# A HISTORICAL STUDY OF THE ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION OF THE SAMBURU OF NORTH-CENTRAL KENYA, 1909 - 1963

BY

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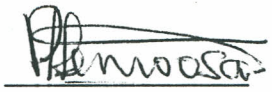
## DECLARATION

THIS THESIS IS MY ORIGINAL WORK AND HAS NOT BEEN PRESENTED FOR A DEGREE IN ANY OTHER UNIVERSITY



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THIS THESIS HAS BEEN SUBMITTED WITH MY APPROVAL AS UNIVERSITY SUPERVISOR

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**DEDICATION**

TO MY MOTHER
AND
MY LATE FATHER

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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## ABSTRACT

The Samburu inhabit a locality they call Enkop EL Sambur' which is administratively referred to as Samburu District. It is one of the districts in the Rift Valley Province of Kenya. This is a study of the economic history of the Samburu. The study provides a variety of Samburu social data to reconstruct the pre-colonial and colonial Samburu pastoral economy. The peopling of Samburu enkop or Samburu is given on the basis of oral traditions which trace their origins from the two directions of Oto in the area South of the Ethiopian Highlands and Baringon (the area South of Lake Turkana). In the study, it is argued that the Samburu arrived and settled in some parts of their present land in the early nineteenth century. By the beginning of the twentieth Century, they spread and inhabited all parts of the present day Samburuland. The

study divides Samburuland into two geographical zones namely; the Lpurkel (Lowland) and Ldonyo (Highlands). These ecological zones, the study, argues, have Influenced the evolution of the Samburu pastoral economy. They have also influenced the formulation of the colonial policies to which the Samburu were subjected.

The study posits that the Samburu pastoral economy was organized along traditional patterns. Although the Samburu livestock herders had individual rights to ownership of Livestock, their land tenure systems made land a collective economic productive resource. Communal ownership of land gave them accessibility to this resource for the purposes of settlement and exploitation. In addition to this they used traditional methods of livestock organization, nomadic pastoralism, and livestock accumulation for both economic and social purposes. With the establishment of British colonial rule, new livestock management methods were introduced. They included the introduction of livestock breeds such as Sahiwal, Boran cattle, and the introduction of a new concept of land ownership, and the division of the Samburuland along clan lines. The colonial administration also imposed on the Samburu a destocking policy whereby they were forced to sell some of their livestock for cash. The study observes that in many respects the Samburu refused to cooperate with the British administrators. Whereas the Samburu resisted these efforts, the study shows how the introduction of taxation among the Samburu forced them to sell their livestock to raise money to pay the tax. The administrative impact of the colonial state was evidenced in the enforcement of the tax collection process that made the

Samburu to seek wage employment as a means to raise money for the payment of the tax. This was one of the factors responsible for the transformation of the Samburu pastoral economy to make it responsive to labour market demands. Other factors included the effects of famine and livestock diseases. The study argues that these forces resulted in the employment of many Samburu both in the public and private sectors of the colonial political economy. The study demonstrates that before the advent of the British, the Samburu organised and operated a barter trade system. They exchanged cattle with small stock and vice versa. It proceeds to show how during the colonial period, the barter system was largely replaced by a money commanded exchange as Samburu livestock traders, shopkeepers and even alien merchants variously interacted in Samburu district.

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**Glossary of Samburu and Swahili words used in this work.**

Lpurkel- Lowlands

Ldonyo - Highlands

Marti - The Land between the Highland and Lowlands beads.

Saen - Beads

Ldawa - Veterinary drugs

Masuzo - Auction

Sikiin - Schemes

Kiromet - Isiolo

Paran - To borrow from other members of Samburu

Lkunono - A clan specialised in iron making

Nkishu - Cattle

Laigwani - Spokesman, or leader of moran

Moran - Young Warriors

Latia - Cattle Associate

Posho - Maize flour

Mzungu - White person

Kiama - Council of elders

Suom - Livestock

Ndoor - A name place in the central part of Samburu district

Sampur - Name of a Bag

Lmasula - A clan

Nyaparai - A clan

Longella - A clan

Lomusi - A clan

Lpisikishu - A clan

Nqwesi - A clan

Kisima - Name of Place where the Samburu held several meeting with the British Administrators

Duka - Shop

Lkumbao - Tobacco

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# CHAPTER ONE

## Introduction

### i) Background

The Samburu are found in the region called 'Enkop El Loikop" connoting the land of our people, 'Loikop'. Although the majority of the Samburu live in Samburu District yet a few are found in the neighbouring districts of Isiolo, Laikipia and Marsabit. The term Samburu signifies both the people and Land (enkop). Many years before the establishment of the Colonial rule in Samburuland in 1909, the Samburu had dominated most of these areas.

Samburuland may be divided into three broad geographical zones; Lpurkel (lowland), Ldonyo (highlands) and `martin', an intermediary area between these two extreme zones. The Lpurkel zone forms the eastern, north-eastern and northern part of the Samburuland. Ldonyo zone is found largely in the South - eastern and southern part. Martin zone is mainly found in the western part of Samburuland. Although Samburuland has been classified into the above zones, the Samburu people are categorized into two geographical zones, Ltungana Lopurkel (Lowland Samburu) and Ltungana Lodonyo (Highland Samburu).

It is therefore imperative to note that the nature of

Samburu economic transformation depended on the locality. There were different reactions by the Samburu who lived in Lpurkel from those who lived in Ldonyo.

The establishment of British administration in Samburuland in 1909 at Marsabit and Archer's Post may be termed as a major turning point in the Samburu economic transformation. It appears that in the colonial era, a number of colonial activities interplayed to cause the Samburu economic transformation. These included trading centers, taxation, imposition of colonial veterinary services, and other aspects of a monetised economy.

ii) **Statement of the Problem**

From 1909 to 1963 the Samburu experienced profound pressure. In what ways did their response occasion an economic transformation?. This study inquires into the nature of this transformation. It investigates the external factors which contributed to the economic transformation of the Samburu. What is the nature of the interface between the external and internal influences in the economic transformation of the Samburu?. When and how did merchant - capital penetrate Samburuland? In what ways did it affect the emergence of a Samburu trading elite, labouring social category

and other cadres? What initiatives by the state either marginalized or integrated the Samburu in the colonial political economy?.

iii) **Objectives**

The study attempts to investigate the economic changes in Samburuland from 1909 to 1963 and establish the patterns of change or continuity. The study identifies the factors bringing about change or continuity in the articulation between the colonial capitalist economy and the Samburu natural pastoral economy.

The study also seeks to find out the nature of the economic relationship between the Samburu and their neighbouring communities.

The study analyses the character of merchant capital and delineates its role in the economic transformation of the Samburu.

Lastly, the study explains the problematic of technological dependence on the underdevelopment of the Samburu pastoral economy.

iv) **Research Premises**

The study is based on the following research assumptions that the Samburu economic transformation was caused by the intrusion of external forces.

- That the colonial state policies played a major role in this economic transformation.
- That indigenous technological changes were slow and the Samburu succumbed to the dispersion of imperial technology with respect to practices of livestock management.
- That merchant - capital was not just a colonial phenomenon in the history of the Samburu.

**V) Justification of the Study**

A preliminary survey on the existing works related to the study showed that there was hardly any engrossing literature on the subject of the Samburu political economy. Whatever exists in form of written (both published and unpublished) scholarly works is fragmentary and often indirectly relates to the ethnography of the people without presenting a coherent and systematic historical account of the changes in the political economy of the Samburu. As a matter of fact, the information related to the history of economic activities of the Samburu is

inadequate. The study attempts to inquire into the history of the economic transformation of the Samburu. This is a relevant undertaking in the sense that it will create an understanding of the history of the Samburu as a whole. A study of the society in this manner may in the long run shed some light on the agents of change in the area.

This study considers the problem of underdevelopment of the Samburu to be complex and intimately rooted in the colonial experience. Perhaps the underdevelopment theory which best explains this experience has not been transcended.

**vi) Theoretical Framework**

This study is guided by the general framework of the dependency theory and that of articulation of modes of production. Given the complex nature of historical processes being investigated, the study integrates these two approaches in order to shed more light on the Samburu pre-colonial and colonial experience. A single framework of analysis may not be sufficient hence the need for an integrated approach.

The dependency theory evolved as a disenchantment with modernization assumptions and therefore critiqued the approach used in explaining Latin American Countries (Frank, 1974). It rejects the assumptions advanced by the

modernization model in the explanation of social reality of the Third World. The dependency theory explains that instead of enhancing development in these countries capitalism under develops them. It does this through unequal exchange emanating from unbalanced trading regimes in which the Western World exploits the less developed economies of the Third World countries. (Aseka, 1989, Zeleza, 1985).

The underdevelopment theory was formulated to analyze the economies of developing countries. It was first used to analyse the economies of Latin America by their own scholars (Frank, 1967, 1974). This analytical concept, however, has been imported to Africa and used to analyse the African economies in relation to the more advanced economies of the Western world (Amin 1972, 1974, 1976, Wallerstein, 1976, Rodney, 1976). These scholars contended that the pre-colonial economies of Africa have been exploited by economies of the advanced countries through unequal exchange relations. The result has been uneven development in the Third World. The ideas of this theory were seen aptly applicable to the Samburu social reality. The mode of economic organization the Samburu used to acquire wealth was considerably affected by the colonial circumstances. The colonial policies impoverished the Samburu by undermining their economic activities, particulary

livestock production and management.

This study has adopted two main concepts namely; the articulation of modes of production and dependency. It demonstrated how these social processes effected economic transformation among the Samburu. The process of articulation explains the historical behaviour of capitalist modes of production in relation to the non-capitalist mode of production; with the former reshaping, preserving and co-existing with the latter (Zeleza, 1985).

The dependency concept is based on the premise that the developed countries undeveloped Third World countries through mechanisms of unequal exchange (Ibid). The underdevelopment or dependency theory assumes that colonial relationships in less developed countries were retrogressive because they were exploitative. In this exploitative social calculus the Samburu livestock was paid for in extremely low price terms while the Samburu bought trade goods at exorbitant high prices. They also depended on imported goods and western technological services, for example veterinary services for their livestock although the value of these services did not match the tax levels imposed on them.

vii) **Review of Literature**

Generally theliterature on the Samburu is lean. Therefore only a few works are reviewed that touch on the Samburu. However, an effort is made to incorporate a review of the related literature where necessary. Alan Jacob ( 1965) discusses the cultural division among Maa - speaking peoples and relates this to their myths of origin. He classifies the Maa - speaking groups into the purely pastoral (Ilmaasai) and semi-pastoral (Iloikop). He states that this economic distinctiveness was as a result of the separation of the Maasai before the 19th Century. From this point, it appears that Alan H. Jacob was unable to pinpoint the exact point of time when the separation took place. Apart from pointing to the general area of the Rift Valley as the place of separation of the so-called Maa - speakers, there is little known about the causes if the separation took place at all. It is necessary to identify the dispersal area in vast Rift valley region. He also contends that the pure pastoral Maasai (Iloikop) moved eastward and Westward without elaborating the point under discussion.

