also, there has been continued misuse and mismanagement of public funds and revenues that are remitted from tea farming whereby some few individuals use them for their personal gains. In this case, the study may serve as an eye opener to the

government agencies especially financial managers, and the entire public on how to check and reduce the existing loopholes on the entire management of the tea sector.

Finally, it is also clear from the literature review that scanty scholarly attention has been directed to an analysis of the relationship between corporate capital (multinationals) and small-scale farmers in Africa's rural areas. The study will serve as an important source of reference to researchers and any other readers who may want to know about African involvement in agriculture and particularly the tea farming system. The study will thus be an important contribution to the increasing literature on Kenya's economic history and more so this study is expected to trigger further research into the field of Socio-economic development in general.

1.7 Literature Review

Several studies so far have been done on tea farming, but none has focused on the impact of the Multinationals involved in this enterprise on the small scale tea farmers. This, therefore, represents the gap that this study aims to fill. The literature reviewed examines the studies under the following sub-themes: multinationals' involvement in the enterprise and generally analyses tea farming and the present economy of Kericho.

1.7.1 Multinationals' involvement and its Impact

A rapidly increasing number of large, privately owned firms have come to control and coordinate production facilities across more than one nation state. Langdon, who studied Multinational Corporations in Kenya, focused his analysis on the soap production and shoe manufacturing industries. He states that multinational corporations have become powerful economic and political realities across most of the world. Their role is hotly debated by communities hit by their decisions, and by policy-makers and academics trying to understand their strategies. His study tested the

arguments of economic dependency theory against reliance on the multinationals in development planning. Dependency on the multinationals is shown to have widened inequalities, blocked employment growth and damaged local enterprise in Kenya. Millions remain in poverty in Kenya and the multinationals, his book concludes, are part of the problem, not part of the solution.¹⁷

The particular effects of multinational corporations' investment, have to be assessed in the whole context of the local political economy, to see how the distributional, structural and class –formation impact of the multinational corporations' role interacts with other factors to shape development strategies and related development patterns.¹⁸

Langdon notes that one such political economy approach, in the African context, sees multinational corporations transfer of capital-intensive technology as shaping a small, relatively well-paid stratum of the industrial working class, whose consumption patterns and political quiescence reinforce and extends unequal development patterns in the country. Yet another approach has emphasised opposite general effects - suggesting multinational corporation investment has spurred indigenous capitalism, rapid industrialization and urban expansion in many less developed countries - thereby adding millions of people to Third World petty-bourgeois and professional strata, with these social forces providing the drive behind nationalistic industrialization.¹⁹

Stewart traced the historical developments with deep assessments of the colonial and post-colonial era. His focus is on Kenya's strategies for development. He noted that "the government has encouraged the integration of the Kenyan economy into the

¹⁷ Langdon S. (1981), *Multinational Corporations in the Political Economy of Kenya*. London, Macmillan, 3.

¹⁸ Ibid, 7.

¹⁹ Ibid, 8.

world capitalist system. Multinational corporations have been offered favourable terms. The Foreign Investment Protection Act of 1964 provided generous guarantees for repatriation of profits, guarantees which have been honoured... the free flow of technology has been encouraged.”²⁰

Barker noted that the colonial pattern was for the marketing companies to use their monopoly power to set prices against farmers who had little capacity to organise and were often forbidden by law to unite against the buyers. However, in the period since independence, it has become clear that the structure of the marketing relationship remains a source of conflict.²¹

On Multi-national Corporations, Leys,²² stated that their operations in Kenya actually predate the end of World War Two. A few Multi-national Corporations, almost all British, were involved in the Kenyan economy prior to that time but by the end of the 1960s, such foreign firms were strongly entrenched in Kenya’s manufacturing. A primary aim of Multi-national Corporations’ operations in Kenya, or elsewhere in the world, is the generation of profit for company and its shareholders. Since Multi-national Corporations have their headquarters abroad, they will desire to repatriate the largest amount of profits possible from their operations in Kenya. He also notes that Multi-national Corporations bring significant advantages to the country of their operations in meeting local competition. These include technological innovation and control, marketing skills, extensive market power and superior management techniques. Further, Leys assessed the consequences of foreign investment and

²⁰ Stewart F. (1981), “Kenya Strategies for Development.” In: Killick T., *Papers on the Kenyan Economic Performance, Problems and Policies*. Nairobi, Heinmann Educational Books Ltd, 77.

²¹ Barker J. (1989), *Rural Communities Under Stress: Peasant Farmers and the State in Africa*. Melbourne, Cambridge University Press, 101.

²² Leys, C. (1975), *Underdevelopment in Kenya: The Political Economy of Neo-Colonialism*. London: Heinemann, 15.

focuses on the level of profits, surplus transfer, wages and employment, and also their (foreign investment) political and social influence on Kenya. Though he did not give a specified analysis of the multinational tea companies on the farmers of Kericho, his work is helpful to this study in underlining how foreign capital (Multi-national Corporations) has influenced Kenya economy in general.²³

Boahen,²⁴ on the other hand, argues that Multi-national Corporations have continuously amalgamated and consolidated into fewer and fewer oligopolies which controls the export as well as the import trade and fixes the prices not only of the imported commodities but also of the exports produced by Africans. The huge profits that accrues from these activities goes to them and not the Africans. This work is relevant to the study in the context of trying to understand the operations of the Multinational Corporations that are active in Kericho's tea sector.

Swainson²⁵ studied Multi-national firms (Brooke Bond) and the tea industry in Kenya between 1918-1977. Although her work generally focuses on the development of corporate capitalism in Kenya, it is invaluable to this study in the aspect of the corporations' influence on the socio-economy of the people of Kericho.

Dobson and Yue studied multinational corporations in East Asia and found that the firm-level linkages have several implications for regional integration. First, the associated trade flows have a positive sum impact on host economies. Every one gains from the division of labour according to evolving locational characteristics of the host economies. Second, governments position their economies so as to take advantage of

²³ Leys, *Underdevelopment*, 135-6.

²⁴ Boahen A. A. (Ed) (1985), *UNESCO General History of Africa. VII: Africa Under Colonial Domination 1880-1935*. Nairobi, East African Educational Publishers, 171.

²⁵ Swainson N. (1980), *The Development of Corporate Capitalism in Kenya 1918- 197*. London, Heinemann Educational Books Limited, 17.

such division of labour by influencing the cost and availability of inputs and access to customers. They should rely more on framework policies such as prudent macroeconomic policies and trade and investment policies including open domestic markets. These are preferable to direct interventions such as trade-related investment measures.²⁶

Ikiara holds the view that the industry has created too few jobs, and many industries tended to use inappropriate, capital intensive technologies. The manufacturing sector continues to depend heavily on imported equipment and raw materials, thus aggravating balance-of-payments problems. The sector has not developed extensive linkages with the rest of the economy as was expected, the production of consumer goods has been unduly emphasised at the expense of capital and intermediate goods. Moreover, indigenous Kenyans do not yet control a significant proportion of the manufacturing sector, and manufacturing exports form only a small part of the country's total exports. These weaknesses have persisted despite considerable direct and indirect government involvement in industry.²⁷

All the foregoing studies have been very relevant in providing some information on the origin and development of multinational corporations, their operations and effects of their involvement on the economies of the countries, Kenya being part of them. However, these studies have not tied their analysis with the social and economic effect of multinational tea companies' operations in the areas of operations. This study, therefore, sought to document the active role of the Multi-national Corporations in Kenya with a bias to corporations engaged in tea sector in Kericho.

²⁶ Dobson W. and Yue C. S. (1997), *Multinationals and East Asian Integration*. Canada, International Development Research Centre, xi.

²⁷ Ikiara G. K. (1988), "The Role of Government Institutions in Kenya's Industrialization." In: Coughlin P. and Ikiara G. K. (ed), *Industrialization in Kenya: In Search of a Strategy*. Nairobi, East African Educational Publishers, 218.

1.7.2 Tea farming and the general economy

Omwoyo²⁸ in his thesis, studied the agricultural changes in the Kipsigis land between 1894-1963. He generally studies on the broad agricultural changes and does not specifically studies tea farming and its interaction with the Kipsigis social and economic organization. His work is very important to this study since it provides the information for better understanding the agricultural changes among the Kipsigis before independence.

On the other hand, Kosgei²⁹ undertook a study on commodity production, tea and social change in Kericho between 1895-1963. Her work, unlike Omwoyo's, attempts to specifically analyse on the development of tea plantation and its interaction with the Kipsigis political, economic and social organisation before independence, it is invaluable to this study in providing the necessary information on this interaction before independence.

In his work, Kitching³⁰ noted that the commercial production of tea introduced some changes into the organization of the Kipsigis agricultural production (and economic organization). However, although he focused much of his study only on general agricultural production, to the exclusion of the socio-economic aspects that are the main subject of concern of the present study, his study is important since it sheds light in to the agricultural changes that occurred in the Kipsigis land as a result of introduction of tea farming.

²⁸ Omwoyo, S. M, *The Agricultural Changes in the Kipsigis Land c. 1894-1963: An Historical Inquiry*. (Doctor of Philosophy in History, Kenyatta University, 2000).

²⁹ Kosgei, J. Sally, *Commodity Production, Tea and Social Change in Kericho, Kenya 1895 – 1963*. (A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of History and the Committee on Graduate Studies of Stanford University in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, 1981). Retrieved on May 12th 2016 from <https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/tel-01256534/document>

³⁰ Kitching G. (1980), *Class and Economic Change in Kenya: The Making of an African Petite Bourgeoisie 1905-1970*. London, Yale University Press, 127.

Robert Maxon and William Ochieng' in an edited work³¹ wrote that, tea was among the most important (settler) export commodity in Kenya and that the most important producers were the large scale estates (plantations) with British capital. They further noted that small scale farmer groups also became involved in the production when it was evident that tea provided wider profit margins than most of the other alternatives. Although their study does not look at the impact that this involvement has had on the socio-economic aspect of these small scale farmers, it is invaluable to this study in providing information on how these farmers got involved in the production.

Kenya receives much foreign aid especially for agriculture and infrastructure. Despite this, Coughlin, Mwau and Begumisa contends that, many opportunities are missed for localising the sources of inputs for these projects. The country has skills and installed capacity to manufacture many of these imported inputs locally but does not do so partly because much of the aid is tied to purchases from the donor country.³² Their work is, however, important to this study as it provides some information on the social and economic implications that is connected to foreign capital (such as multinational corporations) in Kenya.

While analysing tea farming and the present economy, Sorenson assessed the role of women in tea production in Kericho. His main focus was on the consequences of contract farming on women among the Kipsigis. His work is, however, important to this study for providing the historical background of the economic organisation of the Kipsigis before the introduction of tea and its farming. Furthermore, it also provides

³¹ Maxon and Ochieng', *An Economic*, 120.

³² Coughlin P., Mwau G. and Begumisa G. (1988), "Tied Aid, Industrial Dependence and New Tactics for Negotiations: Observations from Kenya." In: Coughlin P. and Ikiara G. K. (ed), *Industrialization in Kenya: In Search of a Strategy*. Nairobi, East African Educational Publishers, 126.

some information on the social impact of tea farming since it underlines the changes in roles of women especially in food production.

Just like Sorenson, Kitching³³ notes that the commercial production of tea introduced some changes into the organization of the Kipsigis' agricultural production. Consequently, in those households with little land, concentration on the production of cereals alone by the women cultivators would have produced a considerable risk, or perhaps even a certainty (where land holdings were very small) of failing to meet socially determined subsistence requirements. In this situation, the proportion of directly consumed production was reduced, and land planted to cash crops (tea), and an increased proportion of domestic food requirements (in cereals and legumes) was purchased in the market. His study, therefore, focused on changes on the agricultural production of the Kipsigis resulting from tea farming.

In his thesis, Koech³⁴ undertook a general critical evaluation of the development of tea industry in Kenya. His study took a more general approach to the tea farming enterprise and therefore does not specifically address the concerns of this study on the socio-economic impact of tea farming. It however provides the basic knowledge necessary for studying the tea farming enterprise.

Ngetich's thesis³⁵ has provided the importance of tea farming to the growth of Kenya's economy. According to him, tea is one of the perennial cash crops in Kericho (and Kenya at large) that contributes the largest portion of foreign exchange earned from agriculture.

³³ Kitching, *Class and Economic*, 127.

³⁴ Koech, Robert K. (1998), "Critical Evaluation of the Development of Tea Industry in Kenya" D. Phil. Thesis, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwala University. Aurangabad, India.

³⁵ Ngetich F. K. (2005), "Provision of Agricultural Information to Small-Scale Tea Growers in Kenya. A Case Study of Bureti District." M. Phil. Thesis, Moi University. Eldoret, Kenya.

In his work, Yegon concludes that on the one hand, the plantation economy has actual and potential contributions to the economic endeavour of the host country but on the other hand, it has done more harm than good to the host country.³⁶

The relevance of the above reviewed and analysed related literature to this study is invaluable in so far as they shed light on the role of multinational corporations on the economy of a country like Kenya. However, it is evident from the foregoing review of the existing literature that, there exists scanty history as regards the documentation of the impact of multinational corporations with a specific reference to the small scale farmers of Kericho. This study is, therefore, driven by the need to bridge this gap in the economic history of Kenya and provide the historical perspective of the impact of multinational corporations on the small scale farmers of Kericho. Moreover, the findings, conclusions and recommendations of this study will serve as an invaluable source in solving the several questions about the impact of multinational corporations in other parts of the country.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

Kombo and Tromp (2006) define a theoretical framework as a collection of interrelated ideas based on theories. A theory is a reasoned statement or groups of statements, which are supported by evidence meant to explain a phenomenon. Theories in research provide tentative theoretical answers to questions, issues and problems before the researcher practically confirms through research that the answer is either correct or wrong. Creswell (2003) affirms that, qualitative researchers increasingly use a theoretical lens to guide their study as to what issues are important.

³⁶ Yegon, *The Impact*, 112.

In attempting to understand and analyse the impact of multinational tea companies on the small scale tea farmers of Kericho District, no single theory was found to capture all the elements under study in a holistic form. As a result, this study utilised the Underdevelopment/ Dependency Theory and the Articulation of Modes of Production Theory. The attraction of dependency theory for study of colonialism in Africa has provided both an apparently incisive analysis and a sharp critique of the mechanisms and effects of imperialism that produced the ‘distorted’ condition of underdevelopment. These effects of imperialism have so far continued to the present time. This condition of underdevelopment was depicted as part of a self-reproducing global system in which a perverse underdevelopment of the periphery was the necessary mirror image of the genuine capitalist development at the centre. A clear illustration of this is the way railways and road developments were routed to drain the primary commodities from producing areas to the coastal ports for export.³⁷ On the other hand, the Articulation theory will come in play as the study attempts to analyse and explain the changes that have taken place as a result of the entry of tea plantations to the Kipsigis economic organization.

1.8.1 Underdevelopment/ Dependency Theory

Colin Leys states that at one time, ‘underdeveloped’ meant, in United Nations’ parlance, ‘insufficiently developed’, or what is now called ‘less developed’. The state of affairs in the ‘underdeveloped countries’ was thought of as being due to a lack of capital, know-how and other inputs which had led to ‘development’ in the advanced industrial countries. Critics of this view argued that on the contrary, the predicament of the ‘underdeveloped’ countries was due to the application to them of western capital, know-how and political power, often over several centuries, in ways which

³⁷ Berman B. and Lonsdale J. (1992), *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya and Africa*. Nairobi, Heinemann, 179.

had structured (and continue to structure) their economies and societies so as to continuously reproduce poverty, inequality and, above all, political and economic subordination to the interests of western capital.³⁸

Underdevelopment occurs when a dominant capitalist system penetrates into a previously autonomous pre-capitalist formation, creating a dialectic centre- periphery relation leading to domination and subordination. This domineering influence eventually effects the transformation of the pre-capitalist formations so that the existing political, economic, social and cultural institutions are replaced by alien capitalist structures. At such a point, the weaker capitalist system becomes watered down to mere peripheral instruments to the industrialized capitalism. In other words, the starting-point of underdevelopment theory is the period in which any given region of today's 'third world' began to be progressively incorporated into a permanent relationship with the expanding capitalist economy.

Economic development is the process concerned with the creation of new forms of production, the introduction of new techniques in to the existing forms of production and the continuous increase in productivity. Underdevelopment on the other hand is the process by which existing forms of production remain static in terms of technology and productivity, in a community where development is occurring in another sector. The development of European estates could only have been achieved over a long period through the creation of underdevelopment of production in African areas. The main economic developments were occurring in the European areas which was due to the Europeans' ability to control and therefore to determine the economic

³⁸ Leys, *Underdevelopment*, xiv.

and political resources of the community and to distribute these resources in their own favour.³⁹

The dependency model also neatly linked conditions before and after independence through ‘continuity in change’ that is the persistence of the relations of dependency and self-reproducing underdevelopment within the apparently changed forms brought by flag independence. Thus colonialism and neo-colonialism were considered explicable within the same theoretical paradigm. The colonial state appeared to be the obvious agent of metropolitan capital in establishing and maintaining the structures of dependence. The post-colonial state on its part has been comfortably congruent with the premises of dependency theory. It has propagated the self-reproducing and self-maintaining systems, with the state serving as the factor of cohesion between the levels of social formation and as the regulatory factor of its global equilibrium as a system. This brings in the ideas of structural functionalist model whereby the relationship between the state and capital can be given or seen in the nature of the system itself. The state acted then (and even now) to organize the unity of capital in a dominant, hegemonic ‘power bloc.’

The main effects were the same, first, the extraction of the surplus of the ‘periphery’ countries- that is, what is produced over and above what is needed for the peoples’ subsistence and for maintaining their stock of productive equipment- for use in the metropolitan countries; and second, the emergence of new relations of production in the periphery countries, based on their progressive exposure to, and domination by, capitalism.⁴⁰

³⁹ Van Zwanenberg R. M. A. (1975), *Colonial Capitalism and Labor in Kenya 1919-1939*. Nairobi, East Africa Literature Bureau, xx.

⁴⁰ Leys, *Underdevelopment*, 9.

In most cases it was a largely foreign bourgeoisie which appropriated the surplus and this made a decisive difference to what followed. Whereas in the metropolitan countries the bourgeoisie either consumed or invested their profits there, generating additional demand and further investment, in the periphery countries this was not the case. Such local demand as was generated locally was also largely satisfied by imports from the metropolitan countries, so that this also failed to stimulate secondary investment. The result was not complete stagnation, but growth largely confined to the sector or sectors producing primary products for export. The economies of the periphery acquired their well-known 'external orientation.'⁴¹

The monopoly in international commodity markets, and monopoly in industrial technology due to the past accumulation of capital in the metropolitan countries and the export of capital from the periphery countries, both taken together have conferred on the former a cumulative advantage in bargaining power.

The new investment is largely undertaken by foreign capital; and moreover by foreign capital in the age of the international corporations, which represent the culmination of the process of concentration in the advanced capitalist countries. These are the organizations which have developed the sophisticated technology required for supplying mass markets (of which the high consumption sectors of the population of the periphery countries form a part). These organizations also tend to be vertically integrated: they produce the goods needed for each stage of production, from processing raw materials to packing the final product. Even when an input might be produced locally, it often pays firms of this type to import it, partly because the extra cost of producing the small quantity needed for production in a subsidiary overseas after they have supplied the needs of their main factories will be very small, and

⁴¹ Ibid., 10.

partly because importing their own products provides opportunities for internal pricing policies which enable them to take their profits at whatever point.⁴²

One of the reasons why foreign firms, rather than local entrepreneurs, tend to dominate the industrialization process at the periphery is that they have the know-how and the capital which are required: technology embodied in machinery, and resources to supply it. Their employment of this technology, developed for advanced industrialized countries, means that the new manufacturing sector is capital-intensive; it does not generate large increases in employment but leads to the creation of a relatively small, semi-skilled labour force that is paid high wages (in relation to incomes of the mass of the population) in order to reduce labour turnover and secure compliance with management needs. This also limits the impact of industrialization on domestic demand for relatively sophisticated consumer goods with a relatively high import content.⁴³

In most African countries, the absence of an established landlord class or of other elements in the indigenous population with capital accumulated from other forms of economic activity, tended to leave no alternative but industrialization through the agency of foreign firms.

Given the existing pattern of local demand, a local capitalist class at the periphery, even with ample help from the state, cannot enter the industrial field without using the technology developed in the industrialized countries. This technology is owned by private foreign companies; it can be bought, at a price (in terms of royalties, commissions, management contracts, and so on). But as it is being constantly

⁴² Ibid., 14.

⁴³ Ibid., 15.

revolutionized in its countries of origin, it must be constantly bought again; in effect it has to be hired. In the meantime, dependence on imported technology also tends to entail imported inputs, almost as much as if the investment were made by foreigners.

Western economic principles were irrelevant for African societies during the colonial era and therefore two sets of economic systems were suggested for proper development. The inhabitants of Kericho District just like all other African societies, viewed agricultural plantations as enclaves or an area of agriculture with a distinct life and society of its own and with its cultural attributes that differ from that of the people around it.

The existence of plantations as enclaves was further given an impetus by the domination of the foreign farmers in some areas and due to alleged threat from the African population, the planters thus fenced off their farms and became totally separated from the rural economy and the local people. The managers in these plantations were foreigners and their salaries were repatriated to the metropolis, the produce was exported and most of the profits went to the owners overseas through salaries, dividends or transfer pricing. Also, the salary of the African labourers went to the metropolis in London through the purchase of imported manufactures sold to them in the shops owned by the planters. Thus a society within the plantation agriculture was characterized as an alien identity, inward looking and cut off from all links with the community that surrounds it.

The ability of the plantation economies especially in the Third World to produce the intended and expected results is a controversial subject. On one side, it has a positive development impact but on the other, it is seen as the root cause of the current problems that the Third World countries are facing. In fact, the plantation enterprises

from the start were characterized by a negative encounter with the Africans. For example, the colonial government used force to acquire the land for the planters. They employed very poor methods of labour recruitment like the *Kipande* (identity card) system, taxation, squatter system and forced labour.

Currently, reservations still exist that the corporations have underdeveloped the area and thus made the people of Kericho and tea farmers in general, to depend on them for their survival. It is clear that the people do not experience expansion of their internal wealth and improved living standards. This means that the community does not realize the significant changes in their living standards due to lack of capital accumulation because they have lost (and continue losing) their surplus values to the corporations. The resulting effect of this therefore, is that the economy of the communities that engage in tea farming has been conditioned by the corporations through tea farming activity and the community is articulated to the needs of the corporations. The community heavily depends on the Multi-national Corporations for their livelihood. In other words, an unequal exchange exists whereby the communities do not obtain an equal value for their produce whereas it buys the end products at very high prices. However, the Plantation Corporations have attempted to cultivate a harmonious relationship of development with the people living around their plantations and their economy.

1.8.2 Articulation of Modes of Production Theory

Articulation can basically be defined as an analysis of how some person or group that has specific interests tries to connect other people, groups, economic arrangements (what Marx called means of production), ideas, and property to carry out their interests. Even more specifically it is an analysis of how such a person or group tries

to force different sorts of objects to act or envision themselves as a group even though there are many indications that they are different.

In the writings of Karl Marx and the Marxist historical materialism, a mode of production or "the way of producing" is a combination of the forces of production (the means and processes of production), relations of production (the social distribution and control of the means and conditions of production), and an articulation between the forces and relations. Marx regarded productive ability and participation in social relations as two essential characteristics of human beings and that the particular modality of these relations in capitalist production are inherently in conflict with the increasing development of human productive capacities. All modes of production are defined by forces of production (the means and processes of production), relations of production (the social distribution and control of the means and conditions of production), and an articulation between the forces and relations.⁴⁴

Marx considered that the way people relate to the physical world and the way people relate to each other socially are bound up together in specific and necessary ways. People must consume to survive, but to consume they must produce and in producing they necessarily enter into relations which exist independently of their will.

A mode of production normally shapes the mode of distribution, circulation and consumption and is regulated by the state. The concept of mode of production is, however, not limited to purely economic forces and relations – it has social, ideological and, in some instances, political dimensions. Furthermore, there are

⁴⁴ Richard Peet (ed) (1980), *An Introduction to Marxist Theories of Underdevelopment*. Australian Nation Univerity, Canberra, 193.

different modes of production associated with different structures of relations between production, distribution and exchange.⁴⁵

A particular mode of production exists only if its conditions of existence are present in the economic, political and ideological levels of a determinate social formation. The structure of the social formation cannot be deduced from the concept of a single mode of production – elements of other modes will also be present. Therefore, any given mode of production will also contain within it (to a greater or lesser extent) relics of earlier modes, as well as seeds of new ones. The emergence of new productive forces will cause conflict in the current mode of production. When conflict arises, the modes of production can evolve within the current structure or cause a complete breakdown.

The presence of a particular mode of production is not sufficient in itself to secure the reproduction of the conditions of its existence. The economic, political and ideological conditions of existence of the modes of production are secured, modified and transformed as the outcomes of specific (class) struggle.⁴⁶

The process by which social and economic systems evolve is based on the premise of improving technology. Specifically, as the level of technology improves, existing forms of social relations become increasingly insufficient for fully exploiting technology. This generates internal inefficiencies within the broader socioeconomic system, most notably in the form of class conflict.

The fundamental driving force behind structural changes in the socioeconomic organization of civilization are underlying material concerns—specifically, the level

⁴⁵ Ibid, 192

⁴⁶ Ibid, 196

of technology and extent of human knowledge and the forms of social organization they make possible.

