

**AGRICULTURAL COMMERCIALISATION, CONTRACT FARMING AND TOBACCO: A STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF TOBACCO CULTIVATION ON EMPLOYMENT TRENDS IN RURAL SIRISIA, BUNGOMA WEST DISTRICT, KENYA, 1975-2005**

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**ABSTRACT:** *Commercial production of tobacco in Kenya has been going on for about a century and since its introduction, its production and use have been issues of great controversy. Tobacco production in Kenya has created a class of growers that have long been ignored by historians. A growing number of scholarly works available on the theme have basically been of scientific and agronomical nature. In a wider context, a lot of literature on social relations on the recent agrarian intensification in Africa does exist, though lack of systematic studies on the relationship between tobacco production and socio-economic impact as well as employment on tobacco farms still remains a yawning gap in the historiography of Kenya. This paper is a focus on a historical examination of tobacco growing peasantry and its impact on employment trends in Sirisia, Bungoma West District of Kenya following concerted efforts by the British American Tobacco Kenya Limited (BAT) to commercialise agricultural production. The study used observation method and interviews in data collection. Archival and documentary sources were also used for secondary data. This study serves a purpose of informing key stakeholders in the government and non-government sectors about the relevant policies to improve rural livelihood in Sirisia and other tobacco producing areas. The study demonstrates the view that the peasant sector occupies a central role in African economic development.*

**KEYWORDS:** History, Socio-Economic, Tobacco Cultivation, Development, Peasantry, Commercial, Employment Trends

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Modern tobacco cultivation for export in Kenya was introduced by BAT in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and from then tobacco became one of the dominant commercial crops. The transformation of the inhabitants (Babukusu) in Sirisia into cultivators went hand in hand with such developments and was one of the chief pre-occupations of the colonial government. The idea of transforming African communities to farmers had been hatched by early colonial anthropologists and was applied extensively in East Africa. Spencer (1984), Kitching (1980), Friedsberg (1987), Kjerland (1995) for example, had proposed and developed such a model.

It is argued in this paper that, the introduction of tobacco production from the mid-1970s in Sirisia succeeded in transforming peasants into producers and in that case employees of the tobacco companies such as the British-American Tobacco (BAT) and Mastermind Tobacco Kenya (MTK). The local producers are therefore part of the complex historical relationship that has existed between the Multinational Companies and the peasantry (Nabudere, 1981).

Sirisia is poor, despite the fact that it has been producing tobacco for Multinational Companies which realise high profits on the international market (KIPPRA, 2001). This phenomenon raises questions about the validity of employment creation and the wider socio-economic effects of tobacco cultivation and its relationship to the poverty situation in Sirisia (Palmer & Parsons, 1883). To understand the process that has led rural cultivators to the current status in this region, there is need for a historical examination of this crop with particular focus on the forces that have coalesced to produce such conditions. This study is thus problematized around the fundamental question of how and why tobacco cultivation in Sirisia has failed to induce the desired socio-economic transformation. The study serves to expand the frontiers of knowledge about the role of Multinational Corporations such as BAT in the socio-economic development of peripheral societies in Africa such as Sirisia.

A number of scholarly works exist about the assessment of the tobacco plant, its history and impact, among them, Babalola (1993), Goodman (1993), Rubert (1997) and Wilbert (1997). The main focus of these works has been on tobacco's origin and its spread from the Western Hemisphere to the rest of the world. These works often note persistent beliefs that the plant was a panacea, especially during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when Europeans became obsessed with it (Murrow, 1994). Some have explored the political debates that the plant engendered as others have centred on its role in indigenous practices, including detailed accounts of the pipes used to smoke it (Wilbert, 1987). Others have linked its use to the spread of psychoactive substances (Scott, 1982). Though other plants have attracted much attention including sugarcane, potatoes, maize, cacao, tea, pyrethrum, coffee and tulips, no other plant has played such a public (and publicly debated) role in the history of the world in the past fifty years than tobacco (Mintz, 1985).