Of most importance is the cultural relation between the Loikop, whom Jacob attributes their name to sampur (bag) who were agriculturalists. It is however noticeable that the Samburu did not cultivate crops but rather keep large herds of animals.

Furthermore, the social relations is. fluid and that the boundary between the Maa and agriculturalists was not static. The term pure-pastoral Maasai is not restricted to one Maasai cultural group.

(Sobania, 1979) examines the history of Samburu in 1800s. He concludes that the Samburu grazed their livestock in the vast region encompassing the east part of Lake Baringo, the whole of East of Lake Turkana, the areas of Oto, Dukana, Sabare and Ldonyo Lemelepo, in the Southern Highlands of Ethiopia. He further highlights the historical relationship between the Samburu and the Rendille. The two ethnic groups had conflicts over cattle rustling as a means of accumulation of stock. Nevertheless they maintained a strong social and economic relationship manifested by inter-marriages and livestock exchange in trade. Sobania continues to state that in the 19th century the Samburu community experienced two problems of wars with the Laikipia and livestock disasters caused by outbreak of rinderpest. Because of these problems the Samburu became weak and were forced to retreat to mountain areas of Kulal, Ndoto, Marsabit and Nyiro for defense purposes.

Spencer ( 1973 ) assesses the colonial impact on the traditional political institutions of the Samburu. He opines that

the latter have persistently resisted colonial interventionist programmes in Samburu district. In the 1930s the conflict between the Samburu traditional values and western values was heightened. Traditional values Spencer concludes, especially moranism and kiama gerontocracy were political practices of the Samburu which posed a formidable hindrance to government efforts to initiate innovative programmes among these people. Fumagalli, (1977) discusses the colonial impact both on ecology and socio-cultural institutions of the Samburu. He observes that the establishment of colonial rule had detrimental effects on their traditional institutions. It destroyed the concept of collective rangeland and resource use, planning and utilization. The Samburu principles of land were dismantled thereby undermining their traditional experience based on utilization of the environment.

Waweru (1992) focuses on the traditional Samburu land management and their experience of traditional expertise in the management of thier environment. He assesses the relevance of ethnoveterinarical (herbal) values in tackling livestock diseases. Waweru discusses the historical relationship between the Samburu and Rendille.

Tignor (1976) examines colonial policies in Maasailand. He opines that the pastoral Maasai had evolved institutions

such as moranism and nomadic pastoralism which have all along acted as barriers to their social and economic change. Tignor uses the persistent adamant refusal by the pastoralist Maasai to adopt either cultivation of crops or modern business, in form of shops to underscore his point. In addition to this, he contends that moranism has been one institution which has been identified as an obstacle to the process of Maasai development.

Kituyi (1990) examines the transformation of the Maasai political economy in the post-colonial era. He argues that the underdevelopment of the post - colonial era built on policy failures of the colonial era. The British Colonial authorities established capitalism in the Maasai political economy through targeted social colonial policy initiatives. First, they established the administrative machinery which oversaw the implementation and operationalization of prejudicial racist policies in the Maasailand. These were followed by the imposition of an extortionist colonial taxation system and land alienation exercise which disadvantaged the Maasai in terms of their accessibility to pastures and water points. It resulted into changes in their livestock production orientating it towards a market economy.

Zwanenberg (1975) discusses the implication of some of

the colonial policies on the pastoral societies Kenya and Uganda. He observes that the colonial authorities failed to realise their objectives of developing the pastoralist societies. The few attempted strategies of the 1940s proved unsuccessful. They resulted in poor livestock management and marketing as well as inefficient veterinary services. Indeed, Dalleo (1975 Migot-Adholla (1981) and Evangetou (1984) hold the same opinion. According to these programmes, veterinary services to them seemed to be designed as a strategy meant to protect the European cattle industry against competition from the cattle of the nomadic pastoralist societies. Such colonial policies prevented the Samburu pastoralists from disposing of their cattle and other stocks on a competitive open - market.

Dalleo (1975) analyses the colonial impact on trade and pastoralism among the Somali of North-eastern Kenya. He contends that colonialists destroyed the pastoralist Somali's barter trade which had been based on the exchange of pastoral products. Instead the British authorities promoted a market economy through the establishment of trading centers with shops with enticing goods and also through the mechanism of payment of cash tax. It was a convenient way to create markets for the capitalist products thereby disrupting the traditional pastoral economies.

Ndege (1992) discusses the effects of the colonial military expedition among the pastoral societies of Kenya. He argues that these militaristic activities had detrimental effects on the development of livestock organization and production. The British military forces confiscated some of the livestock on flimsy grounds, such as levy force and indemnity. This resulted in the impoverishment of the livestock production process and the creation of migrant labour from pastoralist areas. Ndege's work focuses only on general aspects of the pastoral economy.

vii) **Approach and Methodology**

This study has used various means and strategies to achieve its interpretative objectives. It has used sources which may be broadly divided into secondary and primary sources. Considerable reading was carried out in the Moi Library Kenyatta University, Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library University of Nairobi, MacMillan Library, Nairobi, Institute of African Studies, Institute of Development Studies University of Nairobi, and in the Ministries of Agriculture and Land Settlement, and other libraries were consulted in Nairobi and Maralal. Archival materials were collected from the Kenya National Archive in Nairobi and relevant data on the Samburu was documented guided field work collection of information.

Before the start of field research, four research assistants were inducted into the research procedure and methodology for three days. This included explanation of how to collect primary oral data from respondents. The assistants had been identified during a pilot survey to identify respondents. Individual and group interviews were organized among resourceful missionaries, ex-chiefs, teachers, ex-administrators, traders and elders who were interviewed on various aspects of the research topic. A tape recorder was used during oral interviews. It proved ideal in obtaining detailed information without interrupting the conversation with respondents. This information was analyzed much later to allow me time to digest and later thereby providing enough time to analyze each item of the data obtained.

A comparative analysis of oral information and secondary data was carried out to corroborate the data harnessed from secondary and primary sources. Research progress was however hampered for some-time by a general problem of insecurity in Samburuland. Cattle raiding by the Turkana on the Samburu and vice-versa and the Samburu versus the Somali has characterised the area for years. At the time of conducting fieldwork in 1996/7 this practise which is a traditional aspect of pastoralist societies was at its peak. During this period the

Turkana and Somali armed raiders raided the Samburu community from the western and eastern parts of Samburu District almost concurrently these raids resulted in a lot of restlessness, migration and a charged political atmosphere. Such action delayed the actual fieldwork until early 1997 when the cattle rustling relatively subsided in the area of attention.

These insecurity problems were blamed on the government. The people were suspicious of government complicity in this issue of cattle rustling. I had a difficult time trying to convince respondents that I was not a government spy. In such cases, I walked for twenty or so kilometres looking for familiar elders to talk to our respondents. Moreover, there were times when we walked distances taking half day to interview respondents who moved because of the traditional settlement patterns of the Samburu as nomadic cattle herders. However, great assistance and moral support was given by Samuel Lenyakiopiro, one of the research assistants to the project.

Although Kenyatta University funded this project, it nevertheless faced numerous financial difficulties given the vastness of the area under discussion. The funds granted were not enough to complete the field research. Part of the problem was that we spent a lot of time interviewing respondents who

sometimes kept u*because many of them hardly looking for them and rescheduling our interview hours. In other cases, we pursued them in areas where they looked after their livestock or taking calves to water. Despite all these setbacks, the oral information collected was sufficient, for narrative and interpretative purposes to reconstruct the economic history of the Samburu in the pre-colonial and colonial periods.

# CHAPTER TWO

## 2.0 THE PRE -COLONIAL ECONOMY OF THE SAMBURU

### 2.1 Geographical Setting

The Samburu inhabit the Samburu District and neighbouring districts of Isiolo, Laikipia and Marsabit. The district is situated in the Rift Valley province of Kenya. It covers an area of some 8,034 square miles or 20,808 km and is located above the equator, stretching from the River Waso Nyiro in the South to the Lake Turkana in the North. This area is between $33^{1}$ and $2^{0}31$ degrees latitude north and $36^{0}17$ and $38^{0}17$ and $38^{0}$-5 degrees longitude to the East (see figure 1).

Administratively, it has six divisions of Baragoi, Kirisia, Lorroki, Nyiro Wamba and Wasao (Figure 2). To the south it is bounded by Laikipia District. Marsabit district borders Samburu District in the North East. It shares a boundary with Baringo and Turkana districts in the West and to the North-West respectively. The Samburu live in most parts of these districts (Lenaititai, O.I. 1992).

The physical relief of Samburu land varies greatly. The Lorroki plateau which forms the south - western part of itEukope Loikop rise to a height of 1500 metres. To the North and East of this highland stretch a series of mountains. These are Nyiro, whose height reaches at 2,709 metres, Ldonyo

Lekinyeu at 2,337 metres and Ndoto at of 2,637 metres (Waweru, 1992). These mountains have a historical significance for the Samburu. They formed pasture reservoirs that were sought for pasturing livestock during the dry seasons when pastures become coarse and unpalatable and sometimes scarce in the lowlands this is because pasture is greener in lowland and dryer on highland in the dry season.

In addition to playing this role as reservoirs these highlands provide defenses when there are wars between the Samburu and neighbouring ethnic groups. A demonstrative example was when the Samburu were fighting with the Borana in the early nineteenth century. The former took refuge on Mt. Nyiro. Climatically these highlands attract a modest type of rainfall that has given forth the growth of a mountain type of vegetation. Some of this vegetation has formed an important component of pasture food resource for the livestock. The porowai, ngeriyoi' and 'Loliotoi' were types of vegetation which are fed to the animals during dry seasons. These are types of plants commonly found in the mountains (Lekoyoyo, O.I., 1997).

From the above highlands flow rivers and streams that drain their waters in the lowland areas (Lpurkel). Some of these rivers and streams are Seiya in the South-East of the

Lorroki Plateau, Sererit flowing from the Southern part of Mt. Ndoto, and Kurungu and Tual streams in the eastern part flowing from Mt. Nyiro. They provide water in the Lpurkel. Although some flow seasonally from the later, their water tables are near to the surface and easy to reach when the Samburu sink water - holes in the river beds.

Lpurkel lies between these highland areas. The El Barta plains are situated north of the Lorroki plateau and they link this with Mt. Nyiro and Mt. Ndoto. Angata e Keii stretches between the eastern part of the Lorroki plateau and the western part of Ldonyo Lekinyeu. Lpukel is characterized by low rainfall and that has resulted in a harsh environment. When Hohnel was traversing this area in 1888 he summarized its main features as "Samburu lowland is very badly supplied with water and there are absolutely no rivers or streams which are never dry" (Hohnel, 1894, 184).