In any specific society such as the Kipsigis, different modes of production might emerge and exist alongside each other, linked together economically through trade and mutual obligations. To these different modes correspond different social classes and strata in the population. For example, urban capitalist industry might co-exist with rural peasant production for subsistence and simple exchange and tribal hunting and gathering. Old and new modes of production might combine to form a hybrid economy.

However, Marx's view was that the expansion of capitalist markets tended to dissolve and displace older ways of producing over time. A capitalist society was a society in which the capitalist mode of production had become the dominant one. The culture, laws and customs of that society might preserve many traditions of the preceding modes of production, thus although two countries might both be capitalist, being economically based mainly on private enterprise for profit and wage labour, these capitalisms might be very different in social character and functioning, reflecting very different cultures, religions, social rules and histories.

From the foregoing statements, it can be concluded that the articulation of the Kipsigis indigenous economies to European capital entailed a contradictory process of transformation, destruction and preservation of their internal structures.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ See Berman B. (1990), *Control and Crisis in Colonial Kenya: The Dialectic of Domination*. James Currey, London.

1.9 Research Design

This section describes the research design that was employed for this study and the procedures for data collection. It gives the study population, instruments for data collection, processing and analysis procedures. A research design can be regarded as an arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance with the research purpose (Kombo and Tromp 2006). It contributes the blue print for the collection, measurement and analysis of data (Kothari, 2004).

This research was carried out in Kericho District with the view of making a general observation on the impact that the multinational companies have had on the local population, the relationship that exists between tea farming, as an economic activity, and the socio-economic status of the residents. The research enabled the making of general observations that can be applied to other areas that engage in tea farming throughout the country. The research thus employed the case study of Kericho District to arrive at findings that bear relevance to the larger scenario obtained in Kenya.

This was a historical study, which utilized the historical methods of analysis to investigate and interpret past events in order to understand the present. Historical research can be defined as the process of investigating past events systematically to provide an account of happenings in the past. It is a flowing and dynamic explanation or description of past events which include an interpretation of these events in an effort to recapture implications, personalities and ideas that have influenced these events. On the other hand, historical research method refers to the historian's handicraft, i.e. the techniques historians apply in collecting, evaluating, validating and interpreting historical evidence to gain knowledge of the past. Researchers employ

historical narrative for descriptive purposes, that is, to document what happened and what the characteristics of a phenomenon were in the past.⁴⁸

The purpose of historical research is to reach insights or conclusions about past persons or occurrences. Historical research entails more than simply compiling and presenting factual information; it also requires interpretation of the information. Its purpose therefore is to verify and explain history of any area of human activities, subjects or events by means of scientific processes. The important aims for conducting historical research are; first, to reveal or uncover the unknown; second, to answer questions which have not yet been answered; third, to search and identify the relationship of past happenings and their links with the present; fourth, to record and assess past activities and achievements of individuals, agencies and institutions; and fifth, to assist in the understanding of human culture. Furthermore, historical research helps to identify individuals as a community since the construction of links between past and present allow people to be seen as part of a larger drama.⁴⁹

Historical research utilizes varied approaches but this study will utilize two; first, qualitative approach (also known as history by quotation) where the search for a story construed from a range of printed or written evidence and the resultant history is arranged chronologically and presented as a factual tale and the sources range from manuscripts (such as account books, school records, marginalia, letters, diaries and memoirs) to imprints (such as textbooks, journals, children's books and other books of the period under consideration); and second, oral history which focuses on living memory where researchers gather personal recollections of events from living individuals via audio and video recording that gives respondents a natural and

⁴⁸ Flick, U. (2015), *Introducing Research Methodology*. (2nd Ed). New Delhi, Sage Publications, 95.

⁴⁹ Tan, J. J. (2015), *Historical Research: A Qualitative Research Method* (Retrieved on 10/7/2019 from https://www.academia.edu/24276932/historical_research_a_qualitative_research_method)

effective environment to provide a reciprocal interchange between them and the researchers.⁵⁰

There are many research approaches available for researchers to choose from. However, the broad distinction between research methods is whether they are qualitative, quantitative or mixed method approach (Creswell, 2003). Walliman (2007) explained that, qualitative research usually is to do with people and their activities, and is concerned with variables that cannot be quantified. Qualitative research includes designs, techniques and measures that do not produce discretely numerical data (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). More often, the data are in a form of words rather than numbers and these words are often grouped into categories. Creswell (2003) summarizes the characteristics of qualitative research design to include: qualitative research taking place in the natural setting where the qualitative researcher often goes to the site of the participant to conduct research; the use of multiple data collection methods traditionally based on open ended observations; interviews and documents that are interactive and humanistic involving active participation by participants and sensitivity to the participants in the study. Due to the nature of this study, it adopted the qualitative research approach since the targeted data was not discretely numerical but in form of words, ideas and explanations.

Data sources for historical research can be taken from either primary sources or secondary sources. Primary sources are first-person accounts that involve the oral or written testimony of eyewitnesses and these may include documents, letter, observational notes, photographs, recordings, diaries, journals, life histories, drawings, mementos and other relics. Primary sources are usually original artefacts, documents and items related to the direct outcomes of an event or an experience. In

⁵⁰ Flick, *Introducing*, 96.

general, primary sources are created at or very near the time of the historical event that is being described. In contrast, secondary sources are account descriptions of persons who are not eyewitnesses of the event or who did not personally know the person being studied. They are from people who were not immediately present at the time of the event and these are referred to as second-hand accounts of someone, some happenings or some development. Secondary sources can be in form of biographies, scholarly articles, popular books, reference books, textbooks, court records, lab information, encyclopaedias, newspaper articles and even obituary notices.⁵¹

Throughout this study however, a combination of research instruments was used. This combination allowed for the maintenance of balance between the quality and quantity of the data collected. As a result, much of the analysis revolved around primary and secondary sources of data. The primary sources utilized were oral information gathered from small holder tea farmers and the multinational companies through interviews and questionnaires. Archival sources, which were accessed at Kenya National Archives (KNA) in Nairobi were also used. The selection of these methods was guided by the nature of the research carried out. The library research included a review of both electronic and non-electronic books, journals and dissertations. These information were accessed in major libraries in Kenya namely; Margaret Thatcher Library (MTL) at Moi University, Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library at Institute of African Studies at University of Nairobi, Egerton University Library, Kenyatta University Library and Kenya National Library (KNLS) in Eldoret and Kericho were visited in search of information relevant to the study.

⁵¹ Tan, *Historical Research*

The data collection tools used were:

i) Questionnaire:

This is a set of questions which were issued and administered to the respondents. The questions contained therein related to the objective of the study. This research method is advantageous since similar questions were administered to all respondents thus making it easy to compare and analyse their responses. A questionnaire was used because it allowed for flexibility on the part of respondents. For that matter, the questionnaires were given to the respondents then picked later for analysis. It was also used because it did not need any inquiry. Instead there was no debates on the questions asked since the respondents respond in the absence of the researcher.

ii) Oral Interviews:

Face to face interview is the collection of information from the respondents directly by asking questions verbally i.e. face to face. Interview enabled the researcher to get detailed information from the respondents. It was also preferred because in case the questions asked were not understood by the respondent, it could be clarified.

In this method there was a choice of doing “narrative” interviews that gives the interviewees maximum room for telling their personal story or to do “semi-structured” interview that all follow a set of questions in more or less the same order. The narrative approach was chosen for the first question which was intended to learn something of the life history of the interviewee. The questions following after that were then asked within the framework of a semi- structured interview.

The targeted respondents of the study were mainly the small holder farmers, farmers’ cooperative officials and the officials from Multi-national corporations operating in the area namely Unilever Kenya and James Finlay Companies. The population sample

included participants who are small scale farmers, directors of the farmers' cooperatives and others from the multinational companies. A few pioneer farmers and former administration personnel (chiefs and village elders) from within the study area were selectively handpicked as informed respondents. These respondents were able to advice on who to visit and where to find the desired interview partners. The sample size of the study consisted of a population of twenty eight informants. The key informants included:

- a) Elders from the Kericho District whose age consisted of seventy years and above. They were very useful in providing valuable information on the historical background of the Kipsigis.
- b) Those who worked closely with the Europeans, for instant former chiefs and village elders. They provided useful information on the role that the government (colonial and independent) played as agents of change in the Kipsigis land.
- c) Representative from multinational corporations and farmers cooperatives were interviewed to give information on the operations of these entities and how the companies have assisted the farmers.

The study, being a survey research, used Snowball Sampling Technique (S.S.T) to select the initial respondents from the population whereby the researcher selected a respondent known to him to possess the desired characteristics, and after obtaining the information required, the respondent directed/led the researcher to the next respondent with similar characteristics. This was repeated until the desired sample size was

attained.⁵² Also Stratified Sampling Method/ Technique (S.S.M) which identified sub groups in the population and the proportion that was selected from each sub group to form a sample. This method ensured equitable representation of the population in the sample by ensuring that all demographic groups are represented.

For the other respondents drawn from the administrative and managerial staff, Purposive Sampling Method (P.S.M) was used in deciding who to include as participants, putting emphasis on their knowledge concerning development and the general socio-economic status of the area. The method is relevant and vital in the collection of focused and professional information, and also in proper and efficient use of time and money.

Data analysis was done in the form of content analysis along the underdevelopment and articulation of modes of production theories. Through these theories, the study found the relation between multinational corporations and small scale tea farmers as a fusion between the two differing economies of the local people and foreign capital. The collected information being descriptive in nature, the study largely employed qualitative analysis of the data.

1.10 Conclusion

This chapter has argued a case for the need to study the socio-economic impact of multinational tea companies on the small scale farmers of Kericho District in order not only to gain a fuller picture of the Kipsigs' economic history, but also to provide a basis for a more informed interpretation of present day economic dilemmas. It has identified the multinationals as one of the modernisers in changing the organization of the Kipsigis society. The chapter has also argued the use of underdevelopment and

⁵² The Kenya Institute of Management (KIM) (2009), *Fundamentals of Management Research Methods*. Nairobi, Macmillan Kenya Publishers Ltd, 57.

articulation of modes of production theories on social and economic change to serve best in the analysis of the changes of Kipsigis upon the establishment of the foreign capital. The chapter has also posed crucial research questions around which the existing body of literature has been evaluated and critiqued in relation to the study. Further, the chapter has reviewed related literature that exposed significant gaps of knowledge about the socio-economic impact of tea farming on the small scale holders thus justifying the necessity to investigate the transformation of the Kipsigis organization. The next chapter undertakes a description of the pre- colonial organization among the Kipsigis.

CHAPTER TWO

THE KIPSIGIS: THE PRE-COLONIAL SETTING, 1800 – 1895.

2.0 Introduction

The Kipsigis are a part of the Highland Nilotes group of People and a sub-group of the Kalenjin community. They originated in the Sudan, moving into what would become Kenya in the 18th century.⁵³ Although the Kipsigis were traditionally pastoralists, their organization has continuously transformed to living both as farmers and pastoralists. In their present homeland, the Kipsigis have lived in symbiotic relations with their neighbouring communities though there were frequent frictions. The Kipsigis engaged with their neighbours in various ways including trade and raids.

This chapter aims at charting out the pre-colonial background of the Kipsigis. An attempt is made to shed light on the origin of the Kipsigis and further provide an understanding of their cultural, political and economic organization in their present homeland before the coming of the colonialists. This will form an important basis for assessing the changes and the impact thereof associated with colonial intrusion.

2.1 History and Cultural Relations

In their expansion Southwards, the Kipsigis and the Tatonga people reached present-day Shinyanga area in Western Tanzania only for the former group to return to the South Rift region before some went back again going Southwards but could only settle at Ang'ata Barigoi in Trans Mara next to the Tanzanian Border.⁵⁴ The Kipsigis occupy three regions of Kericho, Bureti and Bomet. Mwanzi divides the Kipsigis into three sub-nationalities of Belgut in the north, Bureti in the middle and the Sot/Sotik in

⁵³ Oral Interview, Cheruiyot Arap Mursi, 04/07/2013.

⁵⁴ The Kipsigis Tribe: *Their Racial Origin* – **KNA/DC/KER/3/21**.

the south.⁵⁵ However, these three otherwise distinct and separate sub-nationalities gradually and eventually became unified through integration and amalgamation of their cultures and the spread and use of one identifying word; the Kipsigis. Suffice to say that by 1900, though differences existed, the peoples of Belgut, Bureti and Sot could answer to one name, the Kipsigis.⁵⁶

The basic unit of production and consumption of the Kipsigis was a homestead which comprised a husband, his wife or wives and unmarried children. A few adjacent homesteads formed a *temet* (plural; *temenik*) (hamlets.) Then such several *temenik* or hamlets comprised a *Kokwet* (village) which formed the basic unit of administration and political organization. It could stretch over a couple of kilometres. Anything from fifteen to sixty huts were found in a *kokwet* and no unoccupied stretch of land separated one village or *kokwet* from another and gave them spatial distinction. A tree, a stream, field or pile of stones marked the boundaries between villages. Membership of each *kokwet* was well known to everyone.⁵⁷

Although the Kipsigis were traditionally pastoralists, the pressure on land and high population has forced them to live both as farmers and pastoralists. They are agriculturalists and are one of the tea growing communities in Kenya. Kipsigis say that both they and the Nandi came from a place called "To," which is located in the vicinity of Lake Baringo.⁵⁸ In the course of their southward migration, sometime between the seventeenth and early nineteenth centuries, the Kipsigis and the Nandi separated. Today, the Nandi are their immediate neighbours to the north. Pushing further south, Kipsigis displaced the Luo, Kisii, and Maasai, the descendants of whom

⁵⁵ Mwanzi, H. A, (1977) *A History of the Kipsigis*. Nairobi, East Africa Literature Bureau, 49.

⁵⁶ Omwoyo, S. M, *The Agricultural Changes*, 34.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ The Kipsigis Tribe: *Their Racial Origin* – KNA/DC/KER/3/21.

are currently their neighbours to the west and south. The Kipsigis once called these people *puniik*, meaning "enemies" or "strangers," although relations with these populations were never completely hostile.⁵⁹

Relations with the Maasai were often characterized by fierce competition for grazing land. Despite reciprocal cattle raids, Kipsigis and Maasai intermarried and occasionally adopted one another's children. Exchange with the Kisii seems to have been more frequent, particularly in times of famine, when Kipsigis would exchange cattle for Kisii grain. There are a number of Kipsigis clans of Kisii origin. Ogiek hunters occupy the forest to the west. Like the Nandi, the Ogiek are Kalenjin speakers.⁶⁰ Both the Ogiek and the Nandi maintained intimate cultural and political relations with Kipsigis—they intermarried, shared clan affiliations, participated in joint initiation ceremonies, and, in their case the Ogiek exchanged forest products for Kipsigis grain. Indeed, before the imposition of colonial administration, ethnic boundaries between the Kipsigis and their neighbours seemed to have been quite fluid and permeable just as Arap Mibei remembers,

*“initially we could easily and freely walk into and out of Kisii land... we could also take our cows to graze and lick salt at Luo land. But when the Mzungu came, it was no longer easy to visit Kisii land.”*⁶¹

In their present homeland, the Kipsigis have lived in symbiotic relations with their neighbouring communities though there were frequent frictions. In times of peace, the Kipsigis engaged in thriving trade with the Gusii, Luo, Maasai and their kinsmen, the Nandi. However, due to their love for and devotion to cattle, they frequently raided all their neighbouring communities for cattle, except the Nandi. This led to frequent conflicts and wars with their neighbours. Raids and counter-raids became a common

⁵⁹ Oral Interview, Christopher Arap Tonui, 05/07/2013

⁶⁰ Land Enquiry Commission – Moris Carter (Part 1): *Memorandum on History of Kipsigis – KNA/DC/KER/3/18.*

⁶¹ Oral Interview, Philip Arap Mibei, 23/07/2013.

feature of relations between the Kipsigis and their neighbours on the eve of colonial rule.⁶²

The arrival of the British radically transformed Kipsigis society. White settlers alienated nearly half of Kipsigis land.⁶³ Through a series of pressures and inducements, the Kipsigis were gradually drawn within the orbit of the colonial market economy. In the late twentieth century structural changes in the regional economy forced thousands of western Kenyans, mostly Luo people, to come to Kericho in search of employment.

2.2 Political Organization

Politically, Omwoyo contends that the Kipsigis lacked any central authority. A man was the head of his homestead as much as the wife was in charge of her household. But there existed an intricate relationship to give each autonomy without infringing on the other, for example, a woman decided what to cook, and what to grow in her *shamba*, though this was naturally limited to *wimbi*. But a man was in charge of the entire homestead and harmonised activities within it. Equally as the head of the homestead, a man was subject to societal norms and rules.⁶⁴

Every *kokwet* had elders who were well versed in law and thus could settle disputes between members of the *kokwet*. These elders were referred to as *kiruogik* (judges or counsellors). They were elderly men who had shown intelligence above average in the *kokwet*, capacity to command respect and comprehensive knowledge of the law through experience. In the instance that the *kiruogik* could not settle a dispute, especially if it was between members of different hamlets, then it could be forwarded

⁶² Omwoyo, *The Agricultural Changes*, 49.

⁶³ Oral Interview, Matingwony Arap Rugut, 23/07/2013.

⁶⁴ Omwoyo, *The Agricultural Changes*, 35.

to the *boiyot ab kokwet*, the headman of the village to whom the *kiruogik* acted as advisers. Usually, *boiyot ab kokwet* was not elected, but earned the position for being the assistant of the last leader who had died or retired. But he first had to distinguish himself as a capable leader in order to gain favour as an assistant to the present leader. He did this by trying small cases, with the help of elders, acting as a mediator rather than a judge, between members of his village. He had no other functions apart from those of a judge.⁶⁵

There were three commonly known territories; Belgut, Bureti and Sot. But a Kipsigis man (*Kipsigisindet*), would become a member of more than one territory by virtue of his residence if he had several wives whose homes were in various territories. Hence he would also belong to two or more *kokwotinwek*. Also, a man with considerable number of cattle could distribute them amongst his friends and relatives across provinces, hence creating innumerable links between members of the different *kokwotinwek* and territories of the Kipsigis community. According to Arap Yebei,

*“we could go raiding to Luo land and the cows that we got we could take to ‘hide’ them at our brothers’ homes in Sot. The also brought their spoils from Maasai land to our homes (in Belgut). This helped us to build close relations with them as we could always keep visiting each other”*⁶⁶

Another common feature across all the territories was the age-set system. Every *Kipsigisindet* was initiated into an age-set (*ibinda*). Boys were initiated between 14 to 18 years of age and initiation ceremonies were held every seven years. During the two month period of seclusion, the initiates lived in a temporary hut (*menjo*) in the bush. There were seven age-sets (*ibinwek*); *Maina*, *Chumo*, *Sawe*, *Korongoro/Kipkoimet*, *Kaplelach*, *Kipnyigei* and *Nyongi*. Each *ibinda* lasted from fifteen to twenty years, though the period was certain and probably varied- the rule being that the age-set in

⁶⁵ *Chiefs and Headsman – KNA/DC/KER/5/1.*

⁶⁶ Oral Interview, Zakayo Yebei, 16/07/2013.

the warrior grade retained that status until the first batch of the sons of the previous age-set but one had been initiated. Thus, when the first sons of the *Maina* age-set had been initiated into the *Sawe*, the *Chumo* became elders.⁶⁷

2.3 Economic Organization

The economic organization of the Kipsigis is as much a product of the area's environment and geography as it is of other key factors such as colonial policies and also the involvement of the Kipsigis. The dissimilarity in Kericho's natural endowments as reflected in differences in altitude and temperature have been decisive factors that determines the range of economic activities and involvements that can be successfully undertaken in Kericho District. Although the Kipsigis always cultivated a range of food crops, they were generally—but perhaps anachronistically—identified as "cattle-raising people."

The Kipsigis are known in history for their love and devotion to animals. In fact, Peristiany contends that in the Kipsigis life, tradition and mythology, the cow has a place of its own and occupies in the minds of the people, a position next in importance to that of their children.⁶⁸ Thus, nearly every adult male owned at least one cow since a man who had neither a cow nor a goat was considered to be a pitiable poverty-stricken creature of God whom nobody would dream of paying even a day's visit.⁶⁹ Animal husbandry was the most lucrative enterprise in pre-colonial Kipsigis land. Since land was abundant, and therefore communally owned, cattle remained the single most cherished item of ownership and inheritance. Economically, cattle were

⁶⁷ Omwoyo, *The Agricultural Changes*, 39.

⁶⁸ Peristiany, J. G., (1939) *The Social Institutions of the Kipsigis*. London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 151.

⁶⁹ Towett, T., (1979) *Oral History of the Kipsigis*. Nairobi, Kenya Literature Bureau, 56.

the only form of investment possible.⁷⁰ Milk was a favoured food and was considered crucial for the welfare of young children. Livestock, which included goats and sheep, were a unique form of value, insofar as they remained an important part of bride-wealth payments.⁷¹ Since cattle played a prominent role in marriage transactions, its ownership bequeathed immeasurable influence which in turn translated into the accumulation of surplus, thus permitting those who owned cattle to occupy higher and more privileged positions within the indigenous economy.⁷² Mama Sarah stated that,

*“differentiation in wealth among the Kipsigis was a result of various factors such as the size of livestock, the number of wives one had and the amount of land that the household had the right and ability to cultivate.”*⁷³

Cattle provided the Kipsigis with the nourishing elements of their diet – milk, blood and meat. So were goats and sheep. Donkeys were used to transport goods. Cattle, sheep and goats also provided skin for clothing and as bedding. The cattle were kept in the *piut ab tuga* – place of cattle, and a very roughly fenced enclosure. A hut of a man who looked after the animals at night was built on the eastern side of the enclosure. The daily routine in the keeping of the livestock was simple. The cattle were taken out by the younger boys to graze at about six o’clock in the morning and then returned to the enclosure at about eleven o’clock for milking, which was done by women and young boys. They were then returned to graze until sunset.⁷⁴

Drinking of milk and eating of meat at the same time was prohibited in the believe that this would make the milk of the cow dry up by hardening its udder. A man who was guilty of this offence was *pitorindet* and could be publicly thrashed if found out. The milk was stored in *sotet* - a calabash. Mostly, it was mixed with charcoal (*osiik*)

⁷⁰ Omwoyo, *The Agricultural Changes*, 83.

⁷¹ Oral Interview, Obot Arusei Bor, 23/07/2013.

⁷² Oral Interview, Johana Arap Cheruiyot, 17/07/2013.

⁷³ Oral Interview, Sarah Sang, 05/07/2013.

⁷⁴ Omwoyo, *The Agricultural Changes*, 92.

of a special burned wood (*iteet*) to give it flavour. Equally, the ashes and charcoal of the tree in question had medicinal value. The Kipsigis had a way of fermenting and preserving the milk so that it could last for a long time.⁷⁵

Butter was also made by constantly shaking a calabash half full of milk until butter was formed. Such butter – *mwaita ab chego* – was cooked together with vegetable or herbs for consumption and women could use it to smear their bodies to provide soft skin. Women and children only drank the skimmed milk that was left over.⁷⁶

Blood, an important ingredient of the Kipsigis diet, was drawn from the cattle's neck veins using *loynet*, a small bleeding arrow. Such blood could be drunk either raw or mixed and boiled with vegetable. Bleeding of animals was frequently done but on different animals. Animals are bled not merely for the sake of blood but also to improve their health condition, especially at the beginning of the dry weather.⁷⁷

Towett contends that the love of Kipsigis men and women for their cattle can be demonstrated by their knowledge pertaining to the animals. He states that the Kipsigis knew their cattle well and they could tell which ones of them were good for milk, meat and other uses. Their knowledge about cattle characteristics was almost unsurpassed. They gave names to their cattle according to behaviour, colour and occasionally their place of living. When a Kipsigis skins a killed animal, he could divide and subdivide all the meat and name the parts accordingly. The Kipsigis people knew all the anatomical parts of any domesticated animals. All the bones had names given to them. All the intestines had different names one from another.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Omwoyo, *The Agricultural Changes*, 92.

⁷⁶ Ibid, 93.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid, 95.

In the period preceding colonial rule, crop production among the Kipsigis had not acquired much prominence and importance in relation to pastoralism, but nevertheless, was an important aspect of the Kipsigis economy, especially in food production.⁷⁹ However, livestock were but one component of a mixed farming regime. Like other farming activities, herd-management decisions were heavily influenced by market factors, cash requirements, and distribution and intensity of the rainfall. Thus, most of the food staples were planted during the long rainy season while crops that served as alternatives during famine were grown predominantly during the short rainy season. Finger millet and sorghum were grown as the staple food.⁸⁰

The main crop grown was millet – *wimbi*. At a later period, however, sorghum was brought from the Kuria country to supplement the millet. Millet flour or sorghum flour or a mixture of both was cooked to the consistency of desired dessert so as to produce *kimiet*, a local meal. The cultivation of *wimbi* ensured the provision in the household with sufficient quantity of solid food, for beer brewing during ceremonial occasions and some stored for trading purposes. *Wimbi* could also be exchanged with livestock, a major item of wealth. Together with *wimbi*, the Kipsigis grew an assorted kind of vegetable for household consumption and sale for some cash.⁸¹

On industrial arts, the Kipsigis were renowned for building impressive and durable houses. Many were competent tanners and leatherworkers. Some women constructed delicately woven food baskets and decorated gourds, which served as milk containers.⁸²

⁷⁹ Ibid, 56.