Despite the wealth of material about tobacco, scholars have failed to adequately explore the process by which tobacco became a commodity, its impact on employment trends in rural areas and thus part of world history. Yet, tobacco and mankind have coexisted since prehistoric times (Iain, 2001). As this crop spread, its supposed virtues secured for its great renown. Sages wrote in its favour, poets sang its praise and novelists eulogized it in tales as diviners embodied it in discourses. Spencer writing under its inspiration called it "divine tobacco" (Spencer, 1984), while Wilbert terms it "our holly herb *nicotiana*, ... the smoke of the Gods" and that "it soothes the mind and sobers thought." (Wilbert, 1987). More elaborately, Werner, in a preface to his masterpiece, *Tobaccoland*, says:

I like to regard tobacco both in making it and in smoking it, not only as a sort of fellowship, but as a vast domain of democracy wherein we find gathered people of every class and creed, having, in pipe or plug or cigar or cigarette, a bond of sympathetic understanding and contact and goodfellowship (Werner, 1939).

These accounts describe tobacco as an impetus and very popular crop that soon became manifest in the world, Kenya included. The critical question is: how did this crop acquire modern negative peculiarities? Drawing upon the reported evidence from the history of the crop, Geist holds that, tobacco impacts negatively and blames this on what he calls "Western style of agro-capitalism" (Lohnert & Geist, 1999).

Proponents of the surplus approach and modernization stress the positive effects that the production of commodities such as tobacco had on rural Africa (Palmer & Parsons,

1984). Underdevelopment theorists and some Marxist scholars have come to a radically different conclusion (Nabudere, 1979). They emphasize that tobacco was an uncertain and unremunerative crop whose labour demand often made it incompatible with the effort invested by growers (Valentine et al., 1990). However, proponents of the tobacco industry have argued and continue to argue generally that, tobacco makes an important contribution to tobacco-producing countries through export earnings, tax revenue and employment creation (Aliro, 1993).

It is also argued that, because of its high labour requirements, tobacco boosts local tobacco-growing economies by helping to stem rural to urban under-employment, unemployment and the influx of people from rural to urban areas (Nabudere, 1996). It alleviates the social and economic problems associated with surplus rural labour by providing gainful employment to peasant growers (Muhereza, 1995). Kweyu (1997) argues that, there is no comparable replacement for tobacco in developing nation's agricultural programmes, since in many countries, the rural prosperity created by tobacco helps prevent the drift back to subsistence farming and the movement of the population to urban areas.... it complements and benefits food production. Such arguments posit tobacco growing as contributing greatly towards the 'modernisation' of the rural countryside and leave no room to contrary points of view (Aliro, 1993).

The growing concern has been expressed a lot not only in respect to the health hazards associated with the consumption of tobacco, but also with the environmental impact of its production (Khaoya, 1992). Although tobacco production creates employment and generate foreign exchange, these benefits seem outweighed by the negative effects the crop has on the economy of the various tobacco growing households (ibid). This dilemma is particularly evident in Kenya.

The study focused on the history of men and women to whom tobacco was important for their existence as small-scale contract producers for tobacco companies (Otieno, 1998). Thus, the tobacco industry in Sirisia provided an ideal case study in exploring issues related to labour organization (Otele, 2010). It was considered that as an agribusiness, tobacco cultivation in Sirisia far from being the solution only exacerbated the social inequalities that are the real causes of hunger and dependency (Burbach & Flynn, 2006).

The integration of a peasantry into the international capitalist system through commercialization of agriculture such as tobacco production has occupied the scientific interest of a number of scholars (Chilote, 1984). The works of Mynt (1965) Levin (1960) Forbes (1984) Bryson (1981) Babalola (1994) Muhereza (1995) Aliro, (1993) and Otieno (1998) for example, represent attempts by social scientists to come to grips with the issue through an analysis of the impact of the tobacco production system on African agriculture. These scholars hold the view that, Commercial tobacco production had a negative impact on African agriculture. Otieno and Aliro for instance, envisage that, apart from the shift to commercial tobacco production by the peasantry, tobacco production led to a decline in African agriculture and environmental degradation. The expansion of capitalism within this framework was thus based in part, on the transformation of subsistence agriculture into agricultural production for export (Little, P.D. & Watts, 1994). This intricately fused the precapitalist mode of production and capitalist system altering African agriculture.