This description was influenced by past rainfall drainage patterns when rivers and streams flowed briefly before they dried up. It is, however, important to observe that water tables remain a few metres below the river beds. This fact of sub-terrain water was fully exploited by the pastoralist Samburu. They make holes (wells) on the floors of rivers and streams by using digging sticks and iron bars (Lerantiteni, O.I., 1997).

The scarcity of water in the Lpurkel has often resulted in low rainfall. It receives rains once a year during the long rains in April and May. Lpurkel contrasts strikingly with the highlands where rainfall is relatively reliable and higher. The latter have two rainy seasons a year. The long rains are referred to as Lngengeru and the others as Ltumuren (Fumagalli, 1977). These environmental variations have allowed the Samburu historically to practise nomadic movement of livestock from the lowland in wet season and from the highlands during the dry spell.

The nature of vegetation has been influenced by various topographic conditions in Samburuland. Mountainous areas, therefore, are dominated by forests and mountain vegetation. On the other hand lowlands are characterized by open grasslands with stunted shrubs here and there. Vegetation forms an important component of the pastoral economy of the Samburu who used it to build Kraals, troughs (Karani) and containers (loketa) for watering their livestock. Furthermore, some plants have medicinal value for livestock and humans.

The soils of Samburuland were of significant importance for understanding the Samburu pastoral economy. The geology of Samburu highlands which constitute the mountains of Nyiro, Ndoto, Lorroki plateau and Ldonyo Lekinyeu are underlined by

basement rocks and volcanic formation at varying ages and unconsolidated sediments of quaternary and tertiary origins (Lelekatap, O.I. 1997). The weather processes have acted on these to produce varying types of soil. The most important for our study is the white turf or calliferous type commonly found in both lowlands and highlands of Samburu land. It is found in large quantities in Kisima water and Suguta Marmar water point in the Lorroki plateau. It is also available in some parts of lowlands of Nasicho, Loloworu, Mparuai and Lodua in Nyiro, Wamba and Ndoto mountains respectively. (Lemoosa, O.I, 1997).,

The white ash soils have rich mineral contents, especially sodium chlorine (Mwanzi, 1977, 15). These are useful for livestock licking purpose because of their sour taste. The Samburu attach great value to these minerals and believe that they nourish their livestock.

## 2.2 The Origins, Migration and Settlement of the Samburu People

Samburu are Nilotic speakers who belong to a wider Lmaa ethnic group. The latter comprise of Baraguyu (Lparakwo) of Tanzania, Momonyot and Ldikiri (Ndorobo), the Maasai Lichamus and Larusa (Kwavi) of Tanzania. They are

classified as the plain Nilotes, a segment of the southern Nilotic groups (Spencer, 1965 and Sankan, 1977).

Our findings during this research shows that the Samburu have strong affiliation with the exterminated Laikipia Maasai. Oral tradition suggests that the two shared a common identity. They used to refer to themselves as Loikop and the names Laikipia and Samburu were nicknames given to them by the Maasai because of the historical interactions (Fumagalli, 1977, 71 -72). In the early part of the nineteenth century, the two groups experienced natural calamities that impinged on their social and economic lives. The Laikipiak suffered from the effects of rinderpest (Lokodwa) that claimed large numbers of livestock. They were, therefore, named after (Lorere Lokipei) meaning people whose livestock were affected by rinderpest didease.

The Samburu also suffered from the effects of this epidemic thereby losing a great deal of their livestock as a result of rinderpest. The majority of them became hunters and gatherers. In this period the predominant economic activity was hunting and gathering. The new innovation was developed as a means of eking out some form of subsistence. One of these was the use of sampur a big skin bag. These features were so prevalent that the Maasai nicknamed the proto-

Samburu 'Lorere Lesampur'- meaning people of the big bag. This historical evidence points out the link between the Samburu and the Maasai. They shared some common cultural characteristics. Of most significance was the speaking of the Lmaa dialect. But historical linguistics seem unable to answer the question of their origin. It is important to note that this study attempts to answer part of this question.

Historical linguistics place the Samburu together with the Maasai. This is because they speak the Lmaa language which gives them a common cultural identity. The Lmaa speakers may have evolved in Rift Valley about 1500 A.D. (Sulton, 1990 and Robert shaw, 1990). It has been documented that they may have originated in the area between the Lake Baringo and south of the Lake Turkana (Rudolf). From this area they migrated and settled in their present settlements (Jacobs, 1965 and Fratkin, 1987).

Linguistic sources do not, however, answer certain pertinent questions of the period when these people emerged into distinct groups and the reasons for their separation. This study will only attempt to briefly trace the origin of the Samburu and not that of the other Lmaa speaking people. None the less, it acknowledges the fact that the Samburu and Maasai are twin groups which have a common history.

Whereas Samburu oral traditions claim that they originated from Oto, there have been controversies as to the exact location of this region (Sobania, 1978). According to Waweru (1992) Oto lies somewhere in the North of the present Samburuland. (Waweru 1992, 79-80) pushed this region to far north in the drier parts of Northern Samburu District (Sobania, 1978,1). From these conclusions one is still left asking questions as to the exact location of Oto. The drier part of northern Samburu District which Sobania alludes to seems to make no sense. This is because the whole northern part of Samburu District is vast and dry, and therefore cannot be presumed to be Oto area.

From the available evidence much of which is presented in this study, Oto is the present area South of the Ethiopian Highlands covering Illeret in the north-east of the Lake Turkana to Hurri Hills (Ldonyo Lemelepo). This evidence (Lemarkat, O. I. 1997) is indicative of the fact that the Samburu may have settled at Oto in the mid nineteenth century when they expanded northwards from the Northern part of the Lorroki plateau (Ndoor) (Lekupe, O.I. 1997).

According to another oral narrative, the Samburu originated from Sulai near the present Nakuru area. It further contends that the Proto-Samburu who comprised the present

Samburu and Ilchamus (Njemps) migrated out of this area to Kamungotio near the Lake Baringo. In this area they separated into two distinct groups the rest remained at Mugotio, whilst the Proto-Samburu moved to the areas north of Lake Baringo. This region is referred to as Ldonyo Lekai (Mountain of God ) . The mountain has a historical significance. The Samburu maintain a close contact with the Lichamus. This contact involved social, economic and political relations.

Anderson (1981) acknowledged the strong bond between the Ilchamus and the Samburu. He notes:

> *the strongest and most dominant cultural influence (on the Njemps) has doubtingly come from the Samburu, this being reflected in language, modes of dress, the arrangement of the clan system and various other social institutions (Anderson, 1981, 2).*

There were several reasons for the separation of the two groups. The principal explanation is that the Ilchamus lost livestock from epidemic diseases. The proto-Ilchamus suffered most and they became Okiek (Ndorobo) a term that denoted their hunter - gatherer and fishing livelihood. They started to fish in the Lakes Baringo and Bogoria in order to live. They were looked down upon by other Lmaa speakers for eating fish because this habit is considered taboo by the Lmaa speakers.

This did not mean that they were unacceptable to the Samburu and other Lmaa groups (Lemarkat, O.I., 1997).

In the early nineteenth century the proto-Samburu evacuated the northern part of Lake Baringo and moved to the present Lorroki plateau and the El Barta plains. This movement was caused by the influx of the Turkana in to the Kerio Valley and its environs. The presence of the Turkana in these areas stimulated classes between them and some of the Lmaa speakers, particularly those who had settled in northern Rift Valley. Some of these groups were the Purko Maasai, Laikipia, Ilchamus and Samburu. The cause of the clash appears to have been over pasture lands. According to Lamphear (1992) the Turkana needed more grazing land for their increasing livestock and human population. He contended that these people evaded the effects of the epizootic (Rinderpest) out break that swept the livestock of most of East African communities particularly the Lmaa - speakers. For this reason the Turkana used this advantage to expand their frontiers in all directions. It was within this context that they encountered the Samburu (Kor) inhabiting the Northern Baringo.

It appears that the two groups co-existed for sometime with less noticeable hostility between them. The Samburu adopted some of the Turkana cultural characteristics. The

Samburu morans began to dress, sing and make hairstyles like the Turkana. The relation between the two groups gradually deteriorated as a result of the activities of the other Lmaa groups. The latter organized raiding expeditions against the Turkana. They further state that because of this confusion the raiding Lmaa parties mistook Samburu for the Turkana and raided them several times. It was perhaps for th is reason that the Samburu migrated from Northern Baringo and Suguta Valley and settled in the North-west and northern Lorrokoi plateau. These areas offered favourable climatic conditions for their livestock economy.

In the new areas, the Samburu encountered the Sakuye, a group of Cushitic speakers and the Laikipia. The interaction between these groups led to a historical process of cultural assimilation. The Samburu assimilated some members of the Sakuye community into the various sub-clans of the Samburu. This led to the emergence of the various sub-clans of the Samburu. From this evolved Lmarato, Lwara and Lparsipia sub-clans of Lmasula clan, Songe and Lowa Ngaso sub-clans of Longeli and Lukumai clans respectively (Lelekatap, O.I. 1997). The Samburu also acquired the hardy Boran type of cattle through cattle rustling and livestock exchange from the Sakuye.

The interaction between the Samburu and Laikipia

resulted in a considerable process of assimilation. The former adopted the Loiboni institution from the Laikipiak. The Loiboni Leaduma migrated from the latter to Samburu. This institution played a significant role in the pastoral Samburu economy for it strengthened their military deposition.

In the late nineteenth century, more members of the Laikipiak joined the Samburu due to the raging intertribal wars between them and other Lmaa speaking people. The Lpurko Maasai, Ilchamus and Samburu fought the Laikipiak separately. This led to devastation of the Laikipiak whose remnants were absorbed by these groups and by the Meru community, more particularly the Tigania section. The Samburu assimilated the Lanat clan of the Laikipak and it became a sub-clan of the Lpisikishu clan of the Samburu.

The nineteenth century was a period when effects of other communities which targeted the Laikipiak also affected the Samburu. It resulted in the movement of this group from the Ndoor (Lorroki Plateau) to more northerly region. They settled in the Oto region in the Southern part of the Ethiopian Highlands. The Samburu occupied Dukana (Dukan), Kokai, Ldonyo Lemelepo (Hurri Hills), Ntaar (near Moyale, Saburei (Sabare) and Marsabit (Lenkaak, O.I. 1997).

The cause of the fighting among the Lmaa speakers is

not well known. Evidence from oral traditions, however, suggests that the Laikipak lost a great number of livestock from rinderpest (Hohnel, 1938, 207). It was for this reason that the group resorted to cattle rustling. They raided other Lmaa speakers and non - Lmaa as a means of rebuilding their livestock. It seems the Samburu escaped the effects of the rinderpest until much later. It was therefore natural for the Laikipak Maasai to attack and raid for cattle of the Samburu who where their immediate neighbours.