⁸⁰ Land Enquiry Commission – Moris Carter (Part 1): *Memorandum on History of Kipsigis* – **KNA/DC/KER/3/18.**

⁸¹ Omwoyo, *The Agricultural Changes*, 58

⁸² Oral Interview, Sophia Lapchei, 17/07/2013.

As concerns the division of labour, women did all the cooking, which included the auxiliary tasks of collecting water and firewood. They tended the kitchen gardens and often grew small plots of finger millet and sorghum. Women were also the caretakers of children.⁸³ Major agricultural tasks involved the entire family and, frequently, cooperative work groups composed of *Kokwet* (village) members. Ploughing with oxen was men's work; planting was done by all available family members while weeding was generally done by women.⁸⁴ Arap Kimetto affirms that,

*“men built houses, repaired fences, and cleared rough land. They provided veterinary care for livestock and, when the situation demanded, performed autopsies.”*⁸⁵

For all matters relating to land and land use, the prevailing picture that is held by most scholars suggests that communal ownership of land was the rule rather than the exception in most pre-colonial African societies. It is in fact argued that all members of pastoral communities in Africa never owned land as private property. Traditionally, the Kipsigis were pastoralists though they also relied on crop production to a great extent. Nevertheless, they did not have much attachment to land as a resource to be possessed privately. The Kipsigis idea of property was that upon which one had done some work, which he had acquired by his own effort, such as the house he built or the grain he planted.⁸⁶ Not only was land common property but also all that grew naturally upon it or was found beneath it, such as stone and salt lick (*ngeny*). Personal property or ownership was acquired on a thing as soon as work was done on it, but that which occurs naturally was given by God to all equally, the earth, the grass, the trees, the salt lick, the wild animals and so on. These only became a

⁸³ Oral Interview, Ludiah Rotich, 05/07/2013.

⁸⁴ Agricultural Gazetteer: *Land Tenure in Kipsigis* – **KNA/DC/KER/6/1**.

⁸⁵ Oral Interview, Zephaniah Arap Kimetto, 05/07/2013.

⁸⁶ Peristiany, *The Social Institutions*, 127.

man's property when he had done work upon them.⁸⁷

Kipsigis land matters were very largely controlled by the *Kokwet* (Village) elder. Land, therefore, never became the property of an individual; it was the property of the community. But as long as a man kept a piece of land in cultivation he had the right to use it. However, as soon as he left it to go back to bush or grass; it became public property again. Being a cattle people, they were more interested in the seasonal use of the land, than in the ownership of the land. In the initial years, all land was tribally owned although families must have had influence over certain areas.⁸⁸ Since the Kipsigis did not own land individually, there were no elaborate rules, laws or customs of inheritance regarding land, except for crops.

The old Kipsigis system laid the responsibility for the distribution of property of a deceased on the eldest son of the first wife. He acted in the capacity of an executer or administrator of his father's estate and was guided and equally advised by two elderly relatives of the deceased. It is erroneous to think of the eldest son inheriting everything. He did, in fact, only inherit the right to distribute his father's property equitably among the younger brothers from different wives of the deceased.⁸⁹ The sons had the right only to use the inherited property, but they could not dispose of it out of the family, except as marriage gifts. It is therefore evident that inheritance rules pertained to the chief form of property- cattle, sheep and goats, for there was no property in land.⁹⁰

Some of the exceptions in which land was privately owned included the space outside one's hut – the *kok* – which was deemed private. This included the place where cows

⁸⁷ Omwoyo, *The Agricultural Changes*, 50.

⁸⁸ Agricultural Gazetteer: *Land Tenure in Kipsigis* – KNA/DC/KER/6/1.

⁸⁹ Mwanzi, *A History of the Kipsigis*, 156.

⁹⁰ Omwoyo, *The Agricultural Changes*, 51.

were milked. Then, the small vegetable garden surrounding a hut – *kabungut* – was individually owned and cultivated by the mother and her daughters and often on such gardens vegetable was grown, such as *isagek*, *kelichek*, *interemek* and *mborocheke*; also the calabash from which vessels to hold liquids (*sotet*) are made. The vegetable of the *kabungut* was boiled with blood or meat, for to eat it alone was a sign of extreme poverty during a famine. In addition to the vegetables produced, however, there were other wild vegetables which would be gathered from the nearby bushes or forests; such included *inyonyoek*, *isyek*, *kelichek*, *mindeiywet* (a wild rhubarb), *kapsreraiwek* (a dock) and *raparapchiet*. The *pobat* (mushroom) and small-like fungi – *pugunerek* – which came up in large patches during and after heavy rains were a great delicacy.⁹¹

Far away from the *kabungut* was the *imbaret ab mosop* – field of the house – owned and cultivated by each man's wives to grow their crops, mainly millet, to sustain their household food requirements. The produce from this farm was stored in the *tabut* (granary) on the second storey of the hut over the sleeping quarters. The *tabut* must have been strewn with either *tebengonik* or *sebeta* or *motosyet* leaves. The smoke emanating from the fireplace thus blighted the grain and rendered it useless for trading regionally but could best sell locally. In addition, such *wimbi* would be resistant to weevils and this way it was kept in good conditions for as long as five years so that the risk of famine was reduced.⁹² Such *wimbi* could be threshed and stored in specific pots for future use. And lastly was the *imbaret ab soi* or *kapande* which was owned and controlled by the man in contradistinction to the *imbaret ab mosop* controlled by the wives. *Imbaret ab soi* was initially sown with millet but after

⁹¹ Ibid, 58.

⁹² Ibid, 60.

the adoption of maize, the name changed to *kapande*.⁹³ Besides these privately owned parcels, the rest of the land was considered communally owned. These included, *tirita* – a treeless communal grazing land, *tulonok* – hills considered as communal grazing land, and later reserved for thatching grass; *ainet* – river, a place to which all stock must be given access for watering, *ngeny* – a salt lick, reserved for communal use, *kapkoros* – a sacrificial place, sacred to the community and could not be used by any individual, *orap too* – public ways of access, wide enough to be used for cattle.⁹⁴

Inter-cropping seems to have taken place among the Kipsigis. *Wimbi* was mainly inter-cropped with sorghum. Vegetables could be grown with all these crops, though women had a small plot for vegetable, *kabungut* near the homestead. Even here, a variety of crops were grown together. Occasionally, *wimbi* could be grown in pure stands, especially in *imbaret ab soi*. Adequate food security and self-reliance were ensured by the cultivation of a variety of crops and vegetable. Besides, inter-cropping maximized on labour, which was scarcer than land.⁹⁵ The Kipsigis demonstrated great mastery of agricultural information and practices. For planting purposes, they selected the best *wimbi* heads that could give high yields. They dried and threshed them, and stored grain in the ceiling of a house. This grain, designated as special seed, was therefore kept in a warm area free of any insects or pests.⁹⁶

There was no such thing as sale of land. Crops on the land could be sold or exchanged for cows, goats or articles of trade according to the agreed value, but as soon as the buyer had harvested the crops, the land either reverted to the original owner as *roret* (an area of temporary cultivation which, after stoppage of cultivation, would revert

⁹³ Peristiany, *The Social Institutions*, 130.

⁹⁴ Omwoyo, *The Agricultural Changes*, 52.

⁹⁵ Ibid, 64.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 74.

back to communal use) or to bush when it again became common property to the community. Any transaction involving land had to take place in the presence of a *kokwet* elder to provide witness and blessing of the transfer of property.⁹⁷ What possibly amounted to tenancy and/or loaning of land among the Kipsigis existed. Custom provided for the giving of a *roret* on loan to a person living nearby if the owner lived some distance from the *roret*. The owner of the *roret* could request its return at any time after harvesting the crops. The person who was given a *roret* on loan could not refuse to return it to the owner. The cultivation of the *roret* on loan was always subject to the consent of the owner. But it should be noted that since no landless people existed, the tenant was not therefore in desperate situation, but the system was to the convenience of both the owner and the tenant. Rather than clear a new piece of land, the tenant accepted the transaction because the plot was near his homestead. For the owner, this was a cheap way of preventing land from reverting to bush.⁹⁸

Land was owned exclusively by men, but it was difficult for a man to lease out his land if his wife or elder sons objected. The rights of unmarried daughters and their children to stay on the farm were minimally recognized. However, there was no consensus regarding what portion of the farm, if any, such women or their children could claim.⁹⁹ One of the important results of this type of communal land tenure system was that everyone had the means of subsistence. There were no landless people nor were there any landlords. Disparity between the rich and the poor was very little. However, towards the end of the First World War, with the returning soldiers bringing home new ideas, the younger generation disregarded the elders and started to

⁹⁷ *Kipsigis Customary Law 1958* – **KNA/DC/KER/4/1**.

⁹⁸ Omwoyo, *The Agricultural Changes*, 53-54.

⁹⁹ Oral Interview, Cheruiyot Arap Mursi, 04/07/2013.

enclose land for personal use.

The Kipsigis supplemented their animal husbandry and cultivation by hunting and gathering as another economic activity. Among the foods gathered usually by women, were an assorted number of fruits and roots, notably *mogoiywet*, *tigainmanik*, *legetetiet*, *simbwet*, *nukuuk*, and *sirondet*. The Kipsigis never planted any fruit trees because of their shifting from place to place. It is, therefore, evident that all fruits eaten by the Kipsigis were wild ones. Honey was also harvested from the forests, though at times the Kipsigis had personal honey boxes which were hung on trees far in the forest.¹⁰⁰

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to chart out the pre-colonial background of the Kipsigis cultural, political and economic organization in their present homeland before the coming of the colonialists. The Kipsigis can be divided into three sub-nationalities which have over time gradually and eventually became unified through integration and amalgamation of their cultures and by 1900, all the three groups could answer to one name, the Kipsigis.

The Kipsigis related with their neighbours the Maasai, Kisii, Ogiek and the Nandi in varied ways such as reciprocal cattle raids, intermarriages, participating in joint initiation ceremonies, exchanging foods especially in times of famine and even adoption one another's children. Indeed, before the imposition of colonial administration, ethnic boundaries between the Kipsigis and their neighbours seemed to have been quite fluid and permeable.

¹⁰⁰ Towett, *Oral History*, 59.

Politically, the Kipsigis did not have any central authority. The man was the head of his homestead while the wife was in charge of her household. The *kokwet* elders were vested with powers of resolving/settling disputes and also regulating land use in the interests of the members. In case that they could not settle a dispute, then it could be forwarded to the *boiyot ab kokwet*, to which the *kiruogik* acted as his advisers. The age-set (*ibinda*) system was also another way in which the Kipsigis organised themselves.

Economically, there existed elaborate rules regulating land tenure system and these preserved the right of use though all land belonged to the community. Private land ownership was only limited to the area under cultivation and adjoining the homestead. The Kipsigis economic activities involved animal husbandry, crop cultivation, hunting of wild animals and gathering of wild fruits.

This analysis of the pre-colonial background of the Kipsigis serves to provide an important basis upon which later chapters will assess the changes and the impacts thereof associated with colonial intrusion.

CHAPTER THREE

THE ADVENT OF COLONIAL CAPITALISM AND ITS ARTICULATION WITH LOCAL SYSTEMS OF PRODUCTION IN KERICHO, 1895 – 1924.

3.0 Introduction

This chapter examines the coming of colonialists and their major activities, touching on the economic options that were taken up by the colonialists upon their arrival in Kericho. The description of these economic options entails a closer analysis of colonial agriculture and its entire system of production. The chapter also critically analyses the ways of labour acquisition during the colonial period, and how the Kipsigis were exploited by the colonial system. Such analysis serves as a background against which to assess the origin, development and impact of Multinational tea companies on the small-scale tea farmers of Kericho district in the subsequent chapters. The chapter further examines the origin and establishment of tea plantation in Kenya and finally, presents a historical trace of the origin and evolution of Corporate Capital in Kenya, with specific reference to Kericho District.

3.1 The Coming of British Rule

In the mid-1880s, Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEACO) was chartered to occupy the British sphere of influence along the Indian Ocean coast of East Africa. But by 1889, the company was already sliding into bankruptcy. Initially, the British were interested in the Uganda region, first as the source of River Nile which was the lifeline of their other important region, Egypt, and secondly for its strategic and economic reasons. Thus, by 1895, Britain annexed what was then called the East Africa Protectorate (Kenya), in order to secure a safe passage from the Indian Ocean port of Mombasa to Uganda and in due course (Kenya) became important because of its abundant natural resources, especially the fertile agricultural lands and moderate

climate.¹⁰¹ After annexing Kenya, Britain put it in the care of Her Consul-General in Zanzibar showing how little she welcomed the Company's legacy. Thus, in the ten years between 1895 and 1905, 'Kenya' was transformed from a footpath 600 miles long into a colonial administration. Before 1895, what existed was a patchwork of hunting, cultivating and herding peoples. They exploited varied ecological arenas – forests, hills and plains. A decade later, it had been wrenched into one, though yet very disjointed, field of competition among Africans to appropriate the power of colonial rule.¹⁰² Their former cultural identities, which had insured them against natural disaster with a non-sectarian elasticity, were being hardened into new 'tribes' by the factional politics of access to the narrow institutions of the young conquest state. This transformation was the work of force.¹⁰³

Two major reasons for the British interest in East Africa in general and Kenya in particular were, first, its strategic importance, but most importantly were the region's relatively rich agricultural possibilities which raised hopes of a healthy trade with Europe. These were seen both in terms of the exploitation of indigenous crops and also providing an opportunity for the production of those commodities that were in great demand in Britain. Charles Eliot and John Ainsworth became the principle architects of early European settlements by making persistent calls for white immigration into Kenya. In order to safeguard these economic interests, all 'unoccupied and waste' lands in the protectorate were declared crown lands in 1902 and were either sold or leased to the incoming white settlers.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Omwoyo, *The Agricultural Changes*, 100.

¹⁰² Berman and Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley*, 181.

¹⁰³ Oral Interview, Kipruto Arap Misik, 17/07/2013.

¹⁰⁴ Berman and Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley*, 101.

Early European penetration in Kipsigis land seems to have started in about 1885 for in this year, the first IBEA Company official walked into Kericho district from Narok.¹⁰⁵ Following him came Indian traders and European settlers. These were provided with money and other facilities to induce the local African people to appreciate the benefits of trade goods and services so that they did not stage resistance to British colonial rule. The District Commissioner spent his first tour in a camp by the river at Sotik Post, and the Indians created Sotik Post for the same reason.¹⁰⁶ On his second visit, the District Commissioner moved to Kericho and the first European house was built there in 1897.¹⁰⁷

Langat provides an earlier account of European encounter. He states that the first European to pass through Kipsigis land was the German naturalist, Dr. Fischer in 1886, and then followed by Fredrick Jackson, a servant of the Imperial British East African Company (IBEACO).¹⁰⁸ An undoubtedly successful warrior and a person of considerable influence who was recognised by the Kipsigis in a leadership role called Menya Arap Kisiara concluded treaties with the Maasai and also Fredrick Jackson in 1889.¹⁰⁹ A former Paramount Chief during the late years of colonialism, Cheruiyot Arap Mursi, remembers that:

*“according to Kipsigis custom, two dogs were cut in half to symbolise the establishment of blood-brotherhood relationship between Jackson and Arap Kisiara.”*¹¹⁰

But Jackson was charged with the duty of persuading African leaders to sign treaties of friendship with the Imperial British East African Company and this was done on the same day. Arap Kisiara placed himself and his people under the protection, rule

¹⁰⁵ Agricultural Gazetteer: *Land Tenure in Kipsigis* – KNA/DC/KER/6/1.

¹⁰⁶ Oral Interview, Cheruiyot Arap Mursi, 04/07/2013.

¹⁰⁷ Agricultural Gazetteer: *Land Tenure in Kipsigis* – KNA/DC/KER/6/1.

¹⁰⁸ Langat S. C., (1969) “Some Aspects of Kipsigis History Before 1914” in McIntosh B. G. (ed), *Ngano: Nairobi Historical Studies 1*. Nairobi, East African Educational Publishers, 2.

¹⁰⁹ Political Record Book – KNA/DC/3/1.

¹¹⁰ Oral Interview, Cheruiyot Arap Mursi, 04/07/2013.

and government of the company, ceding to it all rights over land and people, accepting in return the doubtful benefit of association with the Company together with a Company flag.¹¹¹

Omwoyo notes that be it as it may, these early contacts of the Kipsigis people with Europeans were through the attempt to open a road through Narok to Uganda. This was established but the hostility of the Kipsigis prevented it from becoming popular. It is said that the “natives” were generally perilous and the attack on Elton Newman (a Company employee sent to survey the route to Uganda through Maasai land) at Sotik closed the road for a time.¹¹² The next occurrence of importance was during the Nandi expedition of 1900 when Colonel Evatt accompanied by Lieutenant Henderson and Dr. Sherlock entered the Kipsigis land in pursuit of Nandi cattle and refugees but instead seized a number of Kipsigis cattle, not knowing which belonged to the Nandi or Kipsigis. In response, the Kipsigis attacked the party at night. Dr. Sherlock and a number of soldiers and Maasai were killed in action, while Lieut. Henderson was dangerously wounded and large numbers of cattle were recovered by the Kipsigis.¹¹³

Subsequently, the British became determined to subdue the Kipsigis. In May 1902, Major Evans Gorges, who was the first British Political Officer opened Kericho station. Two months later, a medical assistant was posted to Kericho. Sergeant Ellison succeeded Major Gorges in January 1903, and in March that year, Her Majesty the Commissioner visited Kericho. Gradually the colonial administration started to increase the numbers of their staff at Kericho station. These colonial administrators

¹¹¹ Langat, *Some Aspects*, 88.

¹¹² Omwoyo, *The Agricultural Changes*, 103.

¹¹³ Langat, *Some Aspects*, 89-90.

toured the whole area of the Kipsigis land and filed favourable reports on the suitability of the area for European settlement for agricultural purposes.¹¹⁴

The British's external force redefined internal power. In his work, N. E. Makana notes that there is no doubt that colonialism played a central role in drastically restructuring long established patterns (of agricultural production and trade) in order to re-orient the African rural sector towards the imperatives of the market ... Indeed, it (Colonial state) determined what crops would be produced, the prices that would be offered for agricultural produce, and the structure that the market would take.¹¹⁵ Before the colonial conquest, African power had been stored in an ideology of lineage, seniority and kinship. Reciprocal undertaking was prime and thus Kenya's pre-colonial societies showed little stratification in their standards of living.¹¹⁶

In acknowledgement that diplomatic adventure had become administrative responsibility, the Foreign Office relinquished control to the Colonial Office in 1905. After the conquest, Kenya became a more harshly politicized economy. The conquest was not only a political process, but an economic force because power had been centralized in the state, which rested on force and the new imperial ideology of progress. Capital seemed fixed in property and racial identity. Both preserves were demarcated and protected by the state.¹¹⁷

The British colonizers brought many changes to the Kipsigis society. In 1905, white farmers began to settle in Kipsigis territory with the result that the best land in the

¹¹⁴ Omwoyo, *The Agricultural Changes*, 103.

¹¹⁵ Makana N. E., *Changing pattern of Indigenous economic systems: Agrarian change and Rural Transformation in Bungoma District 1930-1960* (Doctor of Philosophy in History, West Virginia University, 2006), 44. Retrieved June 22nd 2013 from http://wvuscholar.wvu.edu:888//exlibris/dt/dt3//apache_media/L2V4bGlicm/zL2ROC9KM18XL2FWYWN0ZV9tZWwRPY8yMDKONE=.pdf.

¹¹⁶ Lonsdale J. "The Conquest State 1895-1904" in Ochieng' W. R. (ed) (1989), *Modern History of Kenya 1895-1980*. London, Evans Brothers Limited, 6.

¹¹⁷ Berman and Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley*, 193.

region was appropriated by the Europeans and population density increased in the Reserve. Through a series of pressures and inducements, the Kipsigis were gradually drawn within the orbit of the colonial market economy. Taxes, wage labour and a cash economy were virtually imposed on the Kipsigis. Men attempted to live up to their responsibility of providing the family with the necessary cash by engaging in off-farm employment and through production for the market.

The establishment of Colonial capitalism in Kenya was a slow process. The early settlers faced a lot of difficulties and hardships such as lack of relevant knowledge to carry on their economic engagements, absence of funds and the changing seasons. For about the first five decades of tea farming, the operation was primarily of a pioneer nature only being reserved for the settlers. After the Second World War, however, restriction on tea farming was lifted. It was also from this period that foreign firms began investing in Kenya by establishing Multinational Corporations.

Omwoyo notes that colonialism generated a dynamic process driven by distinctive internal and external contradictions rather than fixed, unchanging conditions of underdevelopment. These contradictions emanated from the way a particular capitalist metropole interacted with various and often distinctive indigenous social formations. This momentous process of linkage is understood through a particular construction of the concept of articulation.¹¹⁸ It is this process that determined the patterns of social formation and class struggle and the recurrent crises of accumulation and legitimization which occurred in a colony. With the implementation of colonial rule in the Kipsigis land, therefore, came a number of external regulations and influences that were set to gradually modify and change the Kipsigis indigenous economy. And as Arap Mibei of Kapsiya, Belgut vividly recalls:

¹¹⁸ Omwoyo, *The Agricultural Changes*, 105.

*“the coming of the Kiplelchi (white man) brought a lot of things we didn’t know, we heard of rules and laws that we never knew about and we could not oppose them... in no time we were like prisoners in our own land, we could not do anything without the knowledge and or approval of Kiplelchi”*¹¹⁹

Such aspects as the monetization of the Kipsigis economy, the levying of poll and hut taxes, the recruitment of the Kipsigis labour for colonial purposes, the exploitation of the Kipsigis agricultural surplus and the introduction of new crops, were all set to change the economic and agricultural landscape of the Kipsigis.¹²⁰

3.2 Colonial Agriculture in Kericho

The colonial mode of capitalist production in Kenya was dependent upon the Imperial state in all major areas of economic growth; in finance, banking, trade, markets, technology, science, personnel, education, and in the political and administrative mechanisms. It was the Colonial state which determined the form and the mode that capitalist production should take. The decision to develop and support capitalist plantations was a decision taken by the state. This mode was capitalist in that it produced commodities for the market, employed wage labour and was dependent on finance capital.¹²¹

Plantation agriculture was first introduced into Kenya in 1903 and was by far the most important structural innovation made in the economy. It was the Imperial state which had the responsibility, in accord with the Colonial state, for this decision and it was therefore also the responsibility of the state to provide suitable conditions for the development of capital in the estates. Mama Too adds that,

¹¹⁹ Oral Interview, Philip Arap Mibei, 23/07/2013.

¹²⁰ Berman, B. J., (1990), *Control and Crisis in Colonial Kenya*. Nairobi, Heinemann Publishers, 8.

¹²¹ Van Zwanenberg R. M. A. (1975), *Colonial Capitalism*, 275-276.

“large areas of land were legally demarcated for Europeans’ use as private property and the legal basis were set by the political force of law.”¹²²

In the colonial setting, the tribes could not assert themselves politically (as they did before) over their new masters and thus it was the latter who decided the form of the new mode of production.¹²³ It was the colonial state which provided the legal, political, military and administrative conditions for the establishment of large plantations, but then failed to provide sufficient economic support necessary for their rapid growth. That is, Europeans were offered access to African land by the colonial state which then failed to provide sufficient wage labour or finance capital.¹²⁴

Agricultural plantations were modelled and implanted in Kenya with the appearance of the British capitalist farms, but in practice they were technically very different from those in Britain. The seasons of the year and the chemistry of the soils (which were not tested for suitability for various crops) were quite different from those in Britain. Again most of the incoming farmers lacked agricultural and technical knowledge about farming, and the cattle diseases in Africa were unknown in Europe. Besides knowledge, low interest finance and unskilled labour in large numbers, and at a low wage were required appropriate to the particular needs of the productive process, which in practice meant that a large part of the surplus produce be retained by the capitalist producer.¹²⁵

The Colonial government passed a great deal of legislation which supported the needs of the settler farmers to develop capital. There was tariff protection, a great deal of labour legislation which provided suitable conditions to mobilize the tribal peasantry,

¹²² Oral Interview, Anna Too, 04/07/2013.

¹²³ Oral Interview, Zakayo Yebei, 16/07/2013

¹²⁴ Van Zwanenberg, *Colonial Capitalism*, 277.

¹²⁵ Ibid, 278.

and there was protection of private property. The legislations were implemented mainly in the interests of the planters. The colonial status of Kenya ensured that both her political and economic interests were subordinated to those of Britain. Authority was used to assert London's dominant interest over the interests of the nascent colonial state. The Colonial state pressed to develop capital while London saw the colony as an appendage of her own economy. This, therefore, meant in practice that over any matter of conflict of interests, the interests of London would prevail.¹²⁶

It was in the interest of both the Colonial state and the plantations that Africans should be wage labourers so that the planters could extract large financial profit through low wages but which were high enough to pay the government tax. It was not surprising, therefore, to find the administration in the field supporting the efforts of the settlers on the farms even though it was supposed to protect the "natives" from undesirable influences and to strike a balance between competing interest groups at the local level.¹²⁷ In Kenya, capitalist agriculture was implanted from outside without any scientific investigation into the appropriateness or favourability of the economic conditions. Initially, there was no internal market of any dimensions because of the low wage policy and the lack of monetization of the peasant which created very little demand, but as time went by, at around 1920s, internal market gradually grew and increased.