Contemporary views on the genesis of rural impoverishment in Africa, diverge in to two standpoints. The traditional arguments attribute the problem of rural impoverishment to the view that indigenous African socio-economic structures were resilient and conservative, and therefore cannot spur development (Makana, 2006). Goran Hyden (1976) and James Scott (1976) are the main exponents of this school of thought. According to this view, problems of rural backwardness in Africa was due to the infusion of capital that has hardly been pervasive enough to overcome resistance from pre-capitalist socio-economic structures. That is why Hyden in reference to Tanzania notes that, the cohesiveness of indigenous society there engendered what he calls an “economy of affection”, (Hyden, 1976: 18) extremely repulsive both to the market and state initiatives. Hyden holds the view that, even during the colonial period, capital and state policies had a very limited impact on rural agrarian economies in Africa. As Hyden points out, the colonial state was unable to capture the peasants wholly. (Hyden, 1976: 18). In his own words, “capitalism fails to break down the pre-capitalist barriers that still exist in Third World Countries.” (Hyden, 1976) This gives peasants an exit option that empowers them to resist efforts to subordinate their economic activities to the market.

Similarly, the views held by Hyden are shared by James Scott, who analyses peasant societies in South East Asia (Burma and Vietnam). Scott while writing on South East Asia, he employs the theoretical framework of a moral economy and gives a slightly different view. He contends that, peasant behaviour is always conditioned by a subsistence ethic, which may render peasant societies resistant to innovation and change. (Ibid, Scot) In regard to subsistence, he directly attributes food shortage to commercial agriculture, noting that once food had become a commodity that could be sold, the idea of sharing it with those who had not produced enough became less acceptable. After many disruptions caused by famines, colonial abuses, labour migration and penetration of the cash economy into everyday life, different families no longer felt responsible for each other. Therefore, it is generally believed that the ethic of fair sharing of harvests in peasant societies is superior to capitalist policies that induce peasants to grow food for market sale. This is to say that, peasants will expend enough labour to achieve food security because the food that is sold is not available for fair sharing with hungry households. Scott also analyses the feudal type of exploitation that prevailed as a result of commercial agriculture. He observes that, the growth of bureaucratic states intervened in peasant economies to undermine the subsistence ethic (Ibid). What Scott avers always manifests itself in rural Kenya, Sirisia in particular where the BAT uses this type of relationships in production that greatly increases the exploitations of peasants. The findings of the works by Hyden and Scott are significant to this study as they shed light on the variables influencing peasant household receptivity to agrarian change and innovation.

The second interpretation on indigenous agrarian societies addresses the inherent weaknesses in the works of moral economists. This encompassed the works of Polly Hill, (1977) Paul Richards, (1983) Robert Chambers, (1983), Susan George, (1976: 66), Mishambi (1978: 55) among others. In contrast to Goran Hyden’s thesis, these authors opine that peasants are positively responsive to economic incentives.

Polly Hill’s work for instance, focuses on enterprising Ghanaian migrant cocoa farmers who voluntarily and zealously took up the cultivation of coffee. This leads Hill to observe that cocoa farming was primarily the result of the voluntary response of thousands of African farmers to

price incentives and not of initiatives of the colonial government, or the European cocoa buying firms, whose roles were essentially enabling ones. This view is further emphasized by Akinwumi A. Adesina & Baido Farson (1995) who observe that commercialization of agriculture presented opportunities for peasants to improve their welfare. While writing on the peasantry in Burkina Faso and Guinea, the two authors argue that, peasants continuously strive not just to protect but to raise their subsistence level through both long and short-term investments (Ibid).

Paul Richards and Robert Chambers on the other hand, argue that, as long as state interventionist efforts take local skills and initiatives into account, peasants adequately adapt to market demands for export crops. In reference to the state of complementarity between rural people's knowledge and modern scientific knowledge, Chambers contends that, innovations which farmers can manage, and which they find are good spread very rapidly indeed through innumerable personal trials. According to Susan George (1976: 66) peasants are compelled to produce cash crops, and therefore spent most of their time and labour on cash crop production. This is contrary to Hyden and Scott's thesis. For this school of thought, the infusion of capital expropriated the surplus value from the rural areas, inhibiting rural progress and transformation (Konings, 2012). Collectively, these authors therefore fault Hyden's hypothesis and present invaluable evidence of positive peasant response to economic incentives. Their insights are valuable in analysing and interpreting peasant behaviour against a background of increased BAT incentives to draw them into tobacco production as occurred in Sirisia, in the period 1975-2005.