In Oto, the Samburu were further confronted by the Oromo-speaking people who were by then living in the north - east of this region. In the 1880s, the former lost a large number of cattle from rinderpest. This was followed by an outbreak of small pox among human beings. This reduced considerably the size of their population (Stigand 1910. 286). The combined effects of these factors weakened the capacity of the Samburu to withstand external threats caused by the Boran speaking people. These forces compelled the Samburu to retreat from Oto to some parts of Marsabit Ldonyo Lekinyeu, Isiolo, Kiromet and most parts of eastern Laikipia district (Chanler, 1896, 306).

The settlement of the Samburu in the above areas helped them to transform their pastoral economy. They established a

strong trade link with some agricultural societies living in Meru and Nyeri. Further, they established trade relations with the Somali. This trade was, however disrupted by the advent of the British colonial forces. This significant historical phenomenon will be discussed in the third chapter of this study.

## 2.3 Pre-Colonial Samburu Land Tenure System

The Samburu controlled land rights within 'enkop e Loikop- meaning Samburuland or the land of the Samburu people. All members of the Samburu community had jural rights of access to the exploitation of their land and water resources. These were common property. This form of ownership evolved in an environment of constant fluctuation of pasture and variable range (Lane, 1996, 131). Land and water were a means of livelihood for all members of the community to draw optimal benefits from.

Despite the above form of rights to land and water and the regime of ownership there were a few exceptional cases where individual privileges over certain aspects of the rangeland were entertained. When an individual person dug a water-hole on a surface of a seasonal stream he acquired privileges over the use of this well (Leleketap, O.I. 1997).

By virtue of this privilege the well maker administered the use of water from this well. He had the first opportunity to exploit this water for his livestock and that of close members of his clan. They were followed by other members of the Samburu community. Reciprocal relations and rights were exercised within the membership of the clan. The granting of permission to other herders depended on the capacity of water to serve both human and livestock populations of the well-maker and his clan. In some circumstances, water could be denied to one requesting the use of the well. Such cases could happen when infected cattle sought to use water which is fed on uninfected ones.

The objection to the use of water from dug wells (Lariak) without convincing reasons sometimes led to quarrels and fighting between members of one clan and other clans. These conflicts involved the intervention of a council of elders (Kiama) from the parties concerned. The rest of the Samburu society was obliged to enforce the verdict reached by the council in its mediation efforts. The arbitration involved discussion, argumentation and counter-argumentation until a consensus was reached. Based on the traditional procedures, the right of ownership was regarded as temporary.

The Samburu also practised a land tenure system where

the right of control and exploitation of aspects of pastoral resources was confined to members of a clan. This was derived from the fact that Samburuland "enkopel Loikop' was settled according to clans and sub-clans. Under this system a clan occupying an area possessed rights of control and its exploitation. For instance the members of sub-clans of Lmasula clan owned various areas of Mt. Nyiro. In these areas they managed beehive keeping activities in exclusion of other members of other clans of the Samburu. This was a means to check the over - exploitation of the ecosystem of any particular area.

In case the carrying capacity of an area had reached its maximum capacity so that an additional population would lead to degradation, objection to increased herding was extended to members of the clan concerned. In these circumstances an area which would still support more human and livestock populations for incoming herders was identified either from the same clan concerned or others. The incoming herders were accepted and accommodated usually after negotiation with the already settled herders. The latter group only controlled and administered the pastoral resources within their locality on behalf of the entire Samburu society. These rights were passed on to the next clan that were to occupy the same area when it

was left vacant by the previous clan. This was based on the fact that the Samburu practised a cyclical migratory pattern in the 'enkop el loikop'. This aspect will be explained fully below.

## 2.4 Samburu Traditional Pasture Resources

The Samburu practised land use management as a mechanism to make the best use of their multi-faceted ecology. They patterned grazing according to availability of pasture, water and the congeniality of seasons (Lekoyoyo, O.I. 1997). Livestock was moved up the highlands in dry periods when pastures became scarce and coarse in the lowlands. The Samburu herder moved cattle to highlands in dry season and to lowlands in wet season.

The Samburu resorted to transhumance as a mechanism to exploit their variant ecological environment. In this system grazing was planned according to the prevailing climatic conditions. It involved the movement of livestock to the lowlands in wet season and to the mountainous areas during the dry spell. In the months of April and May, November and December, the Samburu migrated from highlands to the lowlands 'Lpurkel'. The importance of the lowland was engrained in the belief that mountainous areas were disease ridden in the wet season because of stagnant swampy areas.

Also the extreme cool conditions make livestock to contract pleuro - pneumonia and earthworms. It was also during the wet season that certain aspects of the pastoral resources particularly drier areas easily became accessible to livestock because of availability of water and minerals, particularly salt and palatable pastures. These pastoral resources gradually diminished in amount as the dry season advanced and affected movement of livestock first at the foots of highlands and eventually in more forested areas. This practice is still operated by the Samburu herders.

The highlands offered a variety of pastures that ranged from plants and grass. Vegetation such as `n'gereyoi', `Loliotoi', porowai' and `Loyiti' were cut down and fed to cattle when grass was exhausted. The Samburu used to avoid this desperate stage through mapping out grazing programmes which would afford adequate regeneration of pastoral resources.

The Council of Elders, "Kiama" drew up detailed rotating grazing plans for given Lmanyala localities. They did this every evening depending on the prevailing weather conditions, the state of water and pasture to avoid overgrazing in certain areas. They passed this information over to every household in a homestead and other homesteads living in the same locality.

The `Kiama' also administered punishment to herders who defied the laid down grazing procedures. Deterrent fines ranged from slaughtering some of their best bulls and expectant cows. They sometimes resorted to a curse in extreme cases (Lepadasa, O.I. 1997). They were guided by the principle that pastures need time to recover if they were to be productive in the near future. It was the same principle that made the Kiama to punish careless use of fire. The Samburu applied fires to vegetation in order to rehabilitate environments. These included areas infected either by tsetsefly, ticks, or by poisonous vegetation, `Impene', This, however, depended on the whole value of the vegetation to the people and livestock (Waweru, 1992, 2-57).

The Samburu loaned pastureland to friendly pastoral neighbours to graze livestock during times of severe drought. This was a mark of inter-tribal reciprocity. They expected a similar gesture when they were in similar circumstances. A consensual agreement was reached to allow non-Samburu herders to share pastures with the Samburu. This entailed negotiations among all interested groups. There were also conditions for grazing. One of the most important was the acceptance by a group to graze in a definitively defined areas and for an agreed period of time. This was a means that the

pastoralist used to circumvent the vagaries of nature.

## 2.5 The Samburu Livestock Economy

In the preceding discussion, the nature of the environment occupied by the Samburu has been highlighted. They rear cattle, sheep and goats, and donkeys. Of these, the Samburu value cattle more for they embody numerous qualities. Cattle for me the center of Samburu's social and economic universe. They provide milk, blood and occasionally meat, hides for shoes, clothes, and materials for building huts. This value is aptly summarized by one respondent interviewed during the field research when he stated: "Kore na nkishu na itau eshiwe likai", that cattle is life on which human life depends (Leleita, O.I., 1997).

Samburu keep cows mainly for calves which multiplied the size of their herds. These animals also provide milk for consumption. The bulls are reared for beef during times of need when milk was scarce, perhaps because of lack of pasture and water and when the cows were pregnant.. Further, they were exchanged with heifers to augment the size of milk providing cows in the herd. The Samburu value more female cattle than male ones for milk production is a major goal of Samburu herding. For this reason they are keen in the

reproductive capability of herds. To achieve this objective, the Samburu ensure that each group of calves `enkio elashau' mature and formed a different stratum of herds. Although the Samburu trade in livestock to acquire what they do not have they are normally precautious. They prefer to sell male cattle.

The Samburu intimate symboliotic relationship with cattle. They devoted considerable amount of their energies and time in serving the need of cattle. They guard them against wild animals day and night. In addition they ensure that the cattle are well pastured and are not thirsty. Futher more, they compose songs about them, and make tethering-cords and ornaments for them. The Samburu wash their hands and faces in the urine of the cattle. The main objective of the Samburu is always to have a large number of cattle in order to gain social prestige in the community. The high number of cattle one has, the higher the level of respect.

The Samburu also used cattle as a means of forging social relations within their community and their neighbours. They pay cattle for bride wealth in a marriage ( Dalleo, 1977, 2; Lane 1996, 10). Marriage creates a larger social relations. It brings together many clans which comes to relate to each other in a new social economic and political manner. For instance, when a girl gets married from another clan, her groom

pays a female cow to her maternal uncle and a two year bull to members of a clan exogamily related to her fathers's clan and a cow to her paternal uncle. The Samburu give out cattle among members of their clans. This was done through the `paran' system; This is a social relation whereby livestock is transferred from one Kinsman and in-laws to another. When a member of a clan losses his stock especially through diseases or cattle raids, then members of his clan and brothers in-law give him cattle. The paran relation, however, extended to cattle associates who are from other clans of the Samburu society. Member of a clan rebuild their livestock from the clan's affinal reciprocal cattle exchanges through the paran or `sayare' system (Lepulelei, O.I., 1997). The latter is a cattle relation where a poor clan affine borrowed livestock from affine from one's clans. The Samburu acquire cattle through blood compensation when a member of a clan is killed by a member of another clan, then the member of a murderer contributed a hundred cattle to members of murdered person. The cattle are distributed to senior families of the clan. These arrangements are used to bolster herds of poor Samburu and also as a means to insure against risks and establish safety nets within their social relations (Lane, 1996, 5).

Sheep and goats also are an important component of the

Samburu pastoral economy. They were reared mainly for milk meat and blood. The stock complement cattle in ensuring the sustenance of life in households (Lekekatap, O.I., 1997). Sheep and goats also contributed to the ecological balance of the Samburu. They exploit different aspects of the pastoral resource. Goats are browser on vegetation unlike cattle which mostly feed on grass. The competition over the exploitation of the ecology is minimized and this help to maintain the health of each group of animals. This characteristic was observed by Stigand (1910) when he remarked that:

> *The sheep of this country (Samburuland) are of the fat tailed variety, a circumstance which enables them to withstand period of drought and poor grazing, for the fat in the tail acts as a sort of reservoir from which nutrients for the body may be drawn (Stigand, 1910; 78).*

Goats also demonstrated the above capacity for they are browser and could feed on twigs and dry leaves of shrubs even during the most severe drought. They tend to produce goats kids and plenty of milk during the dry season because the weather conditions are good for their health and there were plenty of sagaram (fruits of acacia plants). The lactating goats and sheep provide milk for the household when cattle produce little milk due to scarce pastures and water (Stigand, 1910,

78).

The complimentary role of these animals is captured in a statement by one respondent interviewed during the field research for a different but related study. He noted that 'Mara kedorop nkine kakae meta nyamalinalutu' that although a goat is small and short yet there is no problem it cannot solve (Waweru, 1992, 87). In fact the Samburu diversify animal herding in order to provide adequate means of circumventing the vagaries of weather and the environment. This is explained more elaborately by Long'esep when he states that nkntare`Tiniyo nibar nkishu ning'aso ayaya takwentare'. that if one wanted to keep a few herd of cattle then one must first obtain goats and sheep (Lekupe, O.I., 1997).