The British, just like other colonizers, went out to the colonies primarily, if not exclusively, to enrich themselves and promote their own interests, and those of their commercial firms, companies and banks. This was the driving force behind the coming of the colonialists and their main preoccupation was to create and maintain

¹²⁶ Ibid. 279.

¹²⁷ Oral Interview, Zephaniah Kimetto, 05/07/2013.

effective conditions for the ‘orderly’ running of economic activities in the colony which facilitated effective exploitation of colonial resources, both human and material. The legal organization of the colonial agricultural economy was thus designed with one principle objective in mind, that is, to enable the European sector to develop by under developing the African sector. The development of the colonized was none of their business.¹²⁸ Okoth-Ogendo argues that the underdevelopment of the African sector would be demonstrated in the study that dialectical materialism grants that it is possible for value to be transferred from one mode of production to another through the mechanism of primitive accumulation, that is, when the transfer is achieved through the destruction of one mode of production by another.¹²⁹ It is by preserving the domestic sector which is producing subsistence goods, that imperialism realises and further perpetuates primitive accumulation.¹³⁰ This notion seemed to have been embraced throughout the entire colonial period. The colonial production relations were built within Africa over a span of years, during which the numerous self-sufficient African economies were either destroyed or transformed and subordinated. Their connections one with another were broken. By definition, the colonial economy was an extension of that of the colonizing power.¹³¹

3.3 Capitalist Articulation with Local Organization of Land

The Crown Lands Ordinance of 1902 had declared all African “unoccupied” land as crown land. This Ordinance stated that no “native” had any title to land, as his claim to land was only recognised as long as he occupied it. Together with the Crown Lands Ordinance of 1915, which defined the boundaries of the “native reserves,” the

¹²⁸ Boahen A. A., *UNESCO General History*, 173.

¹²⁹ Okoth-Ogendo, H. W. O. (1991), *Tenants of the Crown: Evolution of Agrarian Law in Kenya*. Nairobi, ACTS Press.

¹³⁰ Wolf, R. D. (1974), *Britain and Kenya 1870 – 1930: The Economics of Colonialism*. Nairobi, Transafrica Publishers.

¹³¹ Maxon and Ochieng’, *An Economic*, 345.

Kipsigis found themselves confined in an area without an option of spreading out as was the case previously. The original reason for the establishment of reserves was simply to make way for European settlement. Thus, by the beginning of the First World War, substantial land in the Kipsigis land had been alienated and occupied by white settlers. Even at such an early period, the Kipsigis labourers started to invade the settlers' farms as squatters implying a decrease in pastureland for their livestock.¹³² Omwoyo states that by 1919, cases were noted of people living far outside the Reserve boundaries and that some had even left their homes to squat on European farms. He further elaborates that these people sought to enjoy more pastureland resources, which were now diminishing in their homes. Shortage of pastureland had been felt and as a result, large numbers of the Kipsigis were ready to offer their labour as squatters on European farms in order to secure pastureland for their animals. However, their action was of course, a deliberate challenge to the occupation of their land by alien settlers and thus constituted a form of resistance.¹³³

By around 1919, the Kipsigis could not comfortably meet their pastoral and other economic requirements without undue pressure from land shortage. Stichter contends that the Reserve policy confined the African population to legally delimited areas as most African societies were merely circumscribed in the Reserve area. Land limitation also resulted in the outflow of thousands of squatters for whom this was the only possibility of maintaining a purely pastoral way of life.¹³⁴

Land alienation and settler farming activities had great impact on the indigenous Kipsigis agricultural economy. First, shortage of pastureland started being felt as early

¹³² Annual Report : South Lumbwa District (1930) – KNA/KER/DC/1/3.

¹³³ Omwoyo, *The Agricultural Changes*, 107, 110.

¹³⁴ Stichter, S. (1982), *Migrant Labour in Kenya: Capitalism and African Response 1895 – 1975*. London, Longman, 5.

as 1912 and resulted in large numbers of the Kipsigis who were ready to offer their labour as squatters on European farms in order to secure pastureland for their animals.

This is clearly elaborated in the words of Sarah Kamoing:

*“people left to the European farms in Londiani. Some of our relatives and neighbours went to European farm in Londiani and they never came back... we learnt later that they have settled there (after independence)”*¹³⁵

Secondly, the size of land available for African use decreased, and as the population increased and people were forced to seek wage employment, not only as a subsidiary source for the means of livelihood, but as a way of obtaining cash for the payment of taxes and other essential household requirements.¹³⁶ Expropriation of land thus became a means of enhancing and exploiting African labour by drawing them into the capitalist sector. Finally, the Kipsigis also lost important resources, such as salt licks to the Europeans in the alienated areas and were forced to pay for their use.¹³⁷ Example of the salt licks that the Kipsigis lost were the one at Maraboi and at Chematum in Muhoroni.

The areas which proved favourable for European settlement were in the Songhor – Muhoroni, Kipkelion – Londiani and the Mau – Molo areas, probably due to their close affinity to the railway. Ainsworth reported that the ridge which lay between the Kimugu and Chepkoisi streams were very suitable agricultural lands for settlers.¹³⁸ Rutto maintains that in the Londiani-Kipkelion area, for example, 18 farms of 5,000 acres each were created for European settlement (Land Ordinance 859 Londiani Allotment File). The alienation translated to 90,000 acres of land lost by the Kipsigis when they moved out of the area stretching from *Tuluap Kipsigis Hill* on the edge of

¹³⁵ Oral Interview, Sarah Kamoing, 16/07/2013.

¹³⁶ Oral Interview, Obot Arusei Bor, 23/07/2013.

¹³⁷ Omwoyo, *The Agricultural Changes*, 112-113.

¹³⁸ Political Record Book – KNA/DC/KER/3/1

Mau Forest (Mau Summit), to Muhoroni in 1911.¹³⁹ Further, The Kipsigis lost approximately 25,000 acres of land to white settlement under the soldier settlement scheme known as British East African Disabled Officers' Corps (BEADOC) in 1919. The land was later allocated to tea companies, which still occupy it to this day. The companies include James Finlay (trading as African Highlands Produce Co Ltd) and Brooke Bond (now Unilever Tea).¹⁴⁰

Kosgei states that by limiting the amount of land available for Africans, the (Colonial) state created a land shortage which forced some people out of their homes to find employment and therefore to survive. These displaced people often ended up on settler farms as squatters; "permanent" labour on settler farms.¹⁴¹

Before the coming of the settlers and the colonial government, land ownership among the Kipsigis was communal. According to Orchardson, it was understood among the Kipsigis that "All land is the property of the tribe as a whole, and that which grows naturally upon it is common property." He further argues that all grazing land was public property just as were any trees growing there. If one wished to cultivate, however, he/she could do so, so long as it was not land set aside for public purposes such as salt licks or public paths. The elders usually gave their consent before one could go ahead to cultivate so that some control over land use was maintained. While the piece of land was under cultivation, it belonged to the person and his family. This was usually for a period of one year because the crop grown then, *wimbi*, was thought to do better if it was grown on virgin land or on land that had been fallow.¹⁴²

¹³⁹ Rutto, B., *Historical Land Injustices Suffered by the Kipsigis: A Memorandum Presented to the Task Force on Historical Land Injustices of National Land Commission* (At Kericho town), Sept. 24, 2014, 4.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Kosgei, J. Sally, *Commodity Production*, 7.

¹⁴² Orchardson (1934), *Report of the Kenya Land Commission*. Nairobi, Government Printer, 24 - 26

This system changed with the coming of maize and the general monetization of the economy. For one thing, there was less land available especially for grazing, as a result of land alienation, thereby forcing the Kipsigis to come to grips seriously with the fact that they had a problem. This in itself made some people wish to have their own pieces of land. For a community largely involved in pastoralism, there had to be some way to protect growing crops from the animals. The practice was for each owner to worry about his own crops. Thus "every field, or usually group of fields must be fenced, for there is no redress for the trespass of stock in crops. It is the duty of the cultivator to protect his crops against stock." Further, "all fences were temporary: they did not give a man a right to the land within, which is determined solely by his continued cultivation of land." Maize, unlike *wimbi*, could be and was grown on the same piece of land for years; and traditional practice allowed that if a piece of land was in use, it belonged to the individual using it. But the people growing maize put up fences that were not at all temporary. They used Mauritius thorn, *chepkomon*, which spread and formed strong fences. Over the years, people claimed these fenced areas as their own.¹⁴³

While shortage of grazing land was caused by alienated land, it was also true that with the introduction of maize, movement of animals in search of pasture was limited. The growing of maize and the introduction of ploughs and fences also led to the private ownership of land. People wishing to keep large stocks of animals had to move them out of the "reserve" areas and the settler lands absorbed them. The land set aside for European farmers was usually larger than they themselves made use of and, therefore, they were able to provide extra land for squatters.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ Kosgei, J. Sally, *Commodity Production*, 42

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 50.

Land alienation was carried out without any consideration of what the various sections contained for the Africans. Lack of grazing land was the major but not the only problem caused to the Kipsigis by land alienation. The areas around Buret and Belgut were cut off from the forest zone and, therefore, from certain essential products from the forest, such as timber for building, creepers for baskets and also roots and berries for food and medicine. Salt-licks were to become a long-standing problem between the Kipsigis on the one hand, and the settlers, plantation companies and the colonial state on the other hand. Remarking on the question of salt-licks, one Kipsigis elder in 1933 said, "We must have salt for our cattle, so we have to steal it, which leads us into trouble." The Chematum salt-lick in Muhoroni in particular caused a tremendous amount of resentment among the Kipsigis.¹⁴⁵

Cases of organized armed confrontation with settlers or government agents rarely took place. Kosgei notes that one incident deserves mention, whereby the Kipsigis, annoyed at the possibility of losing any more land, were so enraged by the attempt to alienate land at Kapkatet for a shopping centre that they organized to resist the alienation. They were afraid that this would lead to widespread land alienation in the area. In any event, they hired lorries and transported people, especially women, to the home of Chief Tengecha, who not only sympathised with the colonial policies he was employed to implement, but who was also considered arrogant by his subjects. The women were set on pulling down his house but were stopped by armed police. Some of the men were arrested and locked up as well. Women pulling down a man's house was an outrageously insulting act upon a man.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵ *Report of the Kenya Land Commission*, 24

¹⁴⁶ Kosgei, J. Sally, *Commodity Production*, 48

3.4 Capitalist Articulation with Local Systems of Labour Mobilization

Omwoyo contends that the Kipsigis involvement in the colonial labour market started from the onset of the colonial era. The contribution of the Kipsigis to the colonial labour market must therefore be viewed in the context of the wider settler economy.¹⁴⁷ As earlier stated, the settlers were inadequately supplied with finance capital and wage labour. The colonial government, which was dominated by the imperial policy of self-sufficiency, was unable to provide more than a rudimentary infrastructure. Colonial capital accumulation was, therefore, based on the appropriation of surplus capital created by the cheap and lowly paid African labour which led to impoverishment and exploitation of the African reserves. What was needed, therefore, was a system that would ensure a steady supply of cheap and dependable labour.

The problem throughout Kenya Colony, however, was how to induce a greater proportion of local labour away from the more efficient small holdings in the reserves. The solution was to raise taxes and depress wages. During the colonial era, the colonial government also used force to acquire not only land but also labour for the planters. They employed very poor methods of labour recruitment like the *Kipande* (identity card) system, taxation, squatter system and forced labour. The *Kipande* was used to establish a contractual relationship between the employer and the employee. The *Kipande* carried the name of its bearer and the amount paid to him/her as a wage.¹⁴⁸ Settlers and other resident Europeans and the managers of the foreign enterprises combined to keep wages low and to keep labour semi-feudal through the issue of workers' cards (*Kipande*). Arap Misik explains that,

“the Kipande severely limited the freedom to shift labour from one employer to another. If the bearer breached the contract, he was imprisoned under the Native Registration Ordinance. The wages

¹⁴⁷ Omwoyo, *The Agricultural Changes*, 131.

¹⁴⁸ Yegon, *The Impact*, 114.

written in the Kipande ensured that in future, every employer would pay the bearer the same wages and hence the bearer could not bargain for wage increase."¹⁴⁹

Another form of labour acquisition used by colonialists was taxation. Africans were exploited by the colonial system irrespective of whether or not they produced an export surplus. Tax collection grew more and more efficient, and it was utilized not so much for services to the people as for building the state and its economic infrastructure. On taxation, every unmarried male individual over 16 years was supposed to pay Poll Tax while the married individual had to pay Hut Tax, where by every male had to pay tax for every woman who depended on him. Since there was no alternative source of income, he was forced to secure a job in the White Highland farms. This was the method of labour recruitment not only in Kericho but throughout Kenya.¹⁵⁰ Kosgei asserts that taxation, as a method for drawing people into a monetary economy and financially supporting the colonial state persisted right through the colonial period.¹⁵¹

Capital avoided the cost of production of labour due to its unstable character and thus the only way in which the settler economy could survive the difficult problems of take-off, was through the utilisation of labour intensive methods on a grand scale.¹⁵² Wages were kept abysmally low. In his work, Daniels argues that as was typical of much colonial employment, wages did not constitute a free subsistence income but amounted to a cash supplement to whatever the workers could derive from their homes in the reserve or produce on their own using estate land. A frequent arrangement granted the resident workers, or "squatters," the use of grazing land (from which they or their tribesmen had previously been evicted) in exchange

¹⁴⁹ Oral Interview, Kipruto Arap Misik (Chematage), 17/07/2013

¹⁵⁰ Oral Interview, Isaiah Arap Chebunyei, 23/07/2013

¹⁵¹ Kosgei, J. Sally, *Commodity Production*, 39

¹⁵² Omwoyo, *The Agricultural Changes*, 131.

for training and using their oxen to plough the settler's fields. Many Kipsigis learned maize cultivation in this way. The administration soon pressured them to adopt maize in the reserve.¹⁵³

Boahen further agrees that upward trends were resisted; purchasing power was eroded partly because of the periodic inflations and partly because wages were depressed or allowed to lag behind commodity prices. The backward regime of task or piecework was widely pursued, and workers never received a living wage or any benefits for sickness, disability and old age. The argument for this was that the African labour supply would not grow if wages increased. Rather, since Africans had limited cash needs attached to particular targets, primarily the payment of taxes and purchases of particular imported consumer goods, supply would drop if wages were raised. Throughout their working lives, other members of their family remained self-supporting at the stagnant level which Europeans considered to be African subsistence.¹⁵⁴

However, not many Kipsigis were engaged in providing labour to the white settlers especially in the tea plantations. In 1930, the District Commissioner for Kericho noted the fact that comparatively few “Lumbwa” were employed on the tea estates. This, he noted, was a good indication that the tribe as a whole was not hard hit financially during the 1929/30 economic recession.¹⁵⁵ He further states that unless they (Kipsigis)

¹⁵³ Daniels, R. E. (1980) “Pastoral Values among Vulnerable Peasants: Can the Kipsigis of Kenya Keep the Home Fires Burning?” in Abbott, S. and van Willigen, J. (eds.) *Predicting Sociocultural Change*. Southern Anthropological Society Proceedings 13. Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press.

¹⁵⁴ Boahen, *UNESCO General History*, 343-344.

¹⁵⁵ Annual Report: South Lumbwa District (1930) – KNA/DC/KER/1/3, 21.

can get a ready supply of milk, which they prefer to meat, the Kipsigis are not usually anxious to perform manual work, no matter what the wages.¹⁵⁶

In the squatter system, Omwoyo notes that by 1913, the Kipsigis were already squatting on settler's farms as a form of imposing themselves on European farms. Squatting was the second of the most dominant forms of African labour to emerge and it involved access to land on settler estates for cultivation and grazing in return for a stipulated period of labour service on the settler's fields at a minimum wage. The displaced Africans from the White Highland areas had nowhere to go. They only had at their disposal, the alternative to work for the Europeans in their farms who in turn paid them three-quarters of the normal wages and offered them with a piece of land to squat on. Squatting or the imposition of the available manpower was attractive to most of the Kipsigis men for two reasons. First, they were allowed to move with part of their livestock to the farms, thus getting access to extra pastureland and second, it was a way of avoiding menial and forced labour in the reserves.¹⁵⁷ Therefore, the labourer had a piece of land to graze their animals in return for the labour he offered to his master.

The settlers needed the squatters because they paid them less than they paid the regular employees; the Kipsigis became squatters in large numbers principally because their cattle lacked adequate grazing land after land alienation.¹⁵⁸ Deserving mention as a cause for the rise of squatters from Kipsigis country is the fact that for many years, the government imposed a collective fine on the Kipsigis as a punishment for cattle theft which was usually paid for in cattle. During the Second World War, the Kipsigis also lost enormous numbers of animals to the "war effort." To escape

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, 22.

¹⁵⁷ Omwoyo, *The Agricultural Changes*, 134.

¹⁵⁸ Oral Interview, Cheruiyot Arap Mursi, 04/07/2013.

from both of these, many people took off to settler farms with their animals because the animals were safer there. The threat of having to move to the reserve if the settlers wanted them to do so was the main source of insecurity in the lives of the squatters. As can be imagined, they would therefore accept whatever terms the settlers offered, and the use of their labour in particular was at the mercy of the settlers.¹⁵⁹ This was labour that could have been used in creating surplus for the Kipsigis reserve. As Arap Mursi states, the long-term consequences for the "illegal tenants" of the settler farms were that,

*“they (on the whole) ended up being the landless people in Kipsigis country, because the sharing of land took place while they were away as squatters, and the land was divided on the basis of who occupied it at the time of the division. When and if a settler left, his land was not taken up by squatters. It was sold to people who could pay the high prices that squatters could not afford.”*¹⁶⁰

The colonialists also used forced labour system. Many would-be plantation farmers were from the beginning not wealthy and could not manage proper plantations, with a few being an exception. These farmers, therefore, engaged in very small scale farming, which it would be uneconomical to employ labour. They were with the alternative of working with their own hands. The snag was that white farmers had wanted to draw a clear social distinction between them and blacks, and working with own hands was usually relegated to black labour. The whites were only supposed to employ black labour, not to imitate it. But because they were not in a position to employ, they began to demand that Africans be compelled to work for them. The chiefs played a central role in the acquisition of such labour. What was referred to as administrative ‘encouragement’ of labour led directly to the use of coercion by the chiefs.¹⁶¹ Thus a system of forced labour also known as “communal labour” began.

¹⁵⁹ Kosgei, J. Sally, *Commodity Production*, 51

¹⁶⁰ Oral Interview, Cheruiyot Arap Mursi, 04/07/2013.

¹⁶¹ Kosgei J. Sally, *Commodity Production*, 133.

Under this system, every able bodied man over 16 years was called upon to give six days-unpaid labour for every three months.

None of these systems of labour recruitment was attractive as seen above and as a result therefore, the relationships between the plantations and the people living around the plantations were largely affected through the systems that were used such as *Kipande*, tax and forced labour. In the light of these claims, it will be necessary in the later chapters, to assess the situation that exists between these two stakeholders within the Kenyan economy.

3.5 Cash Crops and the Depastoralisation Process

Omwoyo observes that the enhancement and entrenchment of the Kipsigis in commodity production was one avenue of transforming the Kipsigis economy and exploiting the community through the extraction of its labour and resources. Initially, the Kipsigis were mixed farmers and *wimbi* production played a vital role in their agricultural economy, but to the Europeans this crop was useless and unsalable. It was the avowed policy of the British colonial administrators to replace *wimbi* cultivation with a marketable and profitable grown crop, such as maize. The process of transforming the Kipsigis economy from a predominantly pastoral to one increasingly reliant on cultivation of cash crops started with the introduction of maize. However, the adoption of maize did not initially augur well with the Kipsigis because whereas in terms of the traditional pastoral economy, land was considered a common grazing resource, maize cultivation and later the cultivation of other crops sparked off a process that could culminate in land enclosures and private ownership of land for production of such crops.¹⁶²

¹⁶² Omwoyo, *The Agricultural Changes*, 116, 117.

From the onset of colonization, as early as 1904, the state had reduced export taxes on likely European exports to make it more profitable for Kenyan European farmers to farm. Especially low rates of taxation were levied on imported agricultural implements to be used by white farmers. Government services, including extension services, agricultural service and training, transportation networks, etc., were all limited to white settled areas, although the Africans contributed to the payment of each of these services through taxation. The state further protected European farmers from competition from African farmers by forbidding Africans to grow some of the marketable crops. It was illegal for Africans to grow coffee, tea, pyrethrum, etc.

Furthermore, Africans were not allowed to cross-breed cattle for many years. Only occasionally, when world prices for any of these crops were particularly low, were Africans allowed to grow them; and then they, too, were discouraged by the low prices. It is also true that in times of hardship, the state came to the rescue of the white farmers. Not only were white settler farms protected at the production level in terms of what could be grown by Africans and the various forms of assistance from the state, but they were also protected at the marketing level. The Kenya Farmers Association, which was formed in 1919, was set up to distribute seeds, fertilizers and agricultural tools in the country. More important, was the fact that the Association was the sole buyer of cash crops from farmers and the seller to the outside world.¹⁶³

Later, maize in particular, and especially in the Kericho district, was further encouraged to feed the labour force on the tea plantations in the district and in the other parts of the country. Kitching comments that the development of maize farming in Kericho occurred in response to the demand of nearby settler farms for maize meal to feed their resident workforce, and thus the area concentrated heavily, indeed almost

¹⁶³ Kosgei, J. Sally, *Commodity Production*, 7-8

exclusively, on the cultivation of maize.¹⁶⁴ In any event, when maize was introduced into Kericho district in 1913, the Kipsigis refused to grow it. They boiled the seeds distributed to them by the government before planting them and later reported the failure of the maize to germinate. The District Commissioner proceeded to plant maize on his own farm and, of course, it germinated. He then collected all the chiefs and gave them seeds and *askaris*. The chiefs with the help of *askaris* rounded up men and women and forced them to plant maize on model farms near chiefs' homes. The people were charged with maintaining the farms, including feeding the *askaris*. When the maize was ready, the seeds were distributed to many people whose names were registered. Arap Mursi recalls that “those whose maize did not grow were whipped and fined.”¹⁶⁵ This forced many people to grow maize and by about 1930 practically everyone was growing maize.

Saltman asserts that in fact maize was first introduced in the Kipsigis land in 1906 and the Kipsigis displayed a certain amount of resistance towards growing this crop but the resistance dwindled off during the First World War. The British were undoubtedly interested in the cultivation of this crop which had both an export value and could as well serve to feed the growing labour force in the protectorate.¹⁶⁶ Berman's perspective for colonial support of maize cultivation was the need for regular sources of rations and income to stabilise and legitimise the powerfully increasing colonial domination. This furnished the bedrock for rapid expansion of peasant commodity production in the years before the First World War in Kenya.¹⁶⁷ But to the Kipsigis, maize was a useless crop not comparable to their all-important *wimbi*. For one, it

¹⁶⁴ Kitching, *Class and Economic*, 54.

¹⁶⁵ Oral Interview, Cheruiyot Arap Mursi, 04/07/2013.

¹⁶⁶ Saltman M., *A Restatement of Kipsigis Customary Law*. (PhD Dissertation, Brandeis University, 1971), 28

¹⁶⁷ Berman, *Control and Crisis*, 53.

required extensive cultivation which was alien to Kipsigis. Secondly, it could not replace *wimbi* in making the traditional beer (*murek*). Thirdly, it required to be ferried for long distances to be ground unlike *wimbi* which could be ground right in the household.¹⁶⁸ Continuous exhortations from government officials, the establishment of water mills and later flour mills in the “Reserve”, availability of free seeds, availability of market and the need for money to pay taxes, all gradually led to the adoption of maize cultivation, especially after 1913.¹⁶⁹

In the 1920s, after the First World War and with the opening of the large tea estates in Kericho district, a vast market for maize was created and maize production prices increased rapidly. Consequently, many Kipsigis farmers extended their maize cultivation and began to fence off their fields in order to stake their claims to land in the increasingly highly populated Reserve.

It was into this background that tea was introduced in Kericho. Tea was among the most important settler export commodities in Kenya. The most important producers of this crop were the large scale estates (plantations) with British capital. However, small scale groups of local farmers also became involved in tea production when it was evident that tea provided wider profit margins than most of the other alternatives.¹⁷⁰ Eventually, the commercial production of tea seems to have introduced some changes into the organization of agricultural production of the Kipsigis who took up the cultivation of tea as small scale producers. Consequently, in those households with little land, concentration on the production of cereals alone by the women cultivators would have produced a considerable risk, or perhaps even a certainty (where land holdings were very small) of failing to meet socially determined subsistence

¹⁶⁸ Oral Interview, Francis Arap Boen, 16/07/2013

¹⁶⁹ Omwoyo, *The Agricultural Changes*, 117.