Yet notwithstanding this divergence in opinion, the fact persists that knowledge as to how to bring about meaningful development and transformation of Africa's rural areas is still very limited (Konings, 2011). Approaches to rural development are general and fail to prescribe solutions to local problems. They also tend to grossly neglect the net impact of colonialism. This misses the fact that contemporary economic problems in Africa have deep historical roots that can only be examined through an approach that takes cognizance of their colonial antecedents (Amin, 1974). This study is a critique, on the conceptualization of African peasants. This critique aims at exposing the systematic limitations of existing knowledge, and to transcend those limitations as a necessary aspect of transforming social reality itself. That is why Makana (2006) observes, that, the fundamental weakness that has bedeviled economic development efforts in Africa has been the dearth of serious governmental and institutional intervention to transform the peasant sector.

The studies that have closest affinity to this study are those by Hyden and Hill. Writing about very different contexts, the two scholars reached different conclusions. Hyden holds the view that in the encounter between pre-capitalism and capitalism, the latter failed to breakdown the pre-capitalist mode barriers. As a consequence, the peasantry remained an uncaptured lot. This, he believes, was due to the resistance of what he refers to as the 'economy of affection.' But Hill sees the reverse as true. Using these sources, the present study sought to find out the real situation obtaining in Sirisia. Their insights are valuable in analysing and interpreting peasant response to BAT incentives to draw them into the orbit of capitalism through tobacco production in the period 1975-2005.

In the Third World, peasants are made to produce cash crops using their labour and traditional tools (Lenin, 1956). This necessitates most of their time and labour to be spent on cash crop production rather than food crop production. This then puts the peasant on what George (1976) calls the receiving end of the marketing and transport channels of his products and the consumer goods he requires but what Chambers terms the deprivation trap (Chambers, *Rural Development*, 1983). Under these circumstances, therefore, where the peasant has no control over what he produces and what he requires, he is bound to be the loser. George (1976) thus, notes that, peasants growing cash crops are bound to suffer, especially if they concentrate all their efforts on cash crop production. Mishambi, (1978) following scholars like Lenin, points out that the capitalist relations of production killed self-sufficiency systems practiced before capitalism penetrated communal societies. Thus, the peasant can no longer produce all he needs for subsistence, and so has to go to the market for the items he cannot produce (Mishambi, 1978). Lenin, (1956) argues that, within a capitalist system, peasants are ultimately divorced from their means of production Commercialization of peasant agriculture on the part of peasants expresses the exploitative nature of capitalist relations of production. This argument is better elaborated by (Mapolu, 1989).

Summing up the issue of exploitation and domination of the African peasant by the capitalist mode of production, Shivji (1975) contends that, the African peasant is not an independent producer but a typical petty commodity producer. He is in fact dominated and exploited by the capitalist mode of production. The progressive integration into the cash economy, resulting not only in the creation of larger commercial farms, but also, probably even more important, in the transformation of small self-sufficient cultivators into increasingly market oriented farmers is one of the most striking changes in Eastern African agriculture during the last century. As to how the peasantry emerges and develops, Feder (1974) argues that, it is when commodity production has been internationalized and reached a level where basic elements for the reproduction of the family are socialized into the market. According to Feder, the introduction of commercial agriculture in the Third World set in motion the growth of social differentiation and cemented existing class contradictions. Generally, the role played by capitalism in bringing about miseries on the peasant's life should not be ignored. This is in line with Kjekshus' (Helge, 1977) argument that, the subsistence nature of peasant agriculture should not mean that there was no surplus produced. Kjekshus (Ibid) argues further that, an important feature of the traditional market was its lack of the middlemen element. This was destroyed with the establishment of capitalism; an issue that is well discussed later in this paper.