The Samburu exchange s are types of animals to another thus, a Samburu herder exchanged 12 goats and sheep with a heifer to rear and increase milk production for the household. In case one want a he goat or a ram to feed one's household, then he exchanged it with a two year old bull. Herders prefer to have goats and sheep for herding. They are well adopted to the harsh environment for they intend to produce kids and plenty of milk in the dry season. The Samburu household relies heavily on goats and sheep milk during the dry spell when cattle milk became scarce (Lekupe, O.I. 1997).

The economic role played by goats and sheep among the Samburu is best seen in this statement by one respondent interviewed during the field research for this study. As Lepulelei states; `Mara Kedorop na nkineji kakemeta nyamali nalutu' that a goat is small and short and so there is no small problem that cannot be solved by it (Lepulelei, O.I. , 1997).

The Samburu herd a wide range of animals. These occupy an important position in their economy. Indeed, they have different uses of these animals. For instance the Samburu use cattle and sheep for social and economic purposes. More especially they use to social rituals and religious purposes . On occasions of minor importance, sheep is sacrificed as it is less valuable. In major occasions, cattle is sacrificed for worship and marking important communal events.

Samburu live and still live in homestead (singular, nkang' plural, nkangite) made up of several households nbajijik). Each household is an independent social productive and self-reproductive unit. The biological reproduction of the community was within the household. It consists of a father, wife and his unmarried children. When a son is married his wife he detaches himself from his father's household and establishes his own hut (nkaji). He assumes the full right of ownership of his livestock which he has acquired at birth and

through circumcision from his parent and relatives (Lekupe, O.I. 1997). When a son is born he is allotted a steer by his parents as a gift. This bull was exchanged with a female cow later.

The household draws labourers from its members and sometimes from the cattle associates (Latia) in the one homestead or nearby homesteads and clan's affine and brothers - in- law. The household's young members, boys, girls and moran (young circumcised men) herd livestock. The head of the household, usually a father play the managerial function. Further he has the physical and jural rights over the household's livestock. The father, therefore, has the right to transfer physically an animal from his herd to somebody else. He does this when he transfer part of his animals from his herd to that of his in laws in the form of bride wealth (Fumagalli, 1977,88).

The members of the household have the jural rights of ownership of animals. According to this right they own physically animals and enjoy the use of their products, milk blood and meat but have no right to transfer these animals to friends. They build their animals from a livestock allotted by their mother, father and the clan's affinal and matrilineal relatives.

The labour offered by cattle associates (Latia) to a household is rewarded in kind. These range from milk, meat

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The labour offered by cattle associates (Latia) to a household is rewarded in kind. These range from milk, meat

and blood to an allotment of animals depending on the period of one's service for a household. This kind of reward is referred to as "suomi Eldama", animals or food rewarded for giving service to another household (Lemoosa, O.I. 1997).

## 2.6 Other Economic Activities

Samburu engaged in other economic activities and these are iron smithing, gathering and hunting and bee-hive keeping. Iron smithing, for instance, is worked out by the "Lkunono" black smiths. Some members of the Samburu community specialize in the production of iron implements. They make spears, swords, arrow heads, knives, animal's bells, iron bracelets and iron earnings. These are changed with small stocks and sometimes claves and livestock's products. Although they accumulate a large number of livestock the Lkunono never abandoned their economic activity of iron smithing because they are an esoteric group within the Samburu's clans (Lepile, O.I. 1997). The social belief keep them as a distinct group. According to this belief the Lkunono could only trade with the rest of the Samburu members by way of exchange of the iron implements. With small stock and animals's product.

In addition to the above economic activity the Samburu

hunt big wild game during drought and famine to supplement diminishing products of livestock. The Samburu morans and junior elders irrespective of their clans, organize hunting groups and hunt buffalos, giraffes, and impalas. The meat of wild life supplement the scarce livestock's product (Lerantilene, O.I. 1997). The Samburu make shields, shoes and bracelets from the skins of buffalos and giraffes. The tails of giraffes are very important economically. These are exchanged with domestic livestock's products and small stocks (Lekupe, O.I., 1997).

The Samburu also gather wild fruits and nkasun'gen roots immediately after the long rains. These are used as a supplement to livestock's products and for additional nutritional value. The wild fruits and Nyasin are collected by women and young children. Sometimes when households gather them in excess, these are offered to other households to be replaced at the appropriate date in the future (Lepulele, O.I. 1997). There are instances when the Samburu trade wild fruits with small stocks. For example in the nineteenth century when many herders lost livestock through rinderpest, such trade was conducted.

Beehive keeping is attended by members of the Samburu who tend to live long in mountainous areas. They put in more efforts in keeping beehives than livestock. These people are

referred to as "Ltorobo Lekidongi" the beehive keepers. The exchange excess of honey with small stocks with the rest of the members of the Samburu particularly during the dry spell.

The Samburu organize trade with the neighbouring ethnic communities such as the Boran, Ilchamus (Njemps), Maasai, Meru, Rendille, Somali and Turkana. It was based on a barter system of commodity exchange. In this trade, the latter exchange livestock, honey, and iron implements with livestock from their neighbours. For instance, the Turkana import honey, wild fruits (Seketete, and Losung') and donkeys in exchange for goats and sheep from the Samburu. The Samburu also carry out a different kind of exchange with the Meru community. The latter keep livestock and undertake crop cultivation. They export tobacco (Kumbao) and (Kuruma) maize to the Samburu and exchange them for animal skins and small stocks. The evidence show that the Samburu trade with the Meru community to acquire non pastoral products for supplementary purpose. There, therefore, develop organized trading network between the two communities. Caravans are organized by both the Meru and Samburu households for trade purposes. This trade was most intense during dry seasons. In such circumstances the Samburu herders depended heavily on the supplies from Meru. This trade was enhanced by strong social

relation between the Meru and the Samburu communities. Oral traditions show that both communities have some of their members who originated from either groups.

**Summary**

The environment has played a significant function in the evolution of the Samburu pastoral economy. It helped to create economic, social, and political institutions which were established among the in Samburu community. The institutions are meant to circumvent the harsh conditions created by the natural environment.

The `Kiama' institution ensures that the Samburu pastoral resources were utilized by all herders in the most appropriate way. The development of a just land tenure system, rangeland management strategies and herding of diversified animals in Samburuland are expressions of the adaptability of the Samburu to their ecology. The practice of transhumance between the lowland and highlands of enkopei loikop allows the Samburu to manipulate and exploit their varied environments.

The livestock economy provide both economic and social necessities largely influencing the evolution of their land tenure system. It also influenced their rangeland management

approaches and the choices or preferences they make of animals. Appropriate use of these options enhances the exploitation of their multi-faceted ecology.

## CHAPTER THREE

# MERCHANT-CAPITAL, BRITISH COLONIALISM AND THE SAMBURU PASTORAL ECONOMY, 1895-1920

### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter examines the transformation of the Samburu pastoral economy during the later part of the nineteenth century. The Samburu traded in livestock and ivory for foreign mercantile goods ;beads, iron wares, clothes, tobacco and maize from the merchant traders. In this process of exchange many Samburu obtained goods by which they acquired cattle and thereby rebuilt their livestock.

The establishment of British colonial rule in Samburuland, at the beginning of the twentieth century, undermined the pre-existent merchant trade. The British authorities imposed trade barriers on the operations of the latter. The resultant trade patterns favoured the British market economy. British administrators drew and executed policies which underdeveloped the Samburu economy. Essentially these policies reduced the Samburu to consumers of exotic goods while remaining producers of livestock for the British markets.

## 3.1 Merchant Trade and the Samburu Livestock Economy

In the latter part of the nineteenth century the Kamba ivory traders reached Samburuland in their search for ivory. They identified the new hunting grounds for ivory in their quest for alternative ivory base. In the 1890s the Kamba had exhausted elephants in their country and in the immediate areas of Mt. Kenya in the North. This endeavour took these people to different directions. In the words of Ludwig Krapf, a missionary of the Christian Missionary society (CMS) stationed in the Southern part of the Ukambani country, remarked that:

> *these people [Kamba] felt themselves induced to extend their hunting and mercantile expeditions northwards. While to the west they crossed and entered the forest of the Kikuyu and other people of Mt. Kenya (Lamphear, 1970.80).*

It is difficult to pinpoint the exact time when the hunting activities expanded far north in the Samburuland. However, it appears that the Laikipiak wars of the 1880s hindered their movement into the Southern part of the Samburuland, up to, perhaps, the end of the 1880's. In the 1890s the Kamba ivory traders surfaced in the region and operated in Waso Nyiro, Wargasse (Mathew Ranges) and 'Ndoor (Lorroki Plateau). During this period, the Samburu had returned to the Eastern part of Lorroki after the extermination of the Laikipia by other

Lmaa groups. The Kamba found it easy to conduct their ivory hunting activities in these areas since the inhabitants seemed to have a vast hunting experience. These people were the Ltorobo (Samburu (Okiek) whose origins are said to be in this region.

The Ltorobo Samburu section were assimilated by the founders of the Samburu clans when they arrived in their present land in the nineteenth century. They were settled in Mts. Nyiro, Ndoto and Mathew Ranger (Wargasse) and on the Lorroki Plateau (*Lemarkat O.I. 1997*). Our respondents could not remember the names of all the founders of the Samburu who captured and assimilated some Ltorobo people. Kwara, the founder of Lmasula clan was the only name they recalled. Most significantly each of these founders had captured and subsequently assimilated some members of the Ltorobo group. The Ltorobo Samburu families acknowledge that they are members of Ltorobo group of Lmasula, Nyaparai, Longelli, Lomusi, Lorokushu, Lpisikisliu and Lukumae clans (*Lemarkat, O.I. 1997*). Some of these families have developed to sub-clans of the Samburu. For example the Lanat are basically a sub-clan of Lpisikisihu. There were many reasons for the capturing of the Ldorobo.

One motivating factor why the Samburu founders

assimilated members of Ltorobo was the quest to boost their numbers. During the settlement of the Samburu in their present locality, much resistance was given to the Samburu by the inhabiting groups. When the need for more labour arose, the importance of commanding a bigger population among the Samburu became impelling and engrained in their social philosophy.

`*Woi' inkang kinyi naare nkito*'! a small family destroyed by a big family (*Lemoosa, O.I. 1997*). The Samburu were composed of a few individuals compared to the inhabitants of the Ndoor area. It was therefore necessary to expand their population for Livestock acquisition and its military implications.