¹⁷⁰ Maxon and Ochieng', *An Economic*, 120.

requirements.¹⁷¹ As tea assumed pride of place as a cash crop, Kipsigis subsistence security was directly threatened in that the proportion of directly consumed production was reduced, as land planted to cash crops (tea) increased. Increasingly also, domestic food requirements could now only be procured from the market.¹⁷² However, this movement in the crop mix toward greater dependence on the market for subsistence entailed some risks, including sudden rises in prices of cereals at times of local or general harvest failure, and the failure of one's own crops.¹⁷³

On depastoralisation of the Kipsigis, Daniels in his work argued that early British policy was aimed at the "depastoralisation" of the Kipsigis and their conversion into a supporting role in the colonial economy... and with the Asians starting with rather limited barter, their trade in subsequent years became a major inducement for Kipsigis to become involved in the cash economy.¹⁷⁴

The prime motive of the colonial government was to depastoralise the Kipsigis and turn them into labourers in the settlers' farms. Omwoyo observes that within thirty years, the Kipsigis economic interests shifted from a focus on cattle to intense interests in land and cash. This shift did not happen by accident, but it was a result of strategic colonial policy to depastoralise the Kipsigis. Right from the beginning, the colonial government considered the Kipsigis as being treacherous and consequently targeted their animals so as to humble them.¹⁷⁵ The colonial administration recognised the extent of the Kipsigis reliance on their livestock as a means of their livelihood and they sought to sever this dependence by depleting the Kipsigis livestock. All manner

¹⁷¹ Oral Interview, Francis Arap Boen, 16/07/2013

¹⁷² Oral Interview, Anna Too, 04/07/13

¹⁷³ Kitching, *Class and Economic*, 127.

¹⁷⁴ Daniels, *Pastoral Values* 13.

¹⁷⁵ Omwoyo, *The Agricultural Changes*, 118.

of tactics were used by the colonial government to achieve the economic objective of getting rid of the Kipsigis livestock.¹⁷⁶

A number of cattle were captured whenever there was a police patrol, especially along the Kipsigis borders. Whenever cattle were found outside the designated Kipsigis reserve, these would be confiscated. A notable example was in August 1911 when a number of cattle were found in the Chepalungu forest far well outside the “Reserve limits.” They arrested the animals and half were confiscated under the Diseases of Animals Ordinance.¹⁷⁷ In the same month, another police patrol captured a large number of cattle, sheep and goats in Tinderet. Several cattle allegedly stolen previously from Europeans were also found. All the livestock taken was then confiscated and sold in October and the people punished. Livestock was also used in the payment of fines and settlement of disputes. Besides, the Kipsigis were forced by economic circumstances to sell their animals in order to pay the colonial imposed taxes. Default in paying hut and poll taxes could lead to confiscation of animals. Even petty crimes were resolved by levying fines in form of cattle. Similarly, cattle were confiscated for ‘crimes’ committed individually and collectively. Collective fines amongst the Kipsigis became common even for petty reasons. For example, in December 1912, a fine of about 130 heads of female livestock was imposed on the locations of Arap Chemosit and Arap Prosecutor for engaging in cattle raids.¹⁷⁸ This points to the conclusion that the British colonial authorities wanted to depastoralise the Kipsigis.

The depastoralisation affected the Kipsigis in various ways; first in their diet since cattle, goats and sheep provided them with the nourishing elements of their diet-milk,

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, 120.

¹⁷⁷ Political Record Book – KNA/DC/3/1.

¹⁷⁸ Omwoyo, *The Agricultural Changes*, 121.

blood and meat. These animals also provided skin for clothing and as bedding. Secondly, was in their economic activities. The donkeys for instance were used to transport goods, while bullocks were used to cultivate farms. Thirdly, these livestock, especially the cattle, goats and sheep were used to pay dowry and fines. All these were heavily interrupted when the colonial authorities depastoralised the Kipsigis.¹⁷⁹

The commencement of the First World War negatively impacted on the Kipsigis livestock. During the war, Africans' contribution in manpower and material support were crucial, and the supply of cattle to feed the soldiers was resorted to. In February 1915, a large *baraza* of all chiefs was held and the subject was getting bulls for government's war purposes. By the end of the war the Kipsigis viewed their livestock with an extra purpose – as a source of money. Cattle could now be sold not only to acquire tax money, but also to meet basic needs, such as for buying food and other items being sold around by Indian and Somali traders. The depletion of the Kipsigis livestock was set to continue as the Kipsigis started acquiring more tastes for imported exotic goods and services.¹⁸⁰ The District Commissioner for Kericho in 1941 summed up the situation when he wrote that:

*“the main effect of the war in the Reserve has been the supply of cattle to the Supply Board Control. The prices paid were definitely below the “native” market prices and the cattle were in effect commanded by the Native authorities, otherwise probably none would have been obtained.”*¹⁸¹

For these reasons, and because for many years the Kipsigis were made to pay a collective fine for stock thefts which was paid in animals rounded up by the police, the wealth of the Kipsigis was reduced. It was also government policy to reduce the number of cattle owned by the Kipsigis because, it was argued, the herds were too

¹⁷⁹ Oral Interview, ZakayoYebai, 16/07/2013

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, 122-123.

¹⁸¹ Annual Report – KNA/KER/DC/1/3.

large and unhealthy. What the government did not do was introduce better breeds of cattle or even devise a method of improving Kipsigis methods of cattle keeping. When the Kipsigis were eventually allowed to keep grade cattle, in the late 1940s, this was limited to the well-to-do farmers.¹⁸²

3.6 Monetization and the Penetration of the Market

The policy of monetization, however, was a gradual process and by 1919 the capitalist mode of production had not sufficiently taken roots and was progressively busy in adjusting, restructuring and exploiting the Kipsigis traditional economy. The Kipsigis were thus gradually drawn to a money economy through the levying of taxes, collective fines, the growing of cash crops; such as maize and by offering their labour for wages.¹⁸³ The indigenous societies in which money, commodity production, wage labour and bureaucratic forms of organization were virtually unknown, were progressively and gradually subdued in favour of European forms of capital by a state that already had more than two centuries of development. This process did not occur instantaneously or uniformly in a single broad wave, but in a variety of forms and phases encountering different local conditions and responses. The resulting variations were determined by particular form of external capitalist penetration and political subjugation of the structures of the indigenous societies and the diversity of the local ecology and resource endowment.¹⁸⁴ For instance, Daniels asserts that the collection of hut tax began in 1904. At first taxes were payable in kind, but the administration soon pressed for payments in cash. He further argues that the real importance of

¹⁸² Kosgei, J. Sally, *Commodity Production*, 58

¹⁸³ Omwoyo, *The Agricultural Changes*, 106.

¹⁸⁴ Berman, *Control and Crisis*, 35.

taxation lay not in generating revenue but in initiating the diversion of “native” efforts into the wider economy dominated by European interests.¹⁸⁵

Merchant capital also had an important role to play in changing the Kenyan social structure in the colonial period. Although trade with the outside world was in existence in East Africa long before colonialism, and of course, Africans traded with each other, the conditions set up by colonialism, however, intensified this trade further. For one thing, a whole trading community was brought into Kenya from India with the construction of the railway. While at first many people were cautious about buying some of the goods available from these merchants, it did not take them too long to be dependent on the merchants for things they also began to rely on as essentials. Some of these articles were blankets, cloth, salt, farm implements, and many other items. This involved Africans in a money economy, especially in Kericho district where barter trade was the practice before colonialism. Being involved in a money economy forced people either to go out in search of salaried employment or to grow and sell crops from their farms.¹⁸⁶

All types of goods were available on the market by the late 1920s that had become sufficiently desirable to the Kipsisis to make them seek ways of earning money to pay for them. The commodities ranged from household utensils to ornaments, hoes and ploughs to cloth and so on. To pay for these things and also to pay taxes, many people sold maize, their animals or went out to seek employment. As maize did not seem to earn enough money for all these things and people were reluctant to sell their animals,

¹⁸⁵ Daniels, *Pastoral Values* 1980.

¹⁸⁶ Kosgei, J. Sally, *Commodity Production*, 11

many people sought employment on the tea plantations in the district and on settler farms in the district and in the rest of the country.¹⁸⁷

The introduction of merchant goods and government taxes forced Africans to raise money and to enter into a money economy. In the first two decades of colonialism in Kenya, there were three principal areas from which the Kipsigis could draw money: the settler farms, the tea plantations and their own crop production. Often they had to sell their animals, too, to obtain money. A few people got government jobs and a few more made their way to urban areas although this was later in the colonial period.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter set out to examine the coming of colonialists and their major activities. The British were keen in annexing Kenya because it was strategically important for their activities in East Africa region, especially Uganda. Early European travellers to Kenya gave convincing reports which encouraged white immigration to Kenya, thus leading to the eventual colonization of Kenya. Colonialism had a lot of influences which gradually modified and changed the Kipsigis indigenous economy through the monetization of the Kipsigis economy, the levying of poll and hut taxes, the recruitment of the Kipsigis labour for colonial purposes, the exploitation of the Kipsigis agricultural surplus and the introduction of new crops. Colonialism too, came along with land alienation which had great impact on the indigenous Kipsigis agricultural economy, ranging from shortage of pastureland and decrease in the size of land available for African use, to the Kipsigis losing important resources, such as salt licks to the Europeans.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, 39

Many aspects of Kipsigis society were affected in various ways by the introduction of colonialism and capitalism in its various forms. Cattle, which in the pre-capitalist Kipsigis society played a major role of supplying food and wealth, suffered retrogression in the colonial period. In the first instance, the Kipsigis method of increasing their stocks by raiding was stopped by the colonial government right at the beginning of colonization. Then followed a systematic reduction of stocks that continued right through the colonial period, especially through taxation, which at first was paid in cows, goats and sheep. In the early years of colonization, there were many individual fines, such as the one imposed on failure to supply labour for public works. The fines were usually paid through the sale of animals or the animals were simply seized by the government. The alienation of land for settler or plantation agriculture in Kericho district, together with the individualization of land ownership as a result of maize cropping, led to a shortage of grazing land for the Kipsigis, which resulted in many reducing their stocks out of necessity. The Kipsigis lost cattle during the two world wars, when chiefs were asked to round up animals from their people.¹⁸⁸

The prime motive of the colonial government was to depastoralise the Kipsigis and turn them into labourers on settlers' farms. Besides, only maize cultivation made economic sense for the feeding of African labour in settlers' farms. Maize was easier and cheaper to produce since, despite its low nutritive value in comparison to indigenous crops, like *wimbi*, it provides a great quantity of food and the necessary energy that was ideal for the vast numbers of workers. Through its provision, the workers could feel more satisfied and well fed so that they did their work with cheerfulness and vivacity. Maize was a tool for the penetration of capitalism in rural

¹⁸⁸ Ibid, 57

areas because it was a more saleable crop. Maize was introduced in order to assist a change in the mode of production in Kenya as a whole to a capitalist mode.¹⁸⁹

This chapter also analysed the ways of labour acquisition during the colonial period, and how the Kipsigis were exploited by the colonial system. The Kipsigis were not only paid far less than their labour's worth, but also were overworked, underpaid and at times coerced to work for free. The Kipsigis labour, goods and animals were bought cheaply while the Kipsigis paid dearly for European goods. Besides, the colonial authorities set the levels of taxes, the rates for labour and prices of goods, and through various economic and political mechanisms they forced the Kipsigis to enter into this economy which was set at their advantage. Therefore, the establishment of colonial rule in the Kipsigis land set in motion an accumulation of debilitating effects which led to the transformation of the Kipsigis pre-colonial economy. Most notable of these effects was the depletion of the Kipsigis livestock, emphasis on maize production to replace *wimbi*, demand for labour and associated hut and poll taxes which were articulated to meet the requirements of colonial economic policies.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁹ Omwoyo, *The Agricultural Changes*, 118.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid, 142.

CHAPTER FOUR

TEA FARMING AND ITS ARTICULATION WITH LOCAL SYSTEMS OF PRODUCTION IN KERICHO, 1924 – 1963.

4.0 Introduction

As argued in the previous chapters, when colonial agriculture was started, it was weakened countrywide by the fluctuations of the international economy and other problems, such as land speculation, shortage of capital, high debts, inefficiency and lack of technical skills, which were all compounded by the ‘irrational’ social aspirations of the white community. The competition from African peasant producers later on and a chronic dependence on the colonial state, rendered settler agriculture largely a failure until the Second World War brought a sustained period of high prices and rapid growth.¹⁹¹ Before the mid-1920s, Kipsigis agriculture had expanded more as a consequence of the people’s initiative and response to the money market than as a result of outright government support. Further penetration of capitalism in the area was slowed by the two world depressions of the early 1920s and early 1930s. These aside, and despite half-hearted government support, there was an expansion of commodity production. This aspect is well illustrated in Kipsigis land by an almost total shift from *wimbi* to maize production.

This chapter traces the origin and establishment of agriculture in Kenya with a biased emphasis on tea farming. It will also attempt to present an analysis of how tea farming has articulated with the socio-economy of the Kipsigis. This chapter will also trace the origin and evolution of the small holder tea subsector in Kenya and give a history of the Kenya Tea Development Authority, a parastatal that is mandated to oversee the

¹⁹¹ Berman, *Control and Crisis*, 131.

tea subsector in Kenya. Finally, the chapter highlights a few case examples of pioneer tea farmers in Kericho.

4.1 A Historic Overview of the Agricultural Sector in Kenya- with special emphasis on Tea

Recorded agricultural development in Kenya can be dated as far back as the 16th Century with food crops spreading to the hinter land following Arab traders' movements into the interior of the country. In the early part of this century, British settlers introduced maize, sisal, tea, coffee, wheat and pyrethrum which are important in the country's agricultural sector.¹⁹² Settler farmers not only lacked capital and worked an insufficient area under crop, but were also 'notoriously unbusiness like', lacked 'ordinary business prudence' and were seldom able to estimate their actual production costs or profits. As a result of a combination of such factors and, in spite of government support, settler agriculture in Kenya remained generally structurally weak before 1939.¹⁹³

The word 'Tea' comes from the Chinese local Amoy dialect word *t'e* pronounced "tay." In Chinese, it becomes *Ch'a* pronounced "chah." The name travelled in this form to Japan, India, Persia and Russia. The Dutch brought the form *t'e* to Europe via Java: the English word pronounced "tay" and later "tee" was derived through the Dutch. The word is not found in the Bible, the works of Shakespeare or any other publication in English previous to the latter half of the 17th century.¹⁹⁴ The cultivation of tea originated in China many centuries ago and spread from there in the 19th

¹⁹² Omwoyo, *The Agricultural Changes*, 158.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ *East African Standard*, 25th October, 1968. 'A Thousand Years of Providing Comfort.' – KNA/BV/128/30

century to East India, Ceylon, Indonesia, Formosa and Japan. Tea is now cultivated in Malaya, Turkey, Iran, Russia, South America, Mauritius and many parts of Africa.¹⁹⁵

Though tea was introduced in Kenya in 1903, commercial farming started around 1924 on settler occupied farms. By around 1925, more tea was imported into the country and import tax imposed on the tea. Imposition of the import tax helped to boost development of the local tea industry. By 1928, locally grown tea had replaced the imported product and surplus was available for export. The 1929/30 world economic recession brought a slump in the expanding tea industry as did other sectors of the economy. Due to shrinkage in the export market, the domestic market grew faster than anticipated.

Tea was first introduced to Kericho District by a District Commissioner in about 1900. He planted a few seeds on the site of the present Home Craft School (Rehabilitation Center) in 1905. The resulting tea tree can be seen to this day in the grounds of the school.¹⁹⁶ However, tea farming was restricted and this was justified by the argument of the colonialists that the tea industry would provide many amenities for its African employees and would have a record in social services, housing and welfare generally. It was also hoped that as time went on, the African workers would realise the value of these services and thus make possible a more stabilised and efficient labour force.¹⁹⁷ It is noted that as was the usual practice in East Africa, housing for resident workers was free. There were free schools for the children of the African employees and an elaborate medical service had been established.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁵ *Tea in Kenya*, the Thanet Press, Great Britain. – KNA/MSS/26/2

¹⁹⁶ Agricultural Gazetteer: *Land Tenure in Kipsigis* – KNA/DC/KER/6/1

¹⁹⁷ Oral Interview, Cheruiyot Arap Mursi, 04/07/2013.

¹⁹⁸ *Tea in Kenya*, the Thanet Press, Great Britain. – KNA/MSS/26/2, 33.

It was not until the end of the First World War, when the restriction on planting was abolished in Africa, that there was any significant increase in the scope of the industry. This was occasioned by both the desire for expansion by established tea companies wishing to invest in Kenya, where the political future appeared to be more stable.¹⁹⁹ Later on in 1923, tea seeds were distributed to two settlers. By 1925, two large tea companies, Brook Bond and Finlay Mure came in and purchased most of the land from the British East African Disabled Officers Corps (BEADOC), and tea was then taken up by several other cultivators in North Kericho and around the Jamji river.²⁰⁰

In 1926, the wettest recorded year hitherto provided the tea companies with the required dampness and a suitable season for their first considerable cultivation, in spite of damaging hailstorms in some areas.²⁰¹ Although devoid of statistics, the DC noted in 1927 that the acreage under tea (and coffee) cultivation had increased considerably with the African Highland Produce Company (AHPC) and Kenya Tea Company beginning to be anxious about power for their factories.²⁰² Already AHPC had started to construct a hydroelectric plant on the Jamji (Chemosit) river for the purpose. After having established themselves in Kericho, the tea companies expanded land under cultivation, increasing the number of factories and their labour force.²⁰³ The DC having been impressed by the progress of these tea companies saw this as an example of what could be done with capital in the hands of those competent to use it.²⁰⁴

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Annual Reports, Kericho District – KNA/DR/KER/1/2, 3.

²⁰¹ Annual Reports, Kericho District – KNA/DR/KER/1/3, 4.

²⁰² Omwoyo, *The Agricultural Changes*, 161.

²⁰³ Oral Interview, Zakayo Yebai, 16/07/2013

²⁰⁴ Omwoyo, *The Agricultural Changes*, 162.

Competition for the domestic market was stiff and by 1931, the Kenya Tea Growers Association (K.T.G.A.) was formed to promote the interests of all persons concerned with the cultivation of tea in Kenya. Soon after, the Associated Tea Growers of East Africa (A.T.G.E.A.) was established to foster the same objectives within the three African countries of Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika (current Tanzania).

The economic slump of the early 1930s equally affected the tea industry. The government levied an excise duty of 10 cents per pound at the end of 1931. Coupled with low prices, the progress of the tea industry was somewhat checked though not totally stopped. Agricultural labour in the tea industry slightly dropped. That notwithstanding, the tea economy was steadily on the rise. In 1933, a restriction scheme was instituted and though it was not legalised, it was nevertheless effectively in force. This restriction scheme was voluntarily effected in order to limit the output from the colony and therefore prevent further falling of tea prices. With such limitation of the output, the tea companies could not extend their acreage under tea cultivation nor could they extend their employment capacity. The tea companies continued to flourish in spite of the limitation of their output and the poor prices obtainable because some bushes planted earlier were starting to bear fruits. A most up to date tea factory, run entirely by electricity at Kitumbe belonging to AHPC, was opened in 1934.²⁰⁵

Before the Second World War, the tea industry was practically monopolised by European efforts in the district.²⁰⁶ Even the prices obtainable for tea continued to rise due to the strict observance of production limits. By this time, the Kenya Tea Growers Association had been formed, among other things, to regulate the tea industry and

²⁰⁵ Ibid, 164.

²⁰⁶ Oral Interview, Zephaniah Kimetto, 05/07/2013.

reinforce the limitations of the output. The KTGA also set export quota for each firm.²⁰⁷

The Colonial government did not allow African peasants to grow cash crops up to 1937 when commercial maize cultivation was liberalized followed by cotton. The major arguments by the colonial government were that the Africans could not effectively control diseases on their farms and this could be a threat to the well-cared-for European settler-owned farms. Arap Boen remembers that “our fathers were not allowed to plant the White man’s crop (tea) because they were told they had “weak” farming skills that cannot handle the crops.”²⁰⁸ Lack of farm labour was also feared including competition with the Europeans for lucrative farming business. However, as earlier noted, not many Kipsigis were engaged in providing labour to the white settlers especially in the tea plantations.²⁰⁹

In the 1920s, after the First World War and with the opening of the large tea estates in Kericho District, a vast market for maize was created and maize producer prices increased rapidly. Kitching clearly observes that in the mid and late 1920s, cultivators in Kericho district began to expand their cropped areas in response to the demand for food crop surpluses. This development occurred in response to the demand of nearby settler farms for maize meal to feed their resident workforce, and thus the area concentrated heavily, indeed almost exclusively, on the cultivation of maize, and to a lesser extent beans. In Kericho, just like the other areas in Kenya, it was ‘European’ white maize which was adopted, and the major factor in the very rapid expansion of the cultivated area from the mid-twenties onwards was the use of the ox-drawn plough. He further states that in the case of the Kipsigis, it was the expansion of the

²⁰⁷ Annual Report: Kericho District (1937) – KNA/DC/KER/1/10, 35.

²⁰⁸ Oral Interview, Francis Arap Boen, 16/07/2013

²⁰⁹ Oral Interview, Obot Arusei Bor, 23/07/2013.

nearby tea estates in Kericho that rapidly expanded the market for maize flour. Belgut location was in fact the earliest growth point of maize production in Kipsigis, and it was here that the first plough was introduced by Arap Bargochat. The probable reason for this is that Belgut was, as one might expect, strategically situated near the Kericho plantations.²¹⁰

Sorrenson notes that consequently, many Kipsigis farmers extended their maize cultivation and begun to fence off their fields in order to stake their claims to land in the increasingly highly populated Reserve.²¹¹ In the 1950s, well before land registration under the Swynnerton Plan had been realised at the national level, practically all land in the Kipsigis Reserve had been individualised and was controlled by male household heads. In this process, more intensive forms of cattle raising had also developed. Communal grazing lands disappeared and the cattle were grazed in fenced fields near the homestead. This resulted in women's labour input in cattle husbandry being increased. However, commoditization of cattle and milk production also meant that women's traditional rights to cattle and milk became insecure. In the early 1960s, the Kipsigis were allowed to keep European cattle breeds which had higher milk yields than local breeds, and the development of dairy farming was taken one step further.²¹²

The two world economic depressions during this period had a lot of effect on settler agriculture. Whereas in the 1920s the problem for settlers had been to extract enough labour from the peasant economy to realise profits from the high prices, in the 1929 depression, the problem was swiftly reversed: how to wind down the settlers'

²¹⁰ Kitching, *Class and Economic*, 50 – 51

²¹¹ Sorensen A. (1988), "Consequences and Potentials of Contract Farming for Women: The Case of Smallholder Tea Production among the Kipsigis in Kenya." CDR Working Papers 88.2, Copenhagen, 5

²¹² Ibid.

enterprises, disemploy labour and tighten belts for a period of adversity. The settlers' response to the depressions of 1920s and 1930s was to turn from the export market to the domestic one and to use political power to compensate for their economic weakness. They pressed even for more state control of marketing and processing and for the creation of monopoly restrictions to protect them from African and other competitions. Their aim was to control the internal market, since the international ones over which they had little control, had collapsed. Such settler institutions as the Kenya Farmers' Association (KFA) and the Kenya Co-operative Creameries (KCC) took the lead in attempting to centralise marketing of each product, enforce high standards and high prices and ensure themselves a profit.²¹³

In 1947, the tea planting restrictions were lifted and as a result, external financing started flowing in and significantly increased the scope of the tea industry in East Africa, Kenya in particular. To help boost the industry, Kiprono states that,

*“scientific research focusing on local conditions was initiated and tea growers agreed to finance the research. The Tea Research Foundation of East Africa, currently Tea Research Foundation of Kenya at Kericho was thus founded in 1951.”*²¹⁴

In 1950, the colonial government initiated peasant tea-growing schemes in the Tribal land units with a view to increasing the number of African cash crops. However, later on, after some years of negotiations, the first tea seed was planted in African areas in June 1955. The first nurseries were situated at Kimulot Settlement Scheme.²¹⁵ C. W. Barwell²¹⁶ notes that the first tea (was) planted out in April 1957²¹⁷ whereby around the same time, certain Kipsigis smallholders were selected to begin tea production by

²¹³ Omwoyo, *The Agricultural Changes*, 168 – 169.

²¹⁴ Oral Interview, Paul K. Kiprono (Socio-Economist, Tea Research Foundation of Kenya - Kericho), 20/07/2013

²¹⁵ Oral Interview, Kipruto Arap Misik (Chematage), 17/07/2013

²¹⁶ C. W. Barwell was the District Agricultural Officer of Kericho between May 1949 and December 1958.

²¹⁷ Agricultural Gazetteer: *Land Tenure in Kipsigis* – KNA/DC/KER/6/1

the Special Crops Development Authority (SCDA) which was established as part of the Swynnerton Plan to promote and supervise cash cropping among smallholders. In 1964 this Authority (SCDA) was transformed into the Kenya Tea Development Authority (KTDA), a parastatal organization with its mandate restricted to tea. The introduction of tea in Kericho District brought new important changes to the lives of both the Kipsigis men and women.²¹⁸ Meanwhile the Tea Board of Kenya was formed under the Department of Agriculture in 1950, and as Marete expounds, with the responsibility to

*“coordinate tea growing aspects in Kenya including licensing tea growing, establishment and maintenance of tea factories and export for tea. Financing of the Tea Board was through annual cess levied on tea factories in Kenya. Tea growing by indigenous Kenyans was then started in high altitude areas on an experimental basis.”*²¹⁹

By 1952, population pressure in African Reserve Areas together with political resentment was so high that after the “Mau” uprising, the government drafted a Rural Development Plan for the land occupied by the “natives” in 1953. In response to this Government Plan, the then Assistant Director of Agriculture, Mr. Rodger Swynnerton, drew up what was later known as the “Swynnerton Plan of 1954.”²²⁰ The plan aimed at intensifying the development of African agriculture over a 15 year period and specified crop acreage to be achieved. Other aspects of the plan included government role on settlement and land tenure systems, extension services, and agricultural research, credit and market facilities such as cooperatives. The Swynnerton plan shaped the small holder agriculture in Kenya to what it is today and the policies are being executed with varying modifications.