### **Need to Understand the Tobacco Labour System**

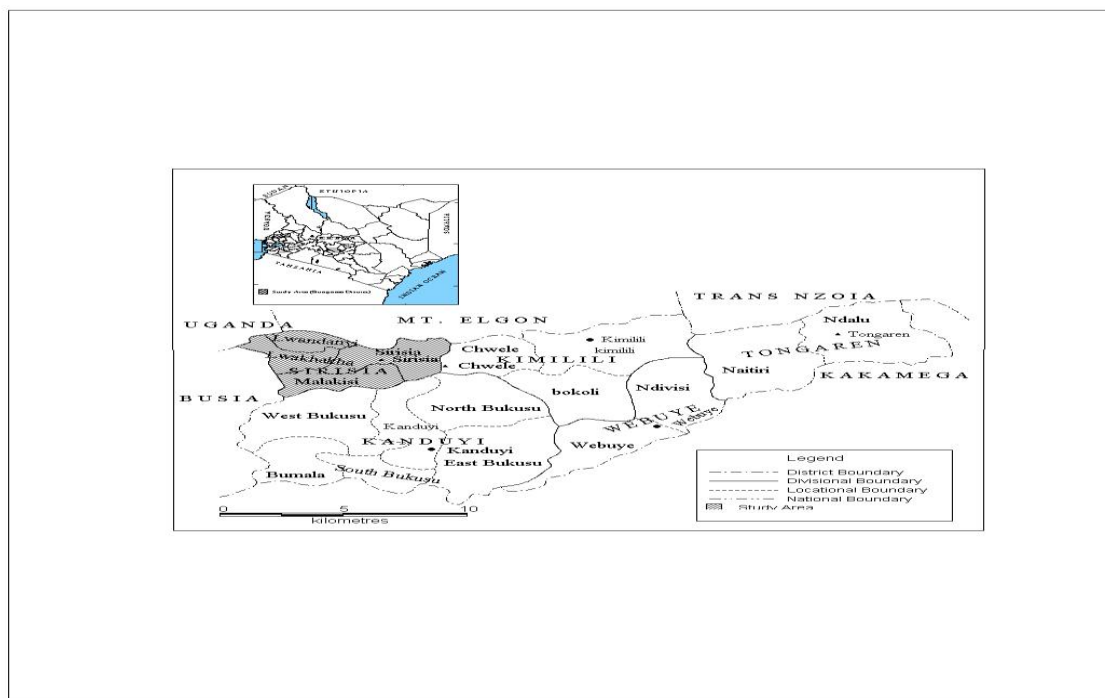
A lot of literature has emerged and the issue of agricultural labour is presently a central theme in Kenyan history. However a study on labour in the tobacco industry and more specifically the history of employment trends in Kenya's rural areas has been one of the most neglected yet interesting fields of research. Agricultural labour in the tobacco farms in Sirisia has not been properly studied. Earlier works dealt with labour on European farms and towns, ignoring labour dynamics in the tobacco growing peasantry in rural areas such as Sirisia. Early studies are generalised works hence scholars need to study at micro level and present a systematic analysis. The socio-economic processes as pertains to an agrarian labour force in the tobacco farms in Sirisia is lacking in documentation. Not only is it important to focus attention on employment trends in the tobacco industry in Sirisia, but the period upon which the research centres represents an important epoch in Kenya's Sirisia Society.

This paper is an exploration of a still largely unmapped area of recent Kenyan social and economic history. It deals with the emergence of a wage labour force in response to the economic changes brought about by establishment of commercial tobacco farming by BAT Company in rural Sirisia. The author also investigates the factors that led to the emergence of wage labour, the changes it underwent in response to BAT policy and farmers' adaptation and the impact on tobacco farming households.

The paper attempts to answer the following questions: What were the influences of the tobacco production system on African agriculture?, What interrelationships existed between the pre-capitalist mode of production and the capitalist system in African economic systems?, What was the nature and extent of the impact of this relationship on the development of the tobacco farming villages?, Are peasants inherently conservative or are they rational actors in the face of economic incentives?, How did the relationships between the growth of tobacco and the socio-economic welfare of the rural cultivators lead to the emergence of wage employment?, What have been the general trends in employment after the establishment of the tobacco industry in Sirisia?

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

Sirisia is part of the Bungoma-Busia tobacco growing region and is located between longitudes 34°E and 35°E and the latitudes 0° and 10°N 9' (Figure 1). Sirisia is located in Bungoma West District, one of the administrative districts of Western Province of Kenya. The area has a high human population. This is attributed to conventionally rain fed agriculture practiced in this region. The soils are rich and suitable for mixed farming except in some parts like Chebukutumi, Bisunu, Butonge, Namutokholo, Yabeko, Kabuchai and Chongoi whose soils are underlain by hardpans (Republic of Kenya, 2001).