The Pastoral economy requires more manpower than farming as every aspect of it requires able persons. Enough labour is required to look after cattle, goats ,sheep, and donkeys. One respondents aptly put the importance of manpower in these words; *Keyo shomi majing' ngoji namaroreki*" livestock cannot exist where there is no person to care fo: them. Although the institution of `Latia' is an association of herders, it provides at least some labour in the Samburu pastoral economy, it is always preferably convenient to have one's own labourers. The manpower for livestock

alone cannot adequately explain the assimilation of some members of Ltorobo by the Samburu founders. Military conquest also played a great role during that period. In the new area the Samburu encountered Sakuye and Boran in northern part of Samburuland in the 19th century. This process led to wars between the Samburu on one hand and the Sakuye and Boran on the other. The wars among the two groups wasted considerable manpower. Oral traditions disclose that the Sakuye and Boran communities had greater supply of manpower and were a formidable force. Using this advantage they dealt a great blow to the Samburu who had a small military force. During these wars the Samburu captured many captives and Ltorobo (Okiek) families from the two groups. The Ltorobo group had strong attachment to their source of livelihood- beehives, wild fruits and wild game that was in abundance in the grassland Lorroki plateau and its vicinity (Mathew Ranges and El Barta Plain). The Samburu assimilated some Ltorobo groups and thereby replaced their human losses (*Lerantileni, O.I. 1997*). They, however, continued to retain some of their customs and practices. It was this group that the Kamba and Meru traded with first for one of their erstwhile practise was hunting.

The Ltorobo Samburu families (Lekuye, Lekadaa,

Lepasore, Lepuyapui and many others) hunted elephants and traded ivory with livestock from the Kamba and Meru traders in the 1890s. They used their hunting experience to engage in profitable trade. In the process they built their livestock and became wealthy herders. Many respondents reveal that; *`Neparaku nkule anyite nemeata apake suom'* a statement which means that some families which had no livestock became wealthy herders (*Lochumai Lepulelei, O.I., 1997*). They did not only trade with the Kamba but also with other members of the Samburu. They exchanged ivory with small stocks and later exchanged these with big ones from the same Samburu.

Nevertheless, oral traditions show that other sections of the Samburu also engaged in the trade during the later part of the 19th Century. These sections bartered goats and sheep donkeys and horses, and livestock products (Milk, animal skin). They exchanged these with cattle and other valuable articles from the merchant traders. There were many reasons why the Samburu got involved in this trade.

First, in the 1890s, many Samburu lost large numbers of cattle through epidemics in the Oto area. According to Spencer (1973) a severe rinderpest (*Lodua*) claimed a big number of Samburu cattle. He also contends that further loss of cattle

came from attacks of the Boran which led to a decrease of human and animal populations (*Spencer, 1973, 157*). It was apparent therefore that the Samburu were badly in need of livestock. In order to sustain themselves, these people lived by selling labour to the Rendille who occupied the same environment as the Samburu. The Rendille community escaped this epidemic because they kept a different type of livestock. They reared camel, goats and sheep. These animals have different biological characteristics from cattle. It is evident that the epidemic that killed the Samburu cattle did not attack camels, and goats and sheep.

Available evidence reveals that it was the Samburu who sought for assistance from the Rendille and found it easy to be accepted by the group. This is because the two groups had already strong social, political and economic relations before the outbreak of the rinderpest disease among the Samburu livestock. Oral traditions state as to how assistant labour was employed to look after the Rendille livestock (Lerantileni, O.I. 1997).

In these circumstances, the Samburu had to rely on small stocks for trade, given that their taboos prohibited them from hunting elephants. Consequently, they traded small stocks and other valuable articles of trade with nguruma (maize), clothes,

beads and copper bracelets from the Kamba and other traders were ready to offer. These goods were provided by various groups of traders who joined the Samburu trade in the 1890s. W. A. Chanler ,noticed the presence of large number of Samburu tribesmen living with the Arabs and Zanzibari caravan traders at Wamba marketing point in the Southern part of the Samburuland (Chanler, 1896, 313).

The Samburu engaged in this long distant trade as many different caravan traders made their way into the Samburuland. They capitalized on prevailing trade conditions by charging exorbitant rates on their trade items. Many of the respondents consensually agreed that the Samburu exchanged one piece of Ivory for heifer or a rhino horn for a heifer. The demand of the Samburu trade is explained in the words of Hardwick Arkell when he remarks that:

> *"to our great disappointment we learnt that ivory was out of the question. A swahili caravan from Kismayu had bought up all the available ivory " The Samburu placed high premium on their goods and livestock. Because of their ability to understand the principles of market. They knew for example that their trade items were on high demand"(Hardwick, 1903, 214 - 215).*

The Samburu had a constant market for their trade items from the numerous merchant caravan trading parties. These

parties took a long period of time gathering Ivory and other valuable articles among the Samburu. The traders bought livestock products (Milk, Animal Skins); goats and sheep for consumption in addition to trading. In the words of Ismail Robli, one of the Somali traders who conducted trade among the Samburu in 1900, asserted that:

> *"Where is the food and Ivory.... He (Samburu elder) replied you are like wazungu (Europeans) who like to buy things cheaply and go away... a swahili caravan stays for one or two years (Hardwick, 1903 - 222).*

Oral traditions show that it is not the Europeans traders, who cheated the Samburu but rather mostly waswahili porters and other assistants. They cheated herders who had no knowledge of goods (clothes and beads and copper brass) (Leriano, O.I. 1997).

By the beginning of the twentieth century the supply of ivory from Samburuland had remarkably decreased due to over exploitation through elephant hunting. The elephant hunters had to travel long distance in search of elephants (Lentimas O.I. 1997). These expeditions took the hunters to the Southern Ethiopian Frontier and most parts of the present northern Kenya.

The shift of merchant trade to the northern part of the

then British East Africa Protectorate was occasioned not only by the scarcity of ivory but also by the impact of the British colonial policy. With the establishment of the British administration in the central part of the protectorate, traders found it difficult to by pass the authorities without being charged trade fees.

The merchant traders especially the Somali (Garre) opened trade routes away from the British controlled areas. One area that became prominent during the beginning of the twentieth century was the Boran country, the Bardera trade route. The Somali traders, therefore, organized trade expeditions along this route in order to avoid the British harassment. There were many reasons for the British interference in the merchant trade in the northern part of the British East Africa Protectorate. One of the most significant reasons is that they had a lot of economic interest in this region because it was endowed with rich natural resources (coffee, gold, and gumarabic). Consequently, they evolved economic situations that benefitted the British colonialists. Dalleo argued that.

> "*almost from the beginning of the British arrival both at the Coast and in the north they (the British) attempted to mould patterns of trade to suit their needs*"(Dalleo, 1975.

90).

The British executed the above objectives in the northern part of the protectorate through the establishment of political structures that ensured them maximum trade gains. In 1906 the British authorities appointed Philip Zaphiro, a Greek citizen in the service of the British Embassy at Addis Ababa as a British agent at the border of the British East Africa Protectorate and Ethiopia (Abyssiania).

Zaphiro's responsibilities were to ensure British presence on the frontier at the expense of Ethiopia and to assure safety along the 400 mile border. He was sent to Moyale in the North of the Protectorate. Zaphiro was struck by the prosperity of the Boran country trade and attempted to influence the British administrative approach to this region. He wanted the British authorities to start effective administration in the latter region in order to reap benefits from the wealth of the trade which was in the hands of the Ethiopia administrators and Somali traders.

Nevertheless, the British government did not want to begin administration in the Northern part of the Protectorate. This was because it was awaiting a report by the Boundary Commission instituted in 1906 to correct the maladies of the first commission. The Commission had drawn up an arbitrary

boundary between Ethiopia and the protectorate, the "Redline". This created a lot of confusion especially for the British Government. Following this, another Boundary Commission was found and headed by major Gwynn. It was commissioned to investigate the boundary line and report the findings to the Governor of the East Africa Protectorate.

From the colonial records, it appears that the British authorities had high economic interests in this region and heavily influenced the formation of the Boma Trading Company (B T C) in the summer of 1906. It was founded by Major Ward with a body of directors. The objective of the company was to open up the northern part of the British East Africa Protectorate for the operations. (KNA/Ward to colonial office, CO533/56, 1907). The Boma Trading company was to operate along the banks of the Juba River between the Waso Nyiro River and the Border of Ethiopia (KNA/Ward to Ellis, Co. 533/56, 1907).

By 1908 the Boma Trading Company had started its operations in some parts of the Protectorate where it established two posts, one at Moyale on the frontier and the other at Dolo on the Juba land (KNA/Saddler to crewe, Co533/47.1908). The negotiation between the company's directors and the Ethiopian Emperor Menelik 11 hindered the progress of the company in the frontier areas. It sought trading

permission to conduct trade in the Boran Country in the southern Ethiopian frontier which formed some part of the Protectorate.

With the establishment of trading stations at Moyale and Dolo, the company began to direct its traffic trade course from the Lagha and Bardera in the Italian territory to Nairobi. This was by means of overland route via Marsabit and by means of Juba land along the border to Kismayu. This route was developed to encourage traders from Moyale to have an access to Nairobi. The company started a depot at Marsabit so that the traders could obtain their goods easily without necessarily going to Bardera. The terms of operation of trade during this period are not clear. There is no record showing its details and activities.

However, the Company had a difficult time because of the threats of Ethiopian raiders from the north and the Somali from the east. The Ethiopian government was rocked by internal fighting due to failing health of Emperor Menelik who was critically ill. The Ethiopian authorities had little control of their people in the southern part of the country and this resulted in the constant violation of the border laws. The records show that the Ethiopian hunters found that the southern Ethiopian frontier had plenty of elephants. The

hunters who were armed with guns also attacked the Samburu inside the Protectorate.

During this period the British agent, Zaphiro with a small police force found it hard to patrol and stop the infiltration of the Ethiopian raiders and hunters into the interior of the northern part of the Protectorate. Colonial records show that the Ethiopians and Somali threats endangered the British position in this region. Their activities caused a general movement out of the region by communities living along the border of Ethiopia and the Protectorate. For example, the Samburu who had settled in Marsabit, Mt Kulal and Mt. Nyiro in the northern part of the protectorate migrated away from some of these areas. They took a south-westerly direction down to Waso Nyiro and Kioromet (Isiolo) area in the North of Mt. Kenya (Jason Leshomo O.I. 1997). The Samburu were not armed with guns for they had no access to the Ethiopian supply of guns. This development caused the movement of the group from the border.

The above circumstances explain the movement of the Samburu to the southern part of Samburuland. In 1909. The bulk of these people had moved away from the Marsabit region and this made it difficult for them to obtain foodstuffs and other necessities from the north, Marsabit area. The Samburu

who settled at Marsabit and its vicinity, Laisoamis and Sunya, continued to shop at Marsabit while the rest, especially those inhabiting Waso Nyiro and Kioremet areas, turned to the Meru for acquisition of foodstuffs and other necessities.