²¹⁸ Sorensen, *Consequences and Potentials*, 5.

²¹⁹ Oral Interview, James Marete (Tea Board of Kenya - Kericho), 20/07/2013

²²⁰ Swynnerton, R. J. M. (1954); “A Plan to Intensify the Development of African Agriculture.” Nairobi.

By 1961, a skewed distribution of farm holdings had emerged forcing the government to initiate a resettlement programme on the fertile highland areas occupied by the Colonial Settlers. Legal restrictions of non-European ownership of land within the areas designated for European occupation were abolished thus allowing Africans to purchase formerly European owned land. This was a turnabout from emphasis on large to the small scale sector in Kenya and a birth of the current bi-modal nature of farm size. We thus have the large scale and smallholder agriculture sub-sectors in Kenya.

Upon the adoption of tea farming (and other cash crops), these crops thus became more productive. Maize, for instance, though a less nutritious alternative to the traditional staple food, *wimbi*, which required fresh land with each planting and a great deal of hard labour, was more productive and in itself needed minimal labour. Maize was also a preferred option by the estates' workers and could fetch higher prices in the market compared to *wimbi*.²²¹ Colonial policy granted white settlers more rights to the major cash crop and promoted increased production of maize by the Kipsigis as a source of food for the growing plantation work force since the plantations employed large numbers of people from outside the Kipsigis area. As the plantations grew only tea and no food crops, they had to rely on the Kipsigis for food supplies, which encouraged maize production which was forced upon the Kipsigis by the colonial government.

The shift to maize production from *wimbi* involved large sectors of Kipsigis society in a market economy. As the colonial government hoped, more land came under maize to meet these increased markets and to provide cash for the increasing number of trade goods (maintained at relatively high prices by tariff

²²¹ Oral Interview, Zakayo Yebei, 16/07/2013

regulations). Another cause for increased maize cultivation, less directly a concern of the administration, was to support the rapidly growing population in the reserve.²²² As Colin Leys (1975) has argued, the profitability achieved by the private European mixed farms was made possible only by the legally engineered underdevelopment on the reserves.²²³

4.2 Tea and the Kipsigis Socio-economy

The presence of the tea estates affects the economy of the Kipsigis people in very fundamental ways. This is particularly the case if the tea plantations are regarded as part of the incoming foreign capital. The presence of foreign capital changed lifestyles considerably. For one thing the Kipsigis had to adjust to a market economy and for a long time, this market was in the tea estates. The tea estates from the start had a large labour force yet none of the tea estates produced any food for the labourers. This is the standard case of a mono-crop. As the labourers spent almost all their time working on the tea estates, they did not grow their own food. They, in fact, were not encouraged to do so. The tea companies, therefore, supplied these workers with all the food they needed. This raised the demand for maize and beans in the neighbouring area. The Kipsigis had entered into maize production before the 1920s, and the tea estates provided a ready market for the maize.²²⁴

The involvement in maize production forced the Kipsigis into a money economy from which they never escaped. This was encouraged by the demand for maize in the tea estates. When the Kipsigis became heavily involved in a money economy and when maize production, the principal cash earner in the district then, became inadequate, the Kipsigis sought to engage in the production of tea, for the tea estates seemed

²²² Daniels, *Pastoral Values* 1980

²²³ Leys, C. (1975), *Underdevelopment*, 23.

²²⁴ Kosgei J. Sally, *Commodity Production*, 71.

wealthy. As the government, together with the tea estates, realised attempts by the Kipsigis to grow tea, the question became a government's concern since the Kipsigis were not supposed to grow tea and thus the settlers had to put pressure on the government to control and regulate the Kipsigis farmers.

Also, the Indian merchants who entered Kipsigis country at the same time as colonialism further accentuated this involvement in a monetary economy by bringing goods that the Kipsigis became accustomed to buying and which later totally replaced their own "traditional" products such as clothing, household utensils, tools, and so on. Thus, the desire to have Indian-sold merchandise, together with the need to pay government taxes and other evolving costs such as school fees, forced the Kipsigis to change their economic structure in order to earn money. A large section of the population was growing maize for sale by the mid-1920s, only a decade after its introduction. Many families for a long time lived on *wimbi* while they planted maize for sale. Kosgei notes that some Kipsigis growing up in the 1920s recall that they still ate *wimbi* as the basic cereal while maize was for sale. By the 1930s, however, they recall many more people were substituting maize for *wimbi*. Maize was becoming more popular as a market crop because there was a ready market for it in the tea plantations and on settler farms in the district, or elsewhere. With the introduction of flour mills into the district, it became easier to obtain maize flour than it was to grind *wimbi* into flour in the age-old method of using two stones; hence the shift to maize flour.²²⁵

Maize as a viable source of cash, however, was becoming less promising by the 1930s. One of the reasons for this was that the tea plantation estates' market which had originally provided such an encouragement to the production of maize was

²²⁵ Ibid, 79 – 80.

becoming limited by the 1930s as a result of the involvement of more people in maize production. With the development of tea plantations around Kericho town, a ready market for maize was guaranteed for Kipsigis maize growers. By the 1940s, the Kipsigis were growing more maize than they could sell through the Kenya Farmers Association to the tea plantations and other parts of the country. This caused those who owned donkeys to sell their maize across their borders to Nyanza and to Maasai land.²²⁶ The settler farmers were also in competition with the Kipsigis for the tea estates' maize market. By the late 1940s, therefore, the Kipsigis were clamouring for permission to grow tea and to keep grade cows as alternatives to and alongside maize production in order to cope with the changed economic conditions.

The Kipsigis were interested in growing tea in an effort to improve their economic conditions for a variety of reasons. There were those who were disturbed by the instability of maize prices and by the fact that maize has to be replanted every year and is harvested at the end of about eight to nine months. For these people, tea seemed more economical because, once planted and pruned, it became a "permanent" crop, and also because there was no talk of the market for tea being saturated at that time. The presence of tea plantations in Kericho no doubt influenced the Kipsigis into wanting to plant tea. There were also people in the district who, from a purely nationalistic point of view like many other African people in Kenya, wished to grow those crops they were prevented from growing for racial reasons. Arap Mursi,²²⁷ remembered that

*“when my (his) father came back from the War (Second World War),
he told us that he and his colleagues in the war were sure that they*

²²⁶ Oral Interview, Kipruto Arap Misik (Chematage), 17/07/2013

²²⁷ Cheruiyot Arap Mursi was the son of an ex-soldier of the Second World War and as a result, the Colonial state appointed him as a Paramount Chief in the late years of colonialism.

*were the same with Kiplelchi (white man) and so then we also should be allowed to plant the permanent crop (tea)''*²²⁸

By the 1950s, it was possible to notice on the Kipsigis countryside that some type of social stratification had occurred. The differentiation was observable in terms of how much land one had and the size and quality of one's livestock, which was sometimes translated into how much milk a family produced every day and therefore how much money was made from the milk. An index of one's social standing was also determined by how much maize one was able to sell. The economic divisions between the people were not sharp by the 1950s, but it was true that some people owned more land, had more animals, farmed larger acreages and could afford more consumer goods (such as blankets, clothes, utensils and farm implements) than the other households.²²⁹ Central among these changes was the development of a market-oriented rural group of producers. Not only did the crops grown by rural dwellers change with colonialism in order to meet the market requirements, but the producers themselves became differentiated as they became more involved in the monetary economy ushered in by colonialism.

White settlement in Kericho district on the onset of colonialism caused land to be alienated from the Kipsigis in favour of the settlers. The result was a land shortage for the Kipsigis, especially for the grazing of animals. The shortage of land for individual family use, which by the 1940s had developed into a crisis as evidenced by the numerous court cases by claimants of various land acreages, forced the Kipsigis to enclose land for individual family use in an attempt to overcome the consequences of the shortage of land. Plantation agriculture also caused alienation of land, further aggravating the shortage of land for the Kipsigis.

²²⁸ Oral Interview, Cheruiyot Arap Mursi, 04/07/2013.

²²⁹ Kosgei, J. Sally, *Commodity Production*, 91, 93

Another factor that caused social differentiation was the church. Though it did not give people salaries, the church had an influence on how people organised their production on their farms. The mission station at Litein under Earl Anderson had often been cited as being as much involved in agricultural activities as it was in spiritual matters. A few of the people who went into mission stations learned some trade such as carpentry, but most of them worked on mission farms. What was important was not being taught how to farm, because no major farming skill was taught and people could farm without any of the training that missions might have had. What was important was the attitudes that people acquired through the church. The Christian ethic of "working hard" and being successful was ingrained, and those who took this seriously did manage to advance considerably in the rural economy of Kericho district.²³⁰

A major source of differentiation among the Kipsigis came from the sharing of land. Land in the pre-colonial period was not scarce and was not owned by individuals. With colonialism, however, some land was alienated for European settlement, plantation tea firms, and also as Crown land, all of which cut down on the amount of land available to the Kipsigis. What eventually led to the individualization of land, however, was the growing of maize. There was at first the need to protect the maize crop from the cattle and other animals, so people set up fences around their crops. Most of these fences later became permanent and cut down on grazing land in particular. Arap Misik recalls that

“those who did not enclose land for maize or were away as squatters while this enclosing was taking place were to lose greatly when the enclosed land was legally recognised in the 1940s. Those with abundant land were then able to grow as much maize as they wanted and still keep animals. Those who lost out or had only small pieces of

²³⁰ Ibid, 166.

*land left, had only limited chances of economic mobility through agricultural production.*²³¹

A tiny group, in fact a handful of individuals who got into tea production could be called capitalist farmers if the amount of labour employed is to be used as a yardstick. These people employed up to ten workers and in most cases lived away from their farms working at well-paying jobs elsewhere in the country. While the average tea grower has about one acre of tea, some of these wealthier farmers had about ten or more acres of tea. The employees on these farms tended to work on their own with a super-visor. Their interaction with the employers was limited and there were cases where a manager was employed to run the farm on behalf of the owner. There was one such farm in Koiwa of thirteen acres of tea and another one in Buret with thirty-five acres. This category of farmers belonged to the 1970s. Although it is the tea growers who have mainly been involved in employing labour, it is also true that some others have also employed labour. This has been the case for those who grow large acreages of maize or those who keep dairy cattle of the high-breed stock and who hire labour for milking the cows and distributing the milk.²³²

It is significant to note that tea production arrived in Kipsigis households as a male-owned crop. It was generally understood that the man in the household was owner of the tea farm and that he devoted his energy there while his wife and children did the support work to keep the family alive. The significance lies in the fact that tea was a cash crop only and the money from this crop would naturally go into the control of the man, the owner of the crop.²³³ This trend, set in motion by the introduction of maize and a money-oriented economy that came with colonialism, was strengthened as the society became more market-oriented (in the sense that more household goods were

²³¹ Oral Interview, Kipruto Arap Misik (Chematage), 17/07/2013

²³² Kosgei J. Sally, *Commodity Production*, 167-168.

²³³ Oral Interview, Cheruiyot Arap Mursi, 04/07/2013.

being obtained from the market as opposed to being made at home). Obot Arusei considers that

“for women, this meant dependence on the men folk for almost all of their material goods as men controlled the sources of money for the household. This was a definite change from the pre-colonial and early colonial period when women provided these things for themselves and men had no direct responsibility for how they were obtained or in what quantities.”²³⁴

4.3 Evolution of the Smallholder Tea Subsector in Kericho

Since the late 1930s, the African “natives” relegated to the African Reserve Areas had developed need for income and wanted to grow cash crops just like the colonial settlers. After the formation of the Tea Board of Kenya in 1950, tea growing by the “natives” living in the high altitude areas was introduced on an experimental basis. The pilot projects were initiated in Nyeri and Kericho districts spreading to other areas of Central Province and Kisii. To help in the promotion of the growing and development of tea in those areas, two Statutory Boards were formed each to oversee operations in its region. The Boards were the Central Province African Grown Tea Marketing Board and the Nyanza and Rift Valley Tea Marketing Board.

On 20 January 1964, the Kenya Tea Development Authority (K.T.D.A.) was established under a statutory legislation under Legal Notice No. 42 Section 190 of the Agriculture Act.²³⁵ The enactment charged K.T.D.A. with the statutory responsibility of promoting and fostering the development of tea for the small scale tea growers within specifically scheduled tea growing areas. This subsidiary legislation empowered K.T.D.A. to assist the small scale tea farmers in expanding their holdings through the following goals and objectives:

²³⁴ Oral Interview, Obot Arusei Bor, 23/07/2013.

²³⁵ Republic of Kenya, Laws of Kenya; The Tea Act, Chapter 348. Government Printer, Nairobi.

- a) Manage Tea Extension Programme with the aim of improving the level of management and crop husbandry.
- b) Develop and maintain a Tea In-filling Programme to cover vacancies within the farms.
- c) Increase the area under tea by recruiting more farmers.
- d) Provide tea planting materials.
- e) Collect, purchase and handle green tea.
- f) Process the tea leaf.
- g) Manufacture the tea.
- h) Market the manufactured tea.
- i) Pay the growers after the necessary deductions.
- j) Develop sound technical, financial and managerial infrastructure.²³⁶

Expansive small-holder tea development sector began in the year 1954, after the launching of the Swynnerton Plan. In the beginning, it was referred to as a Pilot Scheme. Among the first districts to have had such schemes developed were Kericho and Nyeri.²³⁷ The pilot scheme was under the Department of Agriculture and was financed by the Government of Kenya through two statutory marketing boards; the Central Province African Grown Tea Marketing Board and the Nyanza and Rift Valley Tea Marketing Board. The Boards were formed each to oversee the operations in its region. The main object for establishing the scheme was to expand the tea industry in Africa. The first factory established to process the small-holder tea, was set up at Ragati in 1957.²³⁸

²³⁶ Tea Research Foundation of Kenya, *Tea*. Vol. 18, No. 2, Dec 1997

²³⁷ *Tea in Kenya*, The Thanet Press, Great Britain. – KNA/MSS/26/2

²³⁸ Political Record Book – KNA/DC/3/1.

A working committee, led by the Commonwealth Development Corporation was set up to survey and investigate the organization of the small holder tea industry in 1959. The Committee submitted proposals which resulted in the formation of a Special Crops Development Authority in 1960, as a Kenya Statutory Board. In 1964, the Special Crops Development Authority was renamed Kenya Tea Development Authority – K.T.D.A. Initially, the Authority was financed by the Commonwealth Development Corporation and the Government of Kenya. It was later financed by the West German Government and an international development association, which was an affiliate to the World Bank.

The Board members of the K.T.D.A. were elected representatives of the tea growers in different tea growing districts, the Government of Kenya, the tea Board of Kenya and the Commonwealth Development Corporation – C.D.C. As days went by, the K.T.D.A. became self-financing commercial organization, without any subsidies.

The area which came under the Authority was subdivided into twelve tea growing districts and each district was taken to be suitable for the tea plant. Any other area outside the demarcation referred to as the tea line, was not permitted to grow the crops and even the areas within the lines were not allowed to plant tea until satisfactory soil tests had been carried out. The Kenya government required small scale farmers to grow subsistence crops as well as one or more cash crops. Tea became one of the major cash crops for them and it was supposed to utilize a fractional part of their land holdings. In 1968, each small holder was allowed to expand his tea garden to an average of one acre, a size considered sufficient to be handled by a family unit without any labour problem.²³⁹ Thus, following these developments, Kericho witnessed a phenomenal growth in small holder tea production which was pioneered

²³⁹ Republic of Kenya, Laws of Kenya; The Tea Act, Chapter 348. Government Printer, Nairobi.

by a handful of Kipsigis farmers like Jonathan Arap Maina of Koiwa, Cheborge Arap Tengecha of Buret and Kipsiwon Arap Torongei of Belgut. These examples of the pioneer Kipsigis tea farmers are discussed in the next section.

4.4 Case Examples of Pioneer Kipsigis Tea Farmers

Few of these individuals who got into tea production could be considered as capitalist farmers owing to the amount of labour they could employ. These people could employ up to ten workers and in most cases, some of them lived away from their farms working at well-paying jobs elsewhere in the country. While the average tea grower had about one acre of tea, some of these wealthier farmers had about ten or more acres of tea.

The employees on these farms tended to work on their own with a *nyapara* (supervisor). Their interaction with the employers was limited and there were cases where a manager was employed to run the farm on behalf of the owner. There was one such farm in Koiwa of thirteen acres of tea which belonged to Mzee Arap Maina. There was also another one in Buret which belonged to Arap Tengecha and yet another in Sosiot which belonged to Mzee Kipsiwon Arap Torongei.

a) Mzee Jonathan Arap Maina of Koiwa - Konoin

Before colonialism, Mzee Jonathan Arap Maina was just any ordinary man who did not own any much land. However, story has it that when colonialists came and had succeeded in bringing the Kipsigis under their rule, the people of every village used to graze their cows communally and men could take daily turns to graze their cattle. One day, when it was Arap Maina's turn to graze, while in the field, one white settler was assessing land for his expansion and met with Arap Maina. The white man, amazed by the size of the herd that Mzee Maina was grazing, thought that he (Arap Maina)

should be a community (village) elder for him to be able to own such a large herd. The white man got interested with Arap Maina and thought he could entice him so that he could get the land from his (Arap Maina's) community. He then proposed to give Arap Maina a job at his farm as a messenger. However, Arap Maina rose to be a cook then a supervisor. Arap Koech recollects that

“with his job, Arap Maina was able to acquire more land but more so with the end of colonialism, Mzee Maina got a larger share of his white employer's land (partially by purchasing and being gifted).”²⁴⁰

Mzee Maina planted tea on his expansive land and thus was one of the Kipsigis pioneer tea farmers with comparatively large tea farms. He was also one of the first people in the Kipsigis land to build a semi-permanent house roofed with iron sheets. (See Plate 1 above and 2 below). He had a compound fenced with a live fence of kay apples. Arap Maina managed to send his children to school and later got government jobs. He also owned a few commercial plots in Kericho town.²⁴¹



Plate 1: Picture of Mzee Jonathan Arap Maina's semi-permanent house built in 1968.

²⁴⁰ Oral Interview, Richard Arap Koech (Makerer), 18/07/2013

²⁴¹ Oral Interview, Ludia Chemosit, 18/07/2013



Plate 2: Picture of Mzee Jonathan Arap Maina's commercial plot in Kericho town.

b) Cheborge Arap Tengecha²⁴² of Kapkatet - Buret

Arap Tengecha was one of the first people in Kipsigis land who embraced Christianity just before the coming of colonialism. He therefore attended mission schools where he acquired elementary education and also assisted the missionaries to penetrate in to Kipsigis land. When colonialists arrived, Arap Tengecha was considered by the colonialists as the best fit 'bridge' between them and the Kipsigis people. As a result then, he was appointed to be a colonial chief.²⁴³ During the colonial period, Arap Tengecha was the paramount chief of Bureti location. He contributed a lot to the modern Kipsigis country, he encouraged the spread of Christianity and formal education.

When Africans were allowed to plant tea and other cash crops on pilot basis, Arap Tengecha was considered to grow tea. Over time, he was able to increase his acreage and held large tracts of land in which he planted tea. He lived in modern stone house and could also afford to employ a few labourers to work on his farm. Having attended

²⁴² Arap Tengecha was a Paramount Chief

²⁴³ Oral Interview, Richard Arap Koech (Makerer), 18/07/2013

mission schools, he knew the essence of education and in fact developed a great passion towards fostering education. He ensured that all his children acquired education. He thus became the elite of the community because of being one of the pioneers of formal education thus set standards for wholistic community transformation.²⁴⁴

Arap Tengecha owned a vast tract of land, and owing to his love for education, he in fact donated part of his land for the establishment of Tengecha Schools (a complex of four school: a boy's high school, a girl's high school, a boy's primary school and girl's primary school) each with a separate playing field and compound, Tengecha medical training college, Kapkatet Sub-County hospital and Kapkatet Stadium.²⁴⁵ (See Plate 3 and 4).



Plate 3: Tengecha boys which Cheborge Arap Tengecha donated land for their establishment.

²⁴⁴ Oral Interview, Ludia Chemosit, 18/07/2013

²⁴⁵ Oral Interview, Arap Chumo (Senior Chief), 12/07/2013



Plate 4: Tengecha girls schools which Cheborge Arap Tengecha donated land for their establishment.

c) Kipsiwon Arap Torongei of Sosiot - Belgut

Unlike Arap Maina and Arap Tengecha, Kipsiwon Arap Torongei did not have any close interactions with the colonialists. This could be attributed to the fact that during Arap Torongei's period, colonialism had fully taken root in the Kipsigis land. Arap Soi recalls that

“he (Arap Torongei) was just a business man who engaged in trading of wimbi. Over time he engaged in the buying and selling of maize grains which he mostly sold to the then emerging tea estates using donkeys as the means of transportation. Through this business, Arap Torongei managed to acquire an ox plough which he could hire out to people to plough their lands.”²⁴⁶

As Kosgei states, the money for buying ploughs was obtained mainly from selling cows, and was sometimes supplemented by money saved from selling maize. Many more people who actually bought ploughs could have afforded to buy ploughs by selling their cattle, but this was a risk many people were unwilling to take, since it was not certain that one could make enough money from selling the maize to replace the cows sold. As many of them also realised, money obtained from selling maize

²⁴⁶ Oral Interview, Joshua Soi (Senior Chef – Waldai), 04/07/2013

could quite easily be used for other necessities without ever replacing the cattle sold. The result was that not many people bought ploughs, but those who did became fairly well-off because they ploughed larger acreages of maize and therefore sold more, and also because they hired out their ploughs to neighbours who paid them.²⁴⁷ He was also able to acquire a grinding mill (*regorego*). (See Plate 5 below).



Plate 5: Picture of Mzee Kipsiwon Arap Torongei's maize granary built in 1973.

4.5 Conclusion

The first encounter of the Kipsigis with plantation tea was not one that the Kipsigis favoured or distinguished from any other government activity of the early years of colonialism in their country. This was largely because the government was alienating land for the tea estates from the Kipsigis in the same way it was alienating their lands for European settlers or for government use. The presence of the tea estates, however, speeded up the involvement of the Kipsigis people in a market economy, first as a market for agricultural products and later as a source of cash. This chapter set out to trace the origin and establishment of tea farming in Kenya and to present a historical trace of the origin and evolution of the Corporate Capital in Kenya, with a specific

²⁴⁷ Kosgey, S., 64

reference to Kericho District. Tea farming in Kenya was initially faced with a lot of challenges especially due to the problems associated with the fact that the incoming farmers lacked agricultural and technical knowledge about farming. Besides knowledge, low interest finance and unskilled labour in large numbers was limited. At the initial stage of tea farming, the activity was restricted to the white settlers and Africans were not allowed to practice tea farming. This was justified by the argument that the tea industry would provide many amenities for its African employees and would have a record in social services, housing and welfare generally. It was also hoped that as time went on, the African workers would realise the value of these services and thus make possible a more stabilised and efficient labour force.

The chapter has attempted to trace the origin and evolution of small holder tea subsector in Kericho, and to provide a history of the Kenya Tea Development Authority, a parastatal that is mandated to oversee the tea subsector in Kenya. It emerged that the Authority was established to promote and foster tea development for the small scale tea growers and assist the small scale tea farmers in expanding their holdings. It also emerged that expansive small-holder tea cultivation began in 1954, after the launch of the Swynnerton Plan.

The introduction of plantation tea into the district which hired many people provided a market for Kipsigis maize producers and also a salary for those Kipsigis people who were able to get jobs on the tea estates. The settlers, together with the plantation tea firms reduced the amount of land available to the Kipsigis and this caused the Kipsigis to cut down on cattle keeping, their only apparent wealth. The presence of the settlers and the tea plantations as employers of labour, further hastened the

transformation of the Kipsigis into a market-oriented economy in the sense that some of the Kipsigis people were able to earn money from these areas.

The development of capitalism in Britain had a two side effect in that on one hand, it led to the destruction of the peasantry because land became enclosed for more intensive farming while on the other hand, peasants were ejected into the emerging industries as a proletariat. In Kericho district, on the other hand, the intrusion of capitalism from outside created a peasantry where there was none and then failed to transform this into a proletariat by the end of the colonial period. The explanations for this lie largely in the nature of colonial capitalism. Colonial capitalism had its roots in an industrialised developed world. For this reason, it sought raw materials and markets in the outside world. Tea plantation firms in Kericho were owned and controlled in Britain. In fact, their important tea marketing took place there. Profits made by these plantations therefore stayed in the mother country and did not return to Kipsigis country for investment in other areas of development. White settler farmers also repatriated surplus to their mother country.

The colony became a market for industrial goods which in the case of Kericho district and the whole country in general were marketed by Indian traders. These goods destroyed possibilities for local production and led to dependence on the industrialised world for manufactured goods. The Kipsigis peasantry became directly connected with inter-national capitalism through its role as a producer of food crops to support the plantation farms, the settler farms and also the colonial state. By being involved in buying commercial goods, the peasantry also became directly involved in the operation of industrial capitalism by buying industrial goods and therefore in repatriating surplus from the colonised economy to the developed world.