**Figure 1: Study Area**

Primary sources were sought through oral narratives" in form of field interviews and eye witness accounts or observations of tobacco growers, and BAT Officials. By use of simple question guidelines, the informants were allowed to talk freely after introduction of the topic. To supplement this, archival sources were sought from the Kenya National Archives in Nairobi and Kisumu. More data was obtained from the past Ministry of Agriculture Reports, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Reports, Ministry of Finance and Planning Economic Reviews and Statistical Abstracts, Development Plans and British-American Tobacco (BAT) Annual Reports found at the BAT Headquarters and Malakisi Record office and publications and Maize and Produce Board (National Cereals and Produce Board as it is known today) and Annual Reports. Other Secondary sources included books, Journals, Newspapers, Magazines, articles, unpublished theses, seminar papers and periodicals. In addition, two tobacco online resource sites were used in this study.

LegacyTobaccoDocumentsOnlineLibraryfoundat<http://legacy.library.ucsf.edu/> was a digital library of internal tobacco industry documents from the files of top tobacco companies. Secondly, the Guildford-British American Tobacco Documents found at <http://www.lshstm.ac.uk/cgch/tobacco/index.html> which contain approximately 7,000 documents, obtained during Minnesota litigation-State of Minnesota vs Philip Morris Company.

The population sampling frame included men and women from which informants were selected based on age, gender, and past tobacco farming, for interview in Sirisia, Bungoma West District.

## DISCUSSIONS

This paper has examined the background to the tobacco industry and its impact on employment trends in Sirisia Bungoma West district. The study demonstrates the view that the peasant sector occupies a central role in African economic development. Through a critique of the literature on peasant societies in Africa, the study has exposed major ways in which the potential of the peasant sector has been diminished through both misrepresentation and misinterpretation. It is evident that peasant societies across Africa are quite innovative and adaptable to new opportunities. That is why Makana (1994) advances the argument that African peasant households are dynamic and adaptable to agrarian innovations granted that they are adequately sensitized to the fact that such innovations will contribute to their economic well-being.

Generally, studies on tobacco production and its impact on labour and employment in other parts of the world are numerous. The subject is either treated in works devoted to it solely or as part of some wider study; for example, the works of Baud(1995), Stubbs,(1985), Wilbert (1987), Muhereza(1995)and Geist (1999). Of greater relevance was Stubbs'discussion on the history of tobacco production in Cuba. Stubbs contends that, the "international cartels" ruined the Cuban economy (Ibid)and illustrates various points in which the tobacco cartels used to exploit the Cuban peasantry. The literature was useful to this study, particularly when analysing the implication of international forces on local tobacco production. It challenges notions about the incompatibility of small-scale peasant production and capitalist markets, demonstrating that from the late 1800s through the early twentieth century, peasant-controlled tobacco agriculture in Cuba was the mainstay of the export economy. Stubbs draws on rich archival research and anthropological fieldwork in the exploration of factors such as family organization of tobacco production and the importance of patron-client relations.



For a long time therefore, scholars have dealt with the phenomenon of cash cropping and its impact on society. They have analysed why and how subsistence producers shifted to cash crops, and how the market economy has impacted on the life of the peasants. Yet they have not adequately explained why cash cropping has failed to transform the peasant society in any significant way. The effort to understand these issues have been undermined by reliance on specific theoretical models. Secondly, while focusing too much on particular periods and specific social groups, these scholars have paid little attention to the problem of capital formation through agricultural commercialization, contract farming and tobacco as well as its impact on the rural economies. It was, therefore, imperative to study the peasantry and the current agrarian crisis in this perspective.

## CONCLUSION

This study has been a historical examination of the impact of tobacco cultivation on employment trends through labour provision among a tobacco growing peasantry in Sirisia, Bungoma West District of Western Kenya, 1975-2005. The study examines the history of men and women for whom tobacco became an important part of their existence as small-scale agricultural contract producers for the BAT and other successive tobacco companies. The companies' oligolitic structures as observed transformed a once self-sufficient people with a vibrant agricultural based economy into tobacco leaf producers for the international market. Today, Sirisia inhabitants are in a state of perpetual crisis having been transformed by powerful forces of an international conglomerate in the course of few decades, from self-sufficient and haughty independent-minded community, into poverty-stricken famine relief clients.

Further, we argued that, the promotion of tobacco has had no drastic shift in Sirisia social relations. Tobacco was grown almost entirely by women, and the agricultural system was such that the demands of labour were even throughout the year. The provision of sufficient food for the family was, and still, is seen as women's responsibility. Tobacco engendered a new perception of life as it has taken a centre stage in employment creation and indirectly brought stratification in that women were subordinated with it. Tobacco agriculture was essentially a family affair not only because the labour demands of the crop made it possible, but the BAT policy also demanded that the crop had to be cultivated under the supervision of a male head of a household. In this case, the male head of the family was in charge of its organisation, but all family members were actively involved in agricultural labour. That is to say tobacco growing in a family led to creation of employment to every member of a family.