In 1909, the situation at the border between Ethiopia and the protectorate had deteriorated seriously. This crisis was brought about more forcefully, by major Gwynn's report of 1909. It's findings drew the attention of the British authorities to the precariousness of the British position in the northern part of the protectorate and the need to be salvaged. Gwynn recommended for the extension of the boundary line into the southern Ethiopian frontier and the removal of the Boma Trading Company and its replacement by British officials. The British authorities upheld these recommendations and dully implemented them in the same year. This marked the inception of the British administrators among the Samburu people.

## 3.2 The Establishment and Impact of British rule on the Samburu

The Boma Trading company preceded the British administration in the Samburuland. Like the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEACO), the BTC opened up the interior of the northern part of the British East Africa Protectorate for

administration and trade. There were many reasons why the British authorities resorted to the use of Trading Companies as a means to open up the region for commercial exploitation and administration. However, one reason relevant to the study is the cost factor. They were careful not to incur huge administrative expenditures in this region. This view point was due to negative attitude to the latter because of misconception that it was poorly endowed with natural resources.

In 1909, the British Government brought to an end the trading activities of the Boma Trading Company and placed in its place a few British officials in the northern part of the Protectorate. The Provincial Commissioner in Naivasha, despatched captain. A.F. Archer, accompanied by the King's African Rifles (KAR) to Marsabit to take over administration from the Boma Trading company. In the same year Captain Archer started a military post at Archer's post (Mparuai) near the Waso Nyiro river in the southern part of the Samburuland. Archer's post began as a military depot for the newly created Northern Frontier Province (District) for it was situated midway between Moyale in the north and Meru in the south. The British instituted military administration among the Samburu for a number of reasons. Some of these reasons included the need for pacification of the warring communities and the exploitation

of economies of their subjects.

In the foregoing discussion it was apparent that the whole of northern Kenya remained unadministered by the British colonial government until 1909 because of political problems. For example, the confusion over the boundary between the Ethiopia and the British government had impeded the operations of the latter in the northern part of the British East Africa Protectorate until 1909, when the second demarcation was worked out. With the conclusions of the Boundary Commission, the British authorities found it necessary to extend political control among the Samburu in northern Kenya. The political process leading to the establishment of British rule in the Samburuland was quickened by the development of administration taking place in this region during this phase of British colonialism.

It became obvious that the British position in northern Kenya was in a precarious state because of the activities of both Ethiopian raiders and the Somali, and there was every reason to stop these activities. This is because the latter particularly the Ethiopian raiders and hunters caused an upheaval to the British subjects settled in this area. The first objective of the British authorities in this region was to stop the activities of the Ethiopian raiders from attacking the Samburu,

Gabra and Rendille communities. The British regarded these groups as their subjects. The British administrators had to send in a military force to combat the Ethiopian raiders in order to stop the movement of these groups southwards. They feared that this movement would endanger the existence of the white settlers in Laikipia and Central White Highlands. It was evident that the Samburu were in a great danger. In the words of W.E.H. Barret, the District Commissioner to the Northern Frontier District (NFD)

> "*the Samburu settled in the North - East of Samburuland, Mt. Kulal and Ndonya mara needed to evacuate these areas in order to avoid attacks from the Reshiat (Dasanetch) from Ethiopia*" (*KNA/PC/NFD1/0/2 Barret 1913).*

Although the British attempted to combat the menace caused by the raiders, the situation overwhelmed them because of the great magnitude of the menace and small number of military force operating in the vast northern Kenya.

British efforts were not only directed to the Ethiopian raiders but also to the Turkana cattle rustlers from the Suguta valley on the southern part of Lake Turkana (Rudolf). The Turkana were armed with firearms which they acquired from Ethiopia. They used these weapons to attack the Samburu at Mt. Nyiro, and ElBarta plains (Baragoi) in the north - west of the Samburu (*Kumar Lekoyoyo, O.I. 1997).* The British

administrators had to establish a military post at Lonyangallani in the north - east of the Lake Turkana in 1911. With an aim to stop the Turkana from attacking the Samburu. However, their efforts proved fruitless for these attacks were out of control by 1916.

It was in the above context that the British administrators asked the Samburu to supply livestock to the British military forces for meat ration. This was in exchange for the protection the British government gave to the Samburu and such was used this as a means to introduce payments by tribute to these people. The British administrators had problems in collecting tribute from the Samburu during this period due to inadequate protection from the Turkana and Ethiopian raiders. The community had lost confidence in the British protection and hence refused to cooperate with the administration in the collection of tributes (*KNA/PC/NFD1/1/2 1913 - 1914).* They argued that the British official had failed to provide them with protection from their enemies (Longuragurur, O.I. 1994). They contended that they had no livestock left because they had been taken away by their enemies, the Turkana and Ethiopian raiders (Sidaam)

Many respondents confirmed that the Samburu had refused to cooperate with the British administrators in the

exercise of collection of tribute and migrated from the new administrative centers. They cited an incident of 1914 when the Samburu then inhabiting Albarta plains (Baragoi), an event that took place during which many Samburu were killed and hundreds of thousands of their livestock driven away by the Turkana (*Kumar Lekoyoyo, O.I. 1997*).

It was under these circumstances that provoked the British to a point of attacking the Turkana.

In 1914, the British military forces organised a punitive expedition against the Turkana and brought back a large number of livestock some of which were distributed to the Samburu (*KNA/PC/NFD1/1/2, 1914*). They were assisted in this expedition by the Samburu morans. The British authorities carried out this action in order to re-establish the lost confidence of the Samburu in British superiority. In assessing the impact of this expedition to the restoration of confidence on the Samburu, S.E. Dick asserted;

> "*the Samburu confidence has been re-established by the recent expeditions to Turkana and handing over to them of large numbers of stock*" (*KNA/PC/NFD1/1/2,1915*).

They thought that the Samburu would cooperate in the collection of tribute as they would have no excuse of lack of protection of their livestock. The matter was misunderstood by the British administrators for the Samburu had lost considerable

number of livestock to raiders.

It was for this reason that the British attempted to compensate the loss of the Samburu livestock from the Turkana and Ethiopian raiders. It was, however, apparent that the recovery was difficult because of the large number of the Samburu livestock paid as tribute. Colonial records indicate that the Samburu paid many livestock for the tribute. The table below shows the size of tribute paid by the Samburu from 1913 to 1915.

| Year | Animals | Prices | Rupees |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1913-1914 | 3 oxen | @15/- | 4,815 |
| | 30 heifers | @60/- | 1,800 |
| | 802 sheep | @1.50/- | 1,293 |
| | | **TOTAL RUPEES** | **7,908** |

| Year | Animals | Prices | Rupees |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1914 -1915 | 400 Oxen | @15/- | 6000.00 |
| | 1600 sheep | @1/50 | 2,400.00 |
| | 50 donkey | @20/- | 1,000.00 |
| | | **TOTAL RUPEES** | **9,400.00** |

*(KNA/PC/NFD1/1/2 1913-1915)*

The above figures might even have been higher, given that the colonial tax paid by the Samburu was levied in terms of the size of one's herd. Also equally large quantities of stocks were eaten during the collection of the tribute.

The payment of tribute by the Samburu weakened their economic base as the productivity of their livestock economy continued to decline with the removal of some of their best

cows. The British administrators chose some of the best cows for their meat ration (Jason Leshomo, O.I. 1997). The last of this proportion of the herds meant the reduction of the Samburu livestock. This is because the young animals left did not immediately replace the old ones in the herds. The importance of this composition of cows in a herd was discussed in chapter two of this work.

### 3.3 Other Trade Links

The Samburu had developed other trade relations with their neighbours (Meru, Rendille and Somali) before the coming of the British rule to the Samburuland. In addition to this the Samburu also conducted trade among themselves on the basis of barter. They bartered livestock with the members of their community. As discussed above the British administration interfered with emerging network of merchant capital among the Samburu.

The coming of British colonial rule among the Samburu in 1909, somewhat changed the trade patterns in the region. For example, between 1916 and 1917, the British government closed livestock trade between the Samburu and other traders. (*KNA/PC/NFD1/I/2 1916*). They mainly cited disease as the cause of this action. Available evidence reveals that the British

authorities feared that the Somali traders who carried on a booming trade with the Samburu would deplete the Samburu livestock which was used by the British officers for meat ration. This concern was expressed by Mr. Kittermaster, the officer in charge of the NFD in 1916 when he remarked

> *"....very large number of sheep and goats have been taken from the Rendille and Samburu country to Nairobi - the Samburu have now parted with practically all their sheep and goats they have to spare and there will be very few available for export during the present year (KNA/PC/NFD/1/1/2/1916).*

The action by the British administrators created difficult conditions for the Samburu. Having no alternative the Samburu were consequently forced to turn to skin trade as a means of sustaining export relations in order to acquire non-pastoral products from the Meru. The latter exported maize to Samburu. The trade grew in volume in such a proportion that the D.C., Meru had to stop it as it was seriously affecting the Meru flour supply. Many of our respondents disclosed that the British were also worried by the scale on which the Samburu slaughtered livestock in order to obtain skins and hides for trade purposes. It meant loss of their meat ration.

The year 1916 was a difficult one for the Samburu because of drought and British policy that prohibited sale of

livestock. The livestock economy suffered severely from the drought and hence animals produced little milk. During this period, the Samburu slaughtered many sheep and cattle for meat as meat for one animal lasted only for a few days (*Leriano, O.I. 1997*). The consumption of meat at this rate reduced the numbers of livestock kept by Samburu during this period.

The British recognised the danger faced by Samburu livestock and permitted some traders to start "duka" shops among the Samburu. It was perhaps in this context that Mohammed Moti, a British Indian, established a temporary store at Archers Post. Moti bartered beads, maize, tobacco, iron ware and clothes with small livestocks such as goats and sheep. (KNA/PC/NFD1/1/2, 1916). The Samburu had to consume these goods during this period given that their livestock did not produce enough milk. They reduced the consumption of these goods in times of abundant rainfall of 1916 and part of 1917.

In the subsequent years the demand for nguruma (maize) among the Samburu increased because of poor rains and hence low milk production. The Samburu, therefore, traded large quantities of stocks in order to purchase agricultural food stuffs from Indian and Somali traders. Colonial records show that

during the First World War the Samburu reportedly sold about 10,000 sheep and goats and 1,000 head of cattle to the government for ration. The role of these animals for the operations in East Africa was significant (*KNA/PC/NFD/4/2/3).* According to Waweru (1992) these figures might even have been higher than these since such records would not reflect numbers of animals forcefully taken (Waweru, 1992, 180). The Government paid only half of the actual price for the Samburu livestock. This was economically speaking unjust, a form of robbery on the part of the British government. The British exploited the Samburu in their exchange rate involving livestock and modern currency. Available evidence reveals that a cow was paid for in terms of 3 rupees and 1 rupee for both a goat and a sheep (*Lentilalu Hassan, O.I*).