In summary, with the coming of a monetarised economy in which men came to control the crops for sale as well as the marketing arrangements, women became dependent upon their husbands. This dependence increased as more household goods and other necessities such as hoes became obtainable only from the marketplace on payment of cash. It is true that by the 1940s, Kipsigis women were selling agricultural goods at the market, but these were usually vegetables that earned very little money compared to what their husbands could earn through the sale of milk, maize and tea in later years. Wage labour also was a male domain and when men participated in migrant labour, which in the case of the Kipsigis took the form of squatter labour, the women took over the burden of getting food for their families at home, and sometimes for those men who were away. The wages of a migrant labourer were not sufficient for his subsistence, especially as his wages were also needed to pay for those household goods that could be obtained only from the market as well as to pay taxes and school fees for the children.

This in itself drives home the point that capitalism in a colonial economy is more exploitative than in a full-fledged capitalist economy: in the latter case, capitalist wages may not be sufficient to pay for the household labour of the wife but they can buy other daily necessities like clothes, food and so on, whereas in colonial capitalism, the wages are so low as to make a salaried labourer unable to pay for his subsistence, let alone that of his family. Instead, the family has to contribute to his upkeep. It may seem uneconomic for the labourer to continue work, but this is understood only by considering the fact that there are so few avenues for getting cash that people would work for low wages just to be able to buy some of the things they need and to pay taxes and school fees. While the economic changes of the colonial period are more fundamental and seem to have affected women in adverse ways, there

are other aspects of life that changed whose positive or negative value in the lives of the Kipsigis is difficult to assess but which do represent a departure from an earlier era.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE EVOLUTION OF THE TEA SUB-SECTOR IN KERICHO, 1963 - 2010

5.0 Introduction

This chapter will attempt to analyse the operations of the MNCs in Kenya and also provide a narrowed down specific study in Kericho. A primary aim of Multi-national Corporations' operations in Kenya, or elsewhere in the world, is the generation of profit for company and its shareholders, however, the government has tried to establish limits on the repatriation of these profits. Furthermore, the presence of such Multi-national Companies has been important in the shaping of the agricultural economy of Kericho District during and after the colonial rule in Kenya. Multi-national Corporations also brings significant advantages to the country of their operations in meeting local competition.

This chapter also looks at the current relationship as to how the post-colonial policies have shaped the various aspects of the Kipsigis economy with specific emphasis on land tenure and use, liberalization of the market, labour organization and finally provide an analysis of the role of cooperatives in the Kipsigis socio-economy.

5.1 Multi-national Corporations in Kenya

In most African countries, the absence of an established landlord class or of other elements in the indigenous population with capital accumulated from other forms of economic activities, tended to leave no alternative but industrialization through the agency of foreign firms.²⁴⁸ Multi-national Corporations' operations in Kenya actually predate the end of World War Two. A few Multi-national Corporations, almost all British, were involved in the Kenyan economy prior to that time. After World War Two, British firms begun to invest directly in manufacturing as import-substitution

²⁴⁸ Leys, *Underdevelopment*, 15.

industries were developed. Through direct investment, mergers and takeover of existing firms, a number of such Multi-national Corporations gained a foothold in Kenya.²⁴⁹ By the end of the 1960s, such foreign firms were strongly entrenched in Kenya's manufacturing. Since Multi-national Corporations have their headquarters abroad, they will desire to repatriate the largest amount of profits possible from their operations in Kenya.

Omwoyo argues that moreover, the presence of such Multi-national Companies was important in the shaping of the agricultural economy of Kericho District during and after colonial rule in Kenya. Multi-national Corporations bring significant advantages to the country of their operations in meeting local competition. These include technological innovation and control, marketing skills, extensive market power and superior management techniques. Not only do these give Multi-national Corporations an advantage, they are also able to carry out certain of their activities at lower cost within the firm rather than through the market. This, and most particularly their managerial experience, gives the Multi-national Corporations a considerable advantage, particularly in a developing nation like Kenya.²⁵⁰

The Multi-national Corporations have continuously amalgamated and consolidated into fewer and fewer oligopolies which controls the export as well as the import trade and fixes the prices not only of the imported commodities but also of the exports produced by Africans. The huge profits that accrues from these activities goes to them and not the Africans.²⁵¹ As Rodney points out, colonialism and its continued influence through foreign capital and investments, has also virtually put a stop to inter-African trade by either discouraging or banning them altogether. This has prevented the

²⁴⁹ Ibid, 385.

²⁵⁰ Omwoyo, *The Agricultural Changes*, 157.

²⁵¹ Boahen, *UNESCO General History*, 171.

strengthening of links and the development of new ones that could have proved of benefit to Africans.

The government however, has tried to establish limits on the repatriation of profits, but the Multi-national Corporations have devised ways of maximizing repatriated profits by ‘hiding’ them. Swainson states that in theory, the government has created mechanisms to control the conditions under which foreign firms invest in Kenya, although in practice multinational firms are able (through patents and technical agreements) to take advantage of their technological monopoly.²⁵² The Multinational Corporations usually do this through the transfer of prices, and the payment by a subsidiary of management and technical fees to the parent companies. Prices are commonly ‘transferred’ by the technique of under-pricing the Multi-national Corporations’ imports thus creating a net flow of funds to the head office.²⁵³

5.1.1 Tea Multi-Nationals in Kericho

Located within Kericho are some of the world’s largest tea estates. The vast, well-tended and lush green tea farms are only interrupted by indigenous and eucalyptus forests, well-marked tarmac roads and paved foot paths. Kericho is home to the Kenya Tea Development Authority and headquarters of Kenya’s large-scale tea farming operations that include Finlay, Williamson and Unilever. It is a region known worldwide for its production of high quality black tea prized for its brightness, appealing colour, brisk flavour and fragrant leaves.

²⁵² Swainson, *The Development*, 17.

²⁵³ Maxon and Ochieng’, *An Economic*, 385.

James Finlay Kenya (JFK)

Established in 1925 and in its early days known as Africa Highlands Produce, the company is now owned by Britain's John Swire & Sons, Ltd. The estate's factories are ISO 22000 certified and produce both green and black tea extracts.

Jane Ndirangu points out that the estate covers over 10,000 hectares and produces over 30 million kilograms of tea annually. It is one of the biggest tea establishments in the White Highlands. Finlays is known for its black and instant teas of which 95 percent is exported, reaching the world markets of North America and Europe via the weekly auctions at the Mombasa tea auctions. The United Kingdom is Kenya's largest European export market at 17 percent with Egypt taking 21 percent. The balance of 5 percent is sold locally in Kenya where tea is taken three times a day beginning at dawn and frequently after the evening meal.²⁵⁴

Unilever Tea Kenya (UTKL)

Unilever Tea Kenya Ltd, a subsidiary of Unilever, an Anglo-Dutch conglomerate, has been involved in the production of tea, mainly for export. It started as Brooke Bond Kenya (BBK). Tom Rutter, then in charge of Brooke Bond in Calcutta, India, during a hunting safari in Kenya in 1914, realised that the country was ideal for tea growing. In 1922 a BBK sales office was opened in Mombasa and in 1924 the company acquired approximately 400 hectares of land at Limuru and also built Mabroukie tea Factory.²⁵⁵

In 1925, Kenya Tea Company Limited registered with a share capital of 1 million. BBK's first major Tea Factory in Kenya was completed at Kerenga in 1927. The

²⁵⁴ Oral Interview, Jane Ndirangu (Manager, Social Responsibility – James Finlay), 11/05/2013

²⁵⁵ Oral Interview, Mr. Mitei (PRO- Corporate and Admin. Manager – Uniliver, Kericho) – 21/07/2013.

1970s saw a major expansion of BBK activities into tea estates, factories and hotels. The name was changed to Unilever Tea Kenya Ltd. (UTKL) in 2004.

Between 1920 and 1939, Brooke Bond controlled all key stages of production, marketing and distribution of Kenyan tea. Between 1947 and 1960, Brooke Bond was able to increase quality and labour productivity by sponsoring research for higher yielding varieties, processing techniques to improve tea quality and introducing new plucking techniques. These advancements were realized at the Tea Research Institute, which was established by the company at Kericho.

Today UTK is one of the largest commercial enterprises in Kenya. Its contribution to the economy as a foreign exchange earner has increased from Kshs. 0.25 million in 1972 to Ksh. 5.5 billion. Its total land holding stands at 16 223 acres. UTK owns 20 tea estates and eight factories manufacturing an average of 32 million kilograms of tea per year.²⁵⁶

5.2 The Interface between MNC Activities and the Socio-economy of Kericho

The independent Kenya has sought to come up with various policies which have influenced and shaped the current relationship between tea farming and the socio-economic status of the farmers. The tea plantation corporations have also attempted to cultivate a harmonious relationship with the people living around their plantations and their economy. According to the respondents interviewed, the corporations have attempted to cultivate this harmonious relationship through the linkages discussed below;

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

5.2.1 Tea farming and the post-colonial economy

Adu A. Boahen argues that a clear assumption exists in the fact that the British, just like other colonizers, went out to the colonies primarily, if not exclusively, to enrich themselves and promote their own interests, and those of their commercial firms, companies and banks. The development of the colonized was none of their business. Their main preoccupation was to create and maintain effective conditions for the ‘orderly’ running of economic activities in the colony which facilitated effective exploitation of colonial resources, both human and material.²⁵⁷

B. A. Ogot and W. R. Ochieng’ further add that the colonial production relations were built within Africa over a span of years, during which the numerous self-sufficient African economies were either destroyed or transformed or subordinated. Their connections one with another were broken. By definition, the colonial economy was an extension of that of the colonizing power.²⁵⁸

Kitching notes that the commercial production of tea introduced some changes into the organization of the Kipsigis agricultural production. Consequently, in those households with little land, concentration on the production of cereals alone by the women cultivators would have produced a considerable risk, or perhaps even a certainty (where land holdings were very small) of failing to meet socially determined subsistence requirements. In this situation, the proportion of directly consumed production was reduced, and land planted to cash crops (tea), and an increased proportion of domestic food requirements (in cereals and legumes) was purchased in the market. However, this movement in the crop mix toward greater dependence on the market for subsistence entailed some risks, including sudden rises in prices of

²⁵⁷ Boahen, *UNESCO General History*, p. 173.

²⁵⁸ Ibid, p. 345.

cereals at times of local or general harvest failure, and the failure of one's own crops.²⁵⁹

Robert Maxon and William Ochieng' stated that, tea was among the most important settler export commodity in Kenya and that the most important producers were the large scale estates (plantations) with British capital. However, small scale settler groups also became involved in the production when it was evident that tea provided wider profit margins than most of the other alternatives.²⁶⁰

At independence, Kenya opted for a strategy of economic growth based on a desire to preserve the links with Western countries and to gain foreign aid and investment. Accordingly, after 1963, Kenya concentrated on growth rather than distribution and opted right from the start for a capitalist development and the expansion of an already developed private economic sector dependent on foreign capital for its growth. The aim of this economic strategy, as W. R. Ochieng' argues, was the achievement of rapid economic growth and a rise in the overall standards of living, but almost at the expense of increasing the levels of inequality between individuals of different socio-economic statuses or classes and between residents of the urban and rural areas. Agriculture was seen as the crucial springboard of Kenya's economic growth.²⁶¹

Even several years after independence, this trend was not changed. Maxon and Ochieng' stated that it (can be) generally accepted that independent Kenya did not effect a major ideological, or structural break with the colonial state and that all she did was to expand the former colonial administrative and economic infrastructures.²⁶²

Kenya's leadership has opted for a clear strategy of economic growth, based on a

²⁵⁹ Kitching, *Class and Economic*, p. 127.

²⁶⁰ Maxon and Ochieng', *An Economic*, p. 120.

²⁶¹ Ochieng' W. R. (1985), *A History of Kenya*. Nairobi, Macmillan Press Limited, p.

²⁶² Maxon and Ochieng', *An Economic*, p. 259.

determination to keep existing ties with the major industrial nations, especially Britain, in order to gain foreign aid and investment and build overseas markets for Kenyan products. Kenya has relied heavily on private ownership and market forces.

The indigenous bourgeoisie in Kenya have used the state to support their investment, first in large scale agriculture and then in manufacturing. The post-colonial state also acted to ensure the conditions of capital reproduction in general by ensuring civil order and pressing the labour movements, which has obviously been to the advantage of both local and foreign capitalists.²⁶³ The extension of internal accumulation has been accompanied by an increased penetration of foreign capital in Kenyan manufacturing sector. As a result, foreign investors and Multi-national Corporations have found their way into the Kenyan economy in a big way and their influence has increased over the years.

Kenya's economy has been established on agriculture and no wonder Bethwell Ogot and William Ochieng' noted that "agriculture was (and still is) the nation's major source of food, foreign exchange, raw materials for domestic industry and development."²⁶⁴ According to Adu A. Boahen, even though agricultural production has come to constitute the main source of income in Kenya generally, no attempts have been made to diversify the agricultural economy of the country. On the contrary, the production of single or a few cash crops has become the rule. Moreover, because of the concentration on and proliferation of cash crop production, farmers have in fact been compelled to ignore the production of food crops for their own consumption. African farmers in most cases, therefore, have been made to produce what they do not

²⁶³ Swainson, *The Development*, 17.

²⁶⁴ Ochieng', *A History of Kenya*, 159.

consume and to consume what they do not produce, a clear evidence of the lopsided and exploitative nature of the colonial economy.²⁶⁵

This heavy dependence of the country's economy on agriculture has a lot of impacts. In his work, Eliud Yegon concludes that on one hand, the plantation economy has actual and potential contributions to the economic endeavour of the host country but on the other hand, it has done more harm than good to the host country.²⁶⁶

The presence of the tea growing companies in the area has played an important role in the stabilization of the general economy of the area. The multiplier effect of the earnings from the tea sector makes the economy of the whole district in general very strong in relation with other districts in the country. In fact, the business community in the area is drawn from all parts of the country and is engaged in trading in different commodities.²⁶⁷ Yegon noted that during the 15th day of every month, when tea labourers get their advance pay and at the end of the month, the people who sell second hand clothes come from as far as Nairobi, about 300 kilometres away to sell their clothes and other commodities.²⁶⁸ The research found that the companies have built shelters and shops to cater for these transactions, thus, strengthening the economy of the area.²⁶⁹

The people living around the tea estates sell their farm produce in the estates. Maize and beans (which is the staple food in the area) are the most frequently sold farm produce. Kitching noted that in the case of the Kipsigis, it was the rapid expansion of the nearby tea estates in Kericho that rapidly expanded the market for maize and

²⁶⁵ Boahen, *UNESCO General History*, p. 174.

²⁶⁶ Yegon, *The Impact*, p. 112.

²⁶⁷ Oral Interview, Paul K. Kiprono (Socio-Economist, Tea Research Foundation of Kenya - Kericho), 20/07/2013.

²⁶⁸ Yegon, *The Impact*, p. 114.

²⁶⁹ Oral Interview, Mr. Mitei (PRO- Corporate and Admin. Manager – Uniliver, Kericho) – 21/07/2013.

maize flour.²⁷⁰ Since the estates would like to have enough stock for the whole year, the management entices the farmers by offering prices slightly higher than the market prices. Farmers then sell their produce to the companies, which in turn store them for later distribution to its workers at subsidized prices. Other farm produce sold in the estates include milk and pineapples.²⁷¹

Taxes from tea are remitted to the districts for development purposes. Indeed tea is subject to produce sale tax, local authority charges, land rates, value added tax, corporate tax and tea board cess. Therefore, since tea is one of the most heavily taxed crops in the country, a lot of money is remitted to the district headquarters for the maintenance of feeder roads in tea growing areas.^{272, 273} This money is calculated on the quantity of the tea produced and is remitted to the local government through the Kenya Tea Growers' Association (KTGA).

5.2.2 Land tenure and use

There had not been major reviews of land policy (in Kenya) since independence. The situation that existed combined colonial land tenure laws with the independence practices in a complex pattern that made it difficult to operate a land policy.²⁷⁴ The Sessional Paper No. 1 of 1986 acknowledged that the sanctity of private land ownership (would) be respected in Kenya. But this could only operate if private land was used in socially responsible and productive ways. On land tenure and use, the Paper further stated that to ensure both food security and adequate export growth, the

²⁷⁰ Kitching, *Class and Economic*, p. 51.

²⁷¹ Oral Interview, Kenneth Talam (Deputy Manager – Kenya Highlands Sacco Ltd, Kericho) – 18/07/2013.

²⁷² Kenya Tea Growers' Association 1999.

²⁷³ Oral Interview, Kenneth Talam (Deputy Manager – Kenya Highlands Sacco Ltd, Kericho) – 18/07/2013.

²⁷⁴ Republic of Kenya (1986), *Sessional Paper No. 1 of 1986 on Economic Management for Renewed Growth*. Nairobi, Government Printer, p. 90 (para 5.79).

limited quantity of land must be used as productively as modern seed technology, complementary inputs and farming methods could make possible. Any short of optimal land use would jeopardize the economic future of the country.²⁷⁵

The Sessional Paper No. 1 of 1986 further identified seven commodities, one of which was tea, (as being) central to achieving the development goals that were established for agriculture. ... tea expansion (was) the foundation for growth of both agricultural incomes and exports. Programmes to expand production of these seven commodities was crucial in ensuring that agricultural income grows at 5 per cent a year to the end of the century. It further notes that, if these seven intensification and expansion programmes do not succeed, there would be no alternative package of investments of similar magnitude that could make Kenya's agriculture prosperous in so short a time. The Paper states that "Kenya can also grow and export substantially more tea than it does. Government's target (was) to almost triple tea exports by the year 2000, through production programmes for smallholder, commercial tea estates and new Government-owned estates on the forest fringes."²⁷⁶

With the above provisions and the land policies adopted in the later years of 1990s, gave the already established (pioneer) tea farmers an upper hand in their farming enterprise. They got the advantage of progressing their farming "empires" and further expanding their acreages through buying of land from the then less established farmers.²⁷⁷ Even a few decades after independence, most of these "empires" continued to progress (even after the initial pioneer farmers had demised) with the management of pioneer's children. The case example of Mzee Tengecha's and Mzee

²⁷⁵ Ibid, p. 89 (para 5.77)

²⁷⁶ Ibid, p. 68 (para 5.16)

²⁷⁷ Oral Interview, Zephaniah Kimetto, 05/07/2013.

Maina's (discussed in Chapter 4) farms continued to expand and even further engaged in businesses and investments. Their families continued to wield power, influence and respect in the community. After independence, their children ascended to higher political and leadership positions. Their grandchildren have become influential and respectable business people in Kericho area and are even key opinion leaders. All these is attributed to the parents who pioneered in farming and thus provide the foundational basis for the prosperity of their families. Their family names are accorded much respect and influence in the Kipsigis community.²⁷⁸

5.2.3 Marketing Policies: Liberalization

Up to early 1990s, the government had full control of the forces of market. A taskforce formed by the Ministry of Agriculture to look into the restructuring of the tea sector, established that smallholder factory companies were protected against 'poaching' of green leaf raw material, through the Kenya Tea Development Authority Order. Rules issued under the Order prohibited any small-holder tea grower from delivering tea leaf to anybody other than to a specified tea factory or to KTDA itself. Further, the Tea Board protected the investment of the small-holder tea growers by declining to license tea factories in areas adequately served by existing tea factories. And where a new tea factory become necessary as a result of expansion of tea growing, the small-holder tea farmers (would) themselves secure finances to construct an additional tea factory.²⁷⁹ By around late 1990s, however, the government seems to be changing its perspective on market controls and thus adopting the strategy of liberalization. This could be attributed to the recommendations by the World Bank on Structural Adjustment Programmes. The process to liberalize the tea industry started

²⁷⁸ Oral Interview, Cheruiyot Arap Mursi, 04/07/2013.

²⁷⁹ Republic of Kenya (June 1998), *The Report of the Taskforce on Liberalization and Restructuring of the Tea Industry in Kenya: Reforms in the Tea Board of Kenya and the Privatization of the Kenya Tea Development Authority*. Nairobi, Government Printer, p. 7 (para 6.3.2)

in 1992 when the Government of Kenya and the World Bank (IDA) signed an agreement under the Public Enterprise Reform Programme; a strategy for liberalizing and restructuring parastatals including KTDA.²⁸⁰

According to Chumba, liberalization entails the removal of rules which governments have traditionally put in place to regulate the activities of state owned firms. Chumba further argues that liberalization, more commonly known as the 'free trade' agenda, sounds reasonable in itself. Much of the language used to describe it portrays the removal of restrictions, barriers and obstacles to free trade as a positive trend.²⁸¹

Prior to liberalization initiatives, the Ministry (of Agriculture) was charged with the role of decision making in agriculture and its functions spanned the entire sector, leaving little, if any, individual entrepreneurial decision making in the hands of farmers, especially for scheduled crops. While this arrangement was useful in those times, with the globalization of economies, it has become necessary to restructure some of the economic sectors with a view to enhancing the private sector involvement.²⁸²

The liberalization of smallholder tea sector in Kenya was carried out with the aim of replacing a vertically integrated production- marketing system of providing services to farmers by a broad system run by different institutions. Structure, Conduct and Performance framework was used to describe the structure of the market after liberalization. The results indicate that

²⁸⁰ Republic of Kenya (March, 1999), *Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1999 on Liberalization and Restructuring of the Tea Industry in Kenya: Reforms in the Tea Board of Kenya and the Privatization of the Kenya Tea Development Authority*. Nairobi, Government Printer, p. 4 (para 4.)

²⁸¹ Chumba J. (2004). *The Effects of Liberalization on the Performance of Tea Industry in Kenya*: Acts Press. Nairobi, Kenya.

²⁸² Republic of Kenya (March, 1999), *Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1999 on Liberalization and Restructuring of the Tea Industry in Kenya: Reforms in the Tea Board of Kenya and the Privatization of the Kenya Tea Development Authority*. Nairobi, Government Printer, p. 3 (para 4.1)

smallholder tea farmers have more channels for their produce after liberalization.²⁸³

Major changes to the policy framework for liberalizing the tea industry were published in Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1999, debated in parliament and gazetted as “The Tea (Amendment) Act, 1999” in January 2000. The Sessional Paper focused on strengthening TBK to control and regulate the industry and on restructuring and privatizing KTDA to give farmers more say in tea collecting, processing and marketing through their tea factories. Under this change, KTDA would continue to carry out management and development for the smallholder while registered tea growers in the area would be able to own factories through shareholding. The shareholders in each factory elects members to form the board of directors to run the factory.²⁸⁴

The plantation corporations links with the surrounding community through the liberalization system whereby small-scale tea farmers can sell their green leaf directly to the Multi-national Corporations or individuals. Here, the buyer (middle man) has no other contractual obligations to farmers once a purchase price has been agreed between them and payment thereof being made.²⁸⁵ This system however, has been viewed as a response to the present on-going liberalization of the economy which incidentally coincides with the farmers’ dire need for an alternative tea marketing system; the liberalization system is in line with the liberalization process of this sub-

²⁸³ Chepngeno W., Sulo T. & Rono P., *Post Liberalization Marketing of Tea Leaf in Kenya: Market Concentration, Price Spread and Conduct Analyses*. Lambert Academic Publishing (2012-06-22)

²⁸⁴ Nyangito, H. O., *Policy and Legal Framework for the Tea Subsector and the Impact of Liberalization in Kenya*. Productive Sector, Division Kenya Institute of Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA) Policy Paper No. 1 November 2000, p. 10

²⁸⁵ Oral Interview, Mr. Mitei (PRO- Corporate and Admin. Manager – Uniliver, Kericho) – 21/07/2013.

sector.²⁸⁶

The liberalization and restructuring of the tea industry began in 1999 with the publication of the government “Sessional Paper and the Tea Amendment Bill” that was discussed in parliament. The documents discussed the role that the government, KTDA, tea factory companies and farmers’ organizations should play in a liberalized economy. They also provided a legal framework for the regulation of the tea industries with an intention of eliminating the constraints inherent in the KTDA operations. Prior to the liberalization, the small-holder tea production, processing and marketing was subject to government controls. These controls were implemented by the KTDA, which was established in 1964 under the Agricultural Act Cap 318 (Sections 190 and 191) and the Tea Act Cap 343.²⁸⁷ Through these Acts therefore, the KTDA had exclusive control and supervision over the provision of planting materials and extension services to the small-holders, provision of fertilizers, inspection and collection of green leaf from farms, quality control, processing and marketing of small-holder tea.²⁸⁸

Apart from being a response to the liberalization process, this link is also a response to the constraining factors that led to stagnation in the productivity levels like the low levels of fertilizer use, poor husbandry practices on farms and poor management of public factories. It might also be attributed to the delays in tea collection at the buying centres, payment problems by KTDA and the continuous squabbles between farmers and the KTDA. Such constraints prompted farmers to look for alternative ways of

²⁸⁶ Oral Interview, Kenneth Talam (Deputy Manager – Kenya Highlands Sacco Ltd, Kericho) – 18/07/2013.

²⁸⁷ The Tea Board of Kenya 1986, p. 96.

²⁸⁸ Oral Interview, James Marete (Tea Board of Kenya - Kericho), 20/07/2013.

marketing their produce.²⁸⁹

Effects of liberalization to farmers is mixed: On the positive end, farmers have been relieved of monopolistic tendencies of KTDA such as unilateral price determination and farmers have had a much bigger say in the management of tea factories. The main advantage of liberalization to farmers is that they are paid immediately instead of by the monthly or semi-annual payments that KTDA makes. However, if the parallel markets are encouraged without clear guidelines on how farmers can be supported, they are likely to lower tea production because they offer the smallholder farmers no input supplies or services. Benefits to farmers are doubtful because of an inadequate regulatory system of trade. Farmers have no bargaining power, leaving them open to predatory pricing and payment arrangements. Also, the system seems to engender theft of green tea leaves from farms especially at night other effects include: Declining bonuses that farmers used to earn.