The study demonstrates the view that, the peasant sector occupies a central role in African economic development. In the preceding discussion, an attempt has been made to give an account of the developmental effect of the tobacco growth on the Kenyan countryside. It has also been noted that, tobacco did indeed create employment among the tobacco growing peasantry as no other crop is as labour intensive as tobacco. In general, our analysis has suggested that although the tobacco industry made a considerable economic contribution to the Kenyan economy, other factors inherent in the Sirisia tobacco system hindered a rapid sustained development. Among the obstacles to development were the cheap labour policies of the tobacco firm (BAT) and its tendency to distort the production process of peasant agriculture.

Their involvement in tobacco growing has, however, brought them more poverty than it has helped overcome. This has been due to the nature of the production process where the farmers are tied through the contract which they sign with BAT. Its reluctance to tolerate the emergence of tobacco producers' cooperative societies is indicative of its unwillingness to accept challenges to its control over producers. In the end tobacco growers accumulate a lot of debts. The growers enter tobacco growing with a hoe and come out with a hoe.

Measures geared towards improving the condition of the tobacco growers will, therefore, require concerted efforts to organize farmers in form of producer cooperatives. Farmers are sometimes cheated because they are illiterate. Children do not attend school because they are required by their parents to tend tobacco fields and because of poverty. The government has an obligation to improve social services and infrastructural facilities in the tobacco growing areas, since it is the peasant tobacco growers who make it possible for the treasury to realize a significant amount of revenue. State policies emerge in Maxon's (1992) analysis as decisive in pushing peasants along the path of the agrarian revolution through the adoption of high value cash crops (267). In the same vein, state policies are identified by Kitching (1980) as quite pivotal in directing the expansion of agriculture in Kenya particularly in the wake of the agricultural extension, and the extension of the market (101-104). It illuminates the inter-connection between politics and economic destiny in Africa (Mkandawire, 1987.3)

## RECOMMENDATIONS

A study on tobacco and its impact on employment trends in Sirisia varied from one household to another depending on the economic status of the family and cultural expectations. To this end, the study notes that, the fight against tobacco labour provision is a fight against poverty hunger and ignorance. To achieve this goal requires a bottom up approach that would address the identified factors which necessitates tobacco growth. The bottom up approach should help answer the question; How can a local tobacco grower for instance be assured of at least a descent one meal a day? And how are the very poor in Society be assisted to reduce impacts of chronic poverty? How can tobacco labour provision be made commensurate with the returns from the sales? Is tobacco cultivation viable and does it generate worthwhile employment? Participants of the local community should assist in forging a common agenda against labour exploitation in tobacco industry. Based on this study, it is recommended as follows;

That, agribusiness in Kenya should come up with policy on labour. Agribusiness such as British American Tobacco (BAT) recognise women and child labour under corporate social responsibility (CRS) which entails many activities. As key stakeholders, agribusiness should partner with tobacco firms to come up appropriate strategies to curb child labour.

Secondly, the government through the ministry of labour and human resource development (MLHRD) should expediate the formulation of a national policy labour and specifically on child labour (NPCL) as required by the ILO convention No. 183 to set the minimum age.

Further the study found that tobacco is grown not because of benefits but attachment created by the unpalatable contract system and debt bondage. Thus, tobacco growers are bound to the production of tobacco for Multinationals engineering poverty, food insecurity and a general environmental destruction. Conclusively, key stakeholders in the government and non-government sectors should consider reinstating relevant policies to improve the livelihood of the people in tobacco producing areas.

Even though the essential conditions of any historical experience can never exactly be replicated, the past can provide guidance in the determination of development schemes, programmes and policies for the future. Moreover, the study aimed at filling the gap that existed in the labour and agricultural historiography of Kenya, apart from adding to the literature on tobacco farming. On the other hand, the principal value of this research was to document and provide historical analysis which explores a range of issues impinging on tobacco production for over a thirty-year period with the purpose of informing key stakeholders in the government and non-government sectors about the relevant policies to improve the livelihood of the people in the area under study.

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