5.2.4 Labour in Post-Colonial Kericho: Employment

The study found out that most of the management and the supervisors come from the immediate community that comprises of the Kipsigis though this is not the case with the junior employees. In fact, on several occasions the research found out that, the majority of the workers in the senior categories are Kipsigis while the lower jobs in estate are ‘meant’ for other neighbouring communities.²⁹⁰

The workers, both permanent and casual, are entitled to a number of benefits that are provided for by the tea companies. The benefits include free health care provision,

²⁸⁹ Oral Interview, Mr. Mitei (PRO- Corporate and Admin. Manager – Uniliver, Kericho) – 21/07/2013.

²⁹⁰ Oral Interview, Paul K. Kiprono (Socio-Economist, Tea Research Foundation of Kenya - Kericho), 20/07/2013

housing, water, schools for their children and a few workers are allocated small portions of the land where they can grow food crops for their daily sustenance.

On health care, each of the two large tea companies provides clinics or dispensaries in each of their tea estates. These are manned by nurses and medical officers and are equipped to cater for minor illnesses. Each of the companies has a hospital which caters for major illnesses and inpatient care for all their workers. This privilege is extended to both permanent and casual workers, however it discriminates the dependents of casual workers who are charged a fee for use of the benefit.

The companies have built and maintain educational facilities within their estates for workers' dependents. This benefit is non-discriminatory in regard to the employment status of the worker. These companies also provide secondary and university scholarships to students annually who are children of employees and children from the neighbouring communities of Kericho, Bureti and Bomet districts.

The companies provide housing and water to their workers as well. In each of the estates, a section of the land is allocated to the provision of housing for workers and these are known as estate villages. Certain sections are also allocated to the different cadres of employees. In each village, there are communal toilets and bathrooms that are disaggregated according to sex. Unilever for example, provides chlorinated water to estate villages and are working towards improving the sanitation standards in the villages. The companies have provided a community centre in each of the villages which is composed of a shop, butchery, a bar and a large room that is used for meetings. The shops sell an array of groceries from vegetables to cooking oils and are owned by retired workers. The workers are allowed to take groceries and meat from

the butchery and the grocery shop on credit and their expenditure is deducted from their wages.²⁹¹

5.2.5 Role of Cooperatives in Post-Colonial Kericho

The corporations assist the children of the neighbouring communities in the educational endeavours. This is usually done through the apprentice training whereby the pupils who have finished standard eight and form four are taken to various workshops in the estates so that they can be trained on various informal sector activities. Similarly, the top students in the district in their Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) are fully or partly sponsored by the companies in their university education. The companies are also actively involved whenever there is fundraising in aid of any school in the locality.²⁹²

Apart from the above educational assistance, the companies through their affiliated cooperatives, assist the neighbouring community in managing the tea farms owned by various farmers. It is presumably argued that these corporations have found inadequacies in owning large tracts of land in developing countries and have therefore found an alternative way of supplementing their activities through the management assistance. The corporations have taken provision of technical and administrative assistance as viable alternative to subsidize their income.²⁹³

The cooperatives have also been very instrumental in facilitating the provision of agricultural extension services (farmer education), loan facilities and fertilizers to the tea farmers. According to Mr. Talam, the farmers' cooperative societies in the region

²⁹¹ Kirui, J. K., Tirop, H. C. and Rotich, J. K., *Socio-Economic Effects of Liberalization of Small Scale Tea Sector in Kenya: Evidence from Tea Farmers in Konoin District*. Research Journal of Finance and Accounting, Vol. 5, No.24, 2014.

²⁹² Oral Interview, Mr. Mitei (PRO- Corporate and Admin. Manager – Uniliver, Kericho) – 21/07/2013.

²⁹³ Oral Interview, Paul K. Kiprono (Socio-Economist, Tea Research Foundation of Kenya - Kericho), 20/07/2013

have been playing a very crucial role in organizing and undertaking farmer education through field days and sponsoring farmers for trainings. These cooperatives have also been assisting farmers to procure fertilizers and high yielding seedlings needed for improving their production. On the other hand, the savings and credit cooperatives (commonly known as Saccos) have been facilitating the farmers to access financial support through loans for expanding acreages and also for purchasing agricultural implements in their bid to mechanize their farming operations.²⁹⁴

5.3 Conclusion

This chapter set out to analyse the operations of the MNCs in Kenya and also provide a narrowed down specific study in Kericho. The study found out that since Multi-national Corporations have their headquarters abroad, they would desire to repatriate the largest amount of profits possible from their operations in Kenya and any other host country. However, the independence government has tried to establish limits on the repatriation of these profits. It has also sought to establish ways of balancing the operation policies of these Multinationals with the National economic policies.

This chapter also sought to look at the current relationship as to how the post-colonial policies have shaped the various aspects of the Kipsigis economy with specific emphasis on land tenure and use, liberalization of the market, labour organization and finally provide an analysis of the role of cooperatives in the Kipsigis socio-economy. It is evident that the policies on land tenure and use have not undergone much changes since independence and most of what is in place now is a combination of colonial land tenure laws with the independence practices in a complex pattern. However, these policies have continuously acknowledged that the sanctity of private

²⁹⁴ Oral Interview, Kenneth Talam (Deputy Manager – Kenya Highlands Sacco Ltd, Kericho) – 18/07/2013.

land ownership should be respected in Kenya. The government, up to early 1990s, had full control of the forces of market until 1992 when an agreement between the Government of Kenya and the World Bank (IDA) was signed under the Public Enterprise Reform Programme as strategy for liberalizing and restructuring parastatals including KTDA. It has emerged from the chapter that these changes have, to some extent, left the independence government in a position where it does not have much control over land tenure and use.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Summary of Findings

The study set out with an objective to examine the socioeconomic organization of the Kipsigis before the coming of colonialists and the subsequent introduction of tea. It therefore found out that although originally, the Kipsigis were traditionally pastoralists, their organization has however been continuously transformed to living both as farmers and pastoralists.

The Kipsigis occupy three regions of Kericho, Bureti and Bomet and can be divided into three sub-nationalities of Belgut in the north, Bureti in the middle and the Sot/Sotik in the south. However, these three otherwise distinct and separate sub-nationalities gradually and eventually became unified through integration and amalgamation of their cultures and the spread and use of one identifying word; the Kipsigis. The Kipsigis have lived in symbiotic relations with their neighbouring communities though there were frequent frictions. The Kipsigis engaged with their neighbours in various ways including trade and raids. Politically, the Kipsigis did not have any central authority since the man was the head of his homestead while the wife was in charge of her household. The *kokwet* elders were vested with powers of resolving/settling disputes between the members and also regulated land use in the interest of the members. On the other hand, the Kipsigis economy involved the hunting of wild animals and gathering of wild fruits. Their understanding of wild fruits, vegetable and herbs was helpful in supplementing their diets. Crop cultivation, especially of *wimbi* shows how well they were versed with aspects of production. The strength of the Kipsigis pre-colonial economy was, however, animal husbandry which served as the source of milk, meat, blood, bedding and clothing. They were used for

various purposes such as paying fines, dowry and for sacrificial purposes. However, this political and socioeconomic setting was heavily influenced, gradually modified and changed with the coming of colonialism.

The second objective of this study was to assess the origin, evolution and impact of the Multi-National Corporations and plantation agriculture in general on the people of Kericho district. The study found that Multi-national Corporations' operations in Kenya actually predate the end of World War Two. The Corporations have continuously amalgamated and consolidated into fewer and fewer oligopolies which controls the export as well as the import trade and fixes the prices not only of the imported commodities but also of the exports produced by Africans, the huge profits that accrues from these activities goes to them and not the Africans. Tea farming was introduced to Kenya in 1924 and the presence of the tea estates helped in speeding up the involvement of the Kipsigis people in a market economy, first as a market for agricultural products and later as a source of cash since these plantations hired many people thus provided a market for Kipsigis maize producers and also a salary for those Kipsigis people who were able to get jobs on the tea estates. Furthermore, the presence of these companies in the area has played an important role in the stabilization of the general economy of the area. The multiplier effect of the earnings from the tea sector makes the economy of the whole district in general very strong in relation to other districts in the country.

Finally, the third objective of this study was to examine the measures that the tea Multi-National Corporations have put in place to assist the rural community. The study found out that the tea farming enterprise provides employment to the local community – Kipsigis. The corporations also provide educational assistance to the community through apprentice training and also scholarships to the children. Further,

the corporations also assist in managing the tea farms owned by various farmers by providing technical and administrative assistance to these farmers and also assist in facilitating the provision of agricultural extension services (farmer education), loan facilities and fertilizers to the tea farmers.

The study was based the premises that, first, there exists a negative impact of the Multinational Corporations on the community, and second, that the Multinational Corporations have attempted to put in place effective measures to assist the tea farmers. The study found out that the relationship that exists between the Corporations and the residents of Kericho cannot fully be considered as entirely negative since the measures that have been put in place by the Corporations have considerably improved the relationship between the two parties. However, the study holds a view that the Corporations need to do much more to positively impact the life of the community. A closer working relationship between the corporations and the local community especially in the conception stages of the intended measures should be initiated so as to help minimize mistakes such as imposing projects on the people.

6.2 Conclusion

The focus of the study has been the linkages evolving out of the interaction of colonial capitalism (with a bias on tea farming especially the plantations) with the Kipsigis social-economic structures during the colonial period. The study has also examined the changing social-economic relations among the Kipsigis as a result of tea farming. The central concern of the study is that the introduction of tea plantations caused some changes in the Kipsigis social-economic structure. Central among these changes was the development of a market-oriented rural group of producers. Not only did the crops grown by rural dwellers change with the coming of white settler farmers in order to meet the market requirements, but the producers themselves became

differentiated as they became more involved in the monetary economy ushered in by colonialism. During the post-colonial period, the relationship between the Multinational Companies and the neighbouring communities seems to have remained tense. However, over time, these companies have tried to redress these vices by introducing a number of measures.

The study has examined the impact of tea farming among the Kipsigis of Kericho district. It specifically analysed the role of the Multinational Corporations on Kipsigis socio-economic transformation. The study employed underdevelopment/ dependency and articulation of modes of production theories to explain the integration of the Kipsigis in to foreign systems of production when they interacted with Colonial economy through the introduction of foreign crops and goods. Apart from chapter one, the subsequent chapters have shown changes that took place among the Kipsigis when they interacted with Colonialism. Specifically, chapter two undertook an overview of the Kipsigis aspects of the political, economic and social organization during the pre-colonial period. Chapter three focused on the advent of colonial capitalism and its articulation with local systems of production in Kericho and the subsequent response of the Kipsigis. Chapter four focused on the introduction of tea farming and how it affected the local systems of production in the area. Lastly, chapter five focused its concern on how tea farming interacts with and contributes to the present economy of Kericho district.

6.3 Recommendations

Green leaf has to be collected from the farmers and delivered to the factories for processing. It is the organization and implementation of collecting the leaf and delivering it to the factories that has been a major hindrance to the Kenyan small-holder tea subsector. Each factory is responsible for its fleet of vehicles which

transport leaf between buying centres and factories. These factories are equipped to deal with daily vehicle maintenance but have difficulties in keeping all their vehicles on the road due to mechanical problems resulting from the poor state of tea collection roads and difficult terrains. On the other hand, most of the tea roads are loose earth and become soggy, muddy, washed-out and impassable during the rainy seasons. These bad roads hamper green leaf collection and transportation operations. Sometimes, some areas even become inaccessible thus forcing farmers to stop plucking. The effect is that tea overgrows in the farms and thus becomes of poor quality. Plucked tea may also not be collected from the buying centres thus affecting both farmers and factory operations. Factory requirements, such as fuel and spare parts, cannot be delivered on time. All these hamper efficient operations down to the farm level thus affecting extension services as well. The resultant high costs involved reduced farmer income and demoralizes the farmer. KTDA has been trying to maintain roads by use of cess levied on farmers for that purpose. The cess is not adequate and government participation is required to supplement the shortfalls in cess revenue.²⁹⁵

Tea is one of the most heavily taxed crops in the country. This money is calculated on the basis of the quantity of the tea produced and is remitted to the local government and district headquarters for the maintenance of feeder roads and other development purposes in tea growing areas through the Kenya Tea Growers Association. However, it is doubtful whether the money goes to the intended purpose since there are no checks and balances used to ensure that the money is used for the benefits of the farmers and therefore there has been no tangible benefits but instead the money is grossly mismanaged and/or misappropriated with the result that the feeder roads

²⁹⁵ Tea Research Foundation of Kenya, *Tea*. Vol. 18, No. 2, Dec 1997, p -82-83

infrastructure in the small scale tea growing areas have all but collapsed yet it is critical to the supply of green leaves to the tea processing factories.²⁹⁶ This study therefore recommends that checks and balances should be established so as to ensure accountability and reduce misappropriation of these funds.

It is believed that the relationship between the Multinational Companies and the neighbouring communities is always tense. The relationship was dealt a major blow by the systems that were used in labour recruitment during the colonial period. These systems included the *Kipande*, taxation, squatter and the forced labour. However, these companies have tried to redress these vices by introducing a number of measures but the intended outcome of these measures has not yet been fully achieved because people still hold a negative perception about the corporations' intentions. A closer working relationship between the corporations and the local community especially in the conception stages of the intended measures is recommended as a possible means of dealing with this. Such a closer working relationship will help minimize the mistake of imposing projects on the people.²⁹⁷

In 1992, the government published a policy paper on Public Enterprise Reform and Privatization as part of the Structural Adjustment Programme in Kenya. The objective of the reform and privatization policies was to transfer more of the responsibility for production and delivery of goods and services from the public to the private sector and to reduce the demand of public enterprises on the exchequer while achieving greater efficiency in performance through exposure to market forces and competition.²⁹⁸ Liberalization as one of the linkages that have been introduced by the

²⁹⁶ Oral Interview, Kenneth Talam (Deputy Manager – Kenya Highlands Sacco Ltd, Kericho) – 18/07/2013.

²⁹⁷ Oral Interview, James Marete (Tea Board of Kenya - Kericho), 20/07/2013.

²⁹⁸ Tea Research Foundation of Kenya, *Tea*. Vol. 18, No. 2, Dec 1997, p 84

corporations has served the farmers well but on the other hand, has also led to the rise of individuals who act as middle men between the buying companies and the farmers. This has in turn resulted in the exploitation of the farmers since there is no contractual obligation between the two parties (farmers and middlemen) once a purchase price has been agreed on and payment thereof made. Because the middlemen pay the farmers on delivery of their leaves, many families have found it difficult to save the money for future investment. Mzee Cheruiyot Arap Mursi holds the opinion that,

“the companies should come to us and take majani (tea leaves) from here, these chasembo (middle-men) are taking much more than we get yet we are the ones who sweat in the farm all day”²⁹⁹

It is recommended, therefore, that the corporations should start tea-buying centres in the tea growing areas and buy directly from the farmers in order to discourage and reduce the middlemen and enable the farmers to reap maximum benefits from their produce.

The small-holder tea sector managed by KTDA has generally been a success story. The extensive development has been achieved through intensive tea expansion, infilling, provision of fertilizer credit facility, supply of vegetatively propagated materials, programmes and deliberate efforts to attain set targets, and transfer of appropriate technology through extension services. Although fast development could be possible, this has not been achieved as some constraints were encountered, mainly centering on cultural practices of different small-holder communities, land tenure policies, unfavourable weather patterns, labour shortages, and lack of adequate development capital for the small-holders. The KTDA has however, set in motion programmes for future improvement through provision of better extension services,

²⁹⁹ Oral Interview, Cheruiyot Arap Mursi, 04/07/2013.

improved green leaf production and collection, improved tea roads, factory processing capacities, marketing services and green leaf payment methods in liberalized Kenya economy.³⁰⁰

Finally, the susceptibility of the state apparatus to political corruption has tended to contradict the strength of Kenya's controls on foreign capital in the post-colonial period. The government should therefore device various ways of reducing (and eventual eradication of) corruption. Furthermore the Africanisation processes of the foreign capital through jobs and shareholding, which were conceived as measures for controlling the power of foreign capital, has become clear that they have worked primarily to identify the government and the higher civil service more closely with the operations, interests and values of foreign capital. The results have been monopoly profits, high rates of surplus transfer, low increases in employment, and a falling share of wages in national income backed up by tight control over the trade unions. Therefore, legislations should be enacted to help regulate and control the operations and influence of the foreign capital for the benefit of the people of Kenya.

6.4 Suggestions for Further Study

- i) Impact of tea farming on gender equality.
- ii) Impact of tea farming on subsistence production.
- iii) The role of multinational tea companies on the social/ethnic/cultural intermixing.

³⁰⁰ Tea Research Foundation of Kenya, *Tea*. Vol. 18, No. 2, Dec 1997, p 75

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Questionnaire

Part A: Personal Profile:

1) Gender :

Male ☐

Female ☐

2) Age :

3) Marital Status :

Single ☐

Married ☐

Divorced ☐

Widow(er) ☐

4) Level of education attained :

None ☐

Primary ☐

Secondary ☐

Mid-level Colleges ☐

University ☐

5) Number of children you have :

None ☐

1-3 ☐

4-6 ☐

Above 6 ☐

6) Who makes the final decision with regard to the use of the income from tea farming ? ☐

Self

Spouse ☐

Another member of the family (specify) ☐

Part B : Farming Information :

- 7) Alongside tea, which other crops were introduced by Europeans ?
 - i.
 - ii.
 - iii.
 - iv.
 - v.
- 8) What benefits were obtained from the new crops ?
- 9) Who were the first people to grow tea in your area ?
 - i)
 - ii)
 - iii)
 - iv)
 - v)
- 10) When did you start growing tea ?
- 11) What challenges do you face while selling tea ?
 - i.
 - ii.
 - iii.
 - iv.
 - v.
- 12) What kind of assistance do you get from the Multinational Corporations ?
 - i.
 - ii.
 - iii.
 - iv.
 - v.
- 13) What is your perception towards the Multinational Corporations and the tea farming in general ?

14) What measures have these corporations put in place to assist you ?

15) How viable are these measures ?

16) Is there any changed aspect of your life that you could attribute to tea farming?

Yes ☐

No ☐

17) If 'Yes' in 23 above, what changes ?

Appendix II: Interview Questions (Administered to pioneer farmers)

1. Before the introduction of tea and its farming, which crops were grown in this area?
2. What were the responsibilities of **men, women and children** in farming before the introduction of tea ?
3. Alongside tea, which other crops were introduced by Europeans ?
4. What benefits were obtained from the new crops ?
5. Who were the first people to grow tea in your area ?
6. When did you start growing tea ?
7. How was labour acquired during the colonial time ?
8. Which new changes came with independence ?
9. What is your reaction to the changes in post-colonial period ?
10. What challenges do you face while selling tea ?
11. What kind of assistance do you get from the Multinational Corporations ?
12. What is your perception towards the Multinational Corporations and the tea farming in general ?
13. What measures have these corporations put in place to assist you ?
14. How viable are these measures ?
15. Which aspects of your life has changed due to tea farming?

Interview questions (Administered at MNCs)

- 1) Besides tea farming, does the local residents engage in any other commercial activity ?
- 2) How do you think tea farming affect the people's socio-economic life ?
- 3) How do you think the local people perceive your corporation ?
- 4) What social measures/ projects has the corporation put in place to assist the local people ?
- 5) What economic measures/ projects has the corporation put in place to assist the local people ?
- 6) How viable are these projects ?

Appendix III: Research Permit

CONDITIONS

1. You must report to the District Commissioner and the District Education Officer of the area before embarking on your research. Failure to do that may lead to the cancellation of your permit.
2. Government Officers will not be interviewed with-out prior appointment.
3. No questionnaire will be used unless it has been approved.
4. Excavation, filming and collection of biological specimens are subject to further permission from the relevant Government Ministries.
5. You are required to submit at least two(2)/four(4) bound copies of your final report for Kenyans and non-Kenyans respectively.
6. The Government of Kenya reserves the right to modify the conditions of this permit including its cancellation without notice.

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

RESEARCH CLEARANCE PERMIT

GPK605513mt10/2011 (CONDITIONS—see back page)

PAGE 2

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:
Prof/Dr/Mr/Mrs/Ms/Institution
Paulo Kipngetich Koech
 of (Address) **Moi University**
P.O.Box 3900-30100, Eldoret.
 has been permitted to conduct research in

Kericho	Location
Rift Valley	District
	Province

on the topic: **The impact of multinational tea companies on the small scale tea farmers of Kericho District, 1923-1973.**

for a period ending: **31st August, 2013.**

PAGE 3

Research Permit No. NCST/RCD/10/013/18
Date of issue: 24th April, 2013
Fee received: KSH. 1,000



Applicant's Signature

Secretary
National Council for Science & Technology

Appendix IV: Research Authorisation NACOST

REPUBLIC OF KENYA



NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Telephone: 254-020-2213471, 2241349, 254-020-2673550
 Mobile: 0713 788 787 , 0735 404 245
 Fax: 254-020-2213215
 When replying please quote
 secretary@ncst.go.ke

P.O. Box 30623-00100
 NAIROBI-KENYA
 Website: www.ncst.go.ke

Our Ref: **NCST/RCD/10/013/18** Date: **1st July, 2013**

Paulo Kipnetich Koech
 Moi University
 P.O.Box 3900-30100
 Eldoret.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application dated *16th April, 2013* for authority to carry out research on *"The impact of multinational tea companies on the small scale tea farmers of Kericho District, 1923-1973,"* I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Kericho District** for a period ending **31st August, 2013**.

You are advised to report to **the District Commissioner and the District Education Officer, Mombasa District, the Extension Officers, Unilever Kenya and James Finlay Company** before embarking on the research project.

On completion of the research, you are expected to submit **two hard copies and one soft copy in pdf** of the research report/thesis to our office.


DR. M. K. RUGUTT, PhD, HSC.
DEPUTY COUNCIL SECRETARY

Copy to:

The District Commissioner
 The District Education Officer
 The District Agricultural Officer
 Kericho District.

"The National Council for Science and Technology is Committed to the Promotion of Science and Technology for National Development"

Appendix V: Research Authorisation Kericho District Commissioner

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Telegrams:
 Telephone: Kericho 20131/2/4
 When replying please quote
 Ref. No. **L&O 17/5 VOL LIV/310**
 and date



THE DISTRICT COMMISSIONER
 KERICHO DISTRICT
 P.O. Box 19-20200
 KERICHO

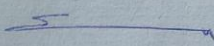
..13TH JUNE..... 13....

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION
PAULO KIPNGETICH KOECH

This is to confirm that the above named student from Moi University has been authorized by the National Council for Science and Technology to carry research on **"The impact of multinational tea companies on small scale farmers of kericho district, 1923-1973."** Kericho County for period ending 31st August, 2013.

Any assistance accorded to him is highly appreciated.


 S. KOSKEI
 FOR: DISTRICT COMMISSIONER
KERICHO

DISTRICT COMMISSIONER
 KERICHO.

CC
 THE DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICER
KERICHO

THE DISTRICT AGRICULTURAL OFFICER
KERICHO DISTRICT.

Appendix VI: Research Authorisation Kericho District Education Officer**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**

FAX NO.05221361
When Replying Please Quote:

District Education Office
P.O BOX 149
KERICHO

REF: KER/ED/300/VOL.I/158.

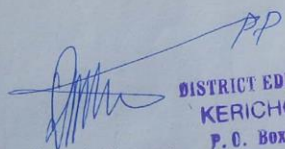
14th June, 2013.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION - PAULO KIPNGETICH KOECH.

The above named has been authorized by National Council for Science and Technology to conduct research on *'The impact of multinational tea companies on the small scale tea farmers of Kericho District, 1923-1973'* for a period ending 31st August 2013.

Any assistance accorded to him will be appreciated.


DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICER
KERICHO DISTRICT
P.O. BOX 149, KERICHO
TEL: 052 21361
Francis Munyeke
District Education Officer
KERICHO DISTRICT.

Appendix VII: Research Authorisation Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries

REPUBLIC OF KENYA



MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, LIVESTOCK AND FISHERIES

Telegraphic Address "MINAG" NAIROBI
 Telex: 22766
 Telephone: 718870/9
 Fax: 718318
 When replying please quote;

KILIMO HOUSE
 CATHEDRAL ROAD
 P.O. Box 30028
 NAIROBI

19th June, 2013

Ref: MOA/INST/6/2/9 VOL II

County Director of Agriculture
 • Kericho County

RE: RESEARCH ACTIVITY FOR PAULO KIPNGETICH KOECH

The above mentioned person is a postgraduate student undertaking masters degree at the Moi University.

He is requesting for assistance from the Ministry to enable them carry out research on **"The impact of multinational tea companies on the small scale tea farmers of Kericho District, 1923 - 1973"**, in Kericho District for a period ending 31st August, 2013.

Attached herein is a copy of Research permit from National Council for Science and Technology for your note.

Kindly offer him any assistance that they may require to enable him undertakes the research in your county.

Mary Kamau, OGW
DIRECTOR: EXTENSION AND TRAINING

Copy to:
 Paulo Kipngetich Koech

STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

ISO 9001:2008 CERTIFIED