The impact of the above exchange process on the Samburu livestock economy was that it reduced its capacity to reproduce and sustain itself. It underdeveloped the former and developed the British colonial economy as the British used the Samburu livestock to develop their economy. The Samburu were paid less for their livestock.

Between 1916 and 1920 livestock trade improved because of the demand of the Samburu livestock by the government as a ration for the military and civil authorities.

Colonial records show that during this period the Samburu supplied 100, 000 sheep, goats and 10,000 cattle (KNA/PC/NFD 4/2/3,. 1920). What is more is that the government only paid half of the prices £35,000 for the animals. It is not indicated what made the Samburu to part with these numbers of livestock, given that these were years during which they did not experience famine, caused by drought or by other natural calamities. We conclude that the British authorities forced the Samburu to contribute livestock without necessarily paying cash.

### 3.4 The Alienation of the Samburuland

Between 1914 and 1920 the size of the Samburuland was reduced drastically by the British by colonial administrators.. The Samburu community occupied Oto area in the southern part of the Ethiopian Highlands, and the lowlands between these mountains before the coming of British rule in 1909. In 1914 the British administrators at Marsabit, led by R. Kittermaster, evicted the Samburu from Mts. Kulal, Nyiro, Ndoto and Ldonyo Mara and settled them in the southern sub-Samburu District near Waso Nyiro River. The British authorities moved the Samburu for two reasons. They came to regard the Gabra as their subjects and provided them with protection from

the Ethiopian administrators. They also evacuated their counter-part, the Samburu in the pretext of settling them in more safer areas..

The British authorities argued that the Samburu community needed safer areas than the Gabra because of threats from the Ethiopian raiders and hunters, and the threat from the Turkana. The Ethiopians and Turkanas were armed with firearms which they used to attack the Samburu and hunted for elephants. It seems, therefore, that the Samburu were not able to combat their enemies because they could not resist successfully the Ethiopian raiders and the Turkana who were armed with guns and ammunition. Colonial records also show that the British military forces were unable to provide the Samburu with adequate protection (KNA/PCNFD4/2/3, 1914). It was in this context that the British authorities moved the Samburu to the southern Sub-Samburu District in 1914.

Nevertheless, the above factors alone cannot explain fully the evacuation of the Samburu from their former land in Marsabit, and the mountainous areas of Kulal, Ngiro, Ndoto and Kisipul plains to the areas around the Waso Nyiro River. From available evidence the British authorities aimed at creating some form of bulkanization of the indigenous people in this period for easier administration. It was in the light of this that the

administrators separated the Samburu from the Rendille who owned jointly parts of the Oto areas in the southern Ethiopian Highlands and northern Marsabit. They found it convenient to unite the Samburu within the region of southern Marsabit and Kiromet (Isiolo) areas (KNA/DCNFDI/1/2. 1913 - 1914).

The concentration of the Samburu in the Waso, Ngiro, Kiromet and Lowa, we nyiro in the eastern part of Laikipia area created pressure on the grazing lands. This resulted in their spread to Timau, Nanyuki, Ichoki and Rumuruti in Laikipia District. Some of these areas were still unoccupied after the eviction of the Lpurko Maasai in 1912 as a result of the agreement between the British authorities and Laibon Lenana. The British colonial administrators beared the presence of the Maasai in Naivasha area. For instance, they thought the Maasai could be security threats to trade caravans. They also wanted to create pasture land for the white settlers. Oral traditions show that the Samburu were wealthy in livestock and needed more grazing lands. They were, however, gradually pushed out of Rumuruti, Nanyuki and Ichoki areas by the British colonial government between 1918 and 1919. They were evicted from of the whole of Isiolo and Laikipia district after the First World War. The colonial government was under pressure to allocate these areas to war veterans who were mainly ex-military

officers. The Samburuland, an extension of Laikipia plateau seemed an ideal area for that purpose. It was in this context that the Provincial Commissioner, for the Northern Frontier District (Province) called a meeting for the Samburu elders at Meru in 1920 and informed them of the eminent removal (KNA/PCNFD/1/1/2, 1920).

Available evidence shows that the Samburu elders objected to the suggestion although the administrator did not allow further discussion on the matter. In the following year the authorities despatched Captain R. N. Mahoney accompanied by the 5th King's African Rifles (KAR) to Waso Nyiro and Kiromet (Isiolo) areas with an instruction to evict the Samburu from these areas. Mahoney used great tact to persuade the Samburu to comply with the government programme. He and his team observed that the new area (Samburu reserve) was a dry and an unfavourable land for livestock. The authorities could not give in the to the Samburu objection. They were displace d from Isiolo and southern part of Waso-Nyiro. The whole community was moved to the northern part of the Waso-Nyiro River (The Samburu reserve). The impact of this action will be discussed latter in chapter six.

## 3.5 Summary

Merchant-capital helped to orient the Samburu pastoral economy to market demands. Consequently the Samburu expanded their consumption of non-pastoral products provided by the merchant traders. They imported beads iron wares, clothes and tobacco from the Arabs, Kamba, Somali, Swahilis and Zanzibari traders who came from outside their society. These traders imported small stocks (goats and sheep), of livestock products, ivory and rhino horns from the Samburu. The merchant trade offered some of the Samburu an opportunity to acquire and rebuild their livestock economy that had been destroyed by the effects of catastrophic natural calamities such as droughts and diseases in the later part of the 19$^{th}$ century. In the words of Spencer (1973) the Samburu suffered from a series of epidemics that depleted both the number of human and animal population during the 1890s they were struck by Lodua and smallpox. By 1900, however, the Samburu had fully recovered from these calamities due to the effects of merchant trade (*Spencer, 1973, 157*).

The establishment of British colonial rule in 1909, undermined the performance of the Samburu livestock economy. The British authorities introduced numerous restrictions on the livestock trade. These policies were to

affect fundamentally the structure of the Samburu livestock economy as the people responded to the imposed policy by offering their sheep and goats for sale as a viable livestock export. They made the Samburu people to act critically in fear and were reduced only to the status of livestock producers and consumers imported goods (Dalleo, 1975, 121). The continual exploitation of the Samburu pastoral economy by the external forces resulted to the general decline of its performance.

## CHAPTER FOUR

## TRANSFORMATION IN LABOUR PATTERNS LIVESTOCK TRADE AND MARKETING, 1921 - 1935

### 4.0. Introduction

This chapter examines the employment of the Samburu in the British colonial economy. As a result of this step the Samburu found employment both in and outside their district. The chapter concludes that the interplay of many factors account for the exodus of these people from their traditional livestock economy into the market economy. The Samburu also continued to engage in exchange of livestock and livestock products. The British colonial government instituted policies that created an unfavourable conditions for exchange for the Samburu. These conditions underdeveloped the Samburu economy in the sense that they reduced them to mere livestock producers and consumers of non pastoral products.

### 4.1 Employment of the Samburu and Labour Patterns

Prior to the year 1921 the British government employed Wameru, Wakikuyu and Wakamba for public works in the vast Northern Frontier District (NFD). It is, however, difficult to ascertain accurately the actual numbers of these people who worked in this region for the purposes of comparing their

figures with those of the Samburu in the service of the government during the same period. What emerges from the documentary sources is the insignificant number of the Samburu who were hired to look after the government livestock and act as Wagon drivers. By 1920, there were twenty Samburu workers who were hired to undertake these services (KNA/PC/NFD/1, 1920). The low level of Samburu wage - labourers emanated from the interplay of many factors. First, there was difficulty of getting the Samburu as the British labourers because of their strong attachment to livestock and cultural practices. It is apparent from the available evidence that the world of the Samburu was limited to their livestock which provided them with food, shelter and clothing. James Leletia, a Samburu elder asserted that; "*Suom nkishon Eltungana amu Ltau enshiwe Likai*" meaning livestock is the livelihood of man, it is the life of the Samburu (James leletia, O.I. 1997).

To the majority of the Samburu, therefore, waged-labour and money made no sense. In the words of Lekupe; "m*enyelo Loikop Siai Leshilingi*" which in literal translation means the Samburu did not know the meaning of a shilling and only knew about their livestock( Lekiraka Lekupe, O.I. 1997). The Samburu had strong inclination to their cultural customs and

festivals which were imbued with economic meanings. They practiced celebrations of (*Imungeti)*. These were ceremonies where they slaughtered livestock and ate together as a community. The Samburu found it difficult to disentangle themselves from this communal social spirit .

In the performance of Lmunget (plural, Lumungeti) the Samburu inculcate the values of moranism and manhood on the warriors. These values were related to identity and heroism, which made them desire to gain prestige within their clubs (*Lporor)* and the whole community (Lekupe, O.I. 1997). The characteristics of this institution contrasted with the British value system and caused protracted antagonism between the Samburu on one hand and the British administrators on the other. For the Samburu moran's employment was considered as an activity that sounded the death of the Knell on the community. In recognition of this fact, one respondent put it aptly; "*ketwo noji nemetli Lelero' it means a society without youth (Moran) is a dead society (Lelekatap, O.I. 1997).* On the other hand the British authorities perceived this behaviour as backward. One of the British administrators wrote.

> "....*Attention was drawn to the fact that the Samburu needed to develop shops and trade was to be promoted ... with a view to the encouragement of the tribe in useful occupation*" (KNA/NED/DC/SAM/1/1, 1927).

Moreover, the British had a negative attitude towards the Samburu because they refused to cooperate with the British administrators. The British regarded these people as lazy and spent much of their time idling and sitting under trees. According to the British administrators, the Samburu were only capable of looking after livestock and organized cattle rustling from their neighbours. It appears that this view influenced the recruitment of the Samburu as the cattle herders and wagon drivers.

Another reason why the British administrators found it hard to employ the Samburu was because of self-sufficiency of their livestock economy. The Samburu satisfied many of their needs from products derived from their livestock. These latter provided them with milk, meat, blood and, animal skins used for clothing and shoes. Skins also served certain social functions. They were used during marriage ceremonies and circumcision of boys. The people only turned to non-pastoral products, maize and sugar during famines and droughts.

Available evidence shows that the volume of trade goods among the Samburu was considerably low. For example, in 1924, 19 safaris of trade goods went to Barsaloi to the shopkeepers. The total amounts of weights were: rice 480 lbs, maize 4,508lbs, tea 65 lbs, Blankets 106, and American cloth

wished to see the Samburu employed as labourers in order to integrate them in a cash economy. It was in this context that an administrator in the district asserted.

> "*I think there is every reason to suppose that with sound administrative advice and help the [Samburu] would respond to any policy the object of which is the ultimate economic advancement*" (KNA/NFD/DC/SAM 3/1/1925).

The British found it difficult to employ the Samburu in practice because of the latter's attachment to their animals. Captain E. Erskine the officer in charge of Samburu District, had to use respectable Samburu elders to mobilize the Samburu to be employed by the administrators. In 1921, he recruited several Samburu young men for stock herding and as Wagon drivers. Others were to be mail runners for the 5th King's African Rifles (KAR). The report does not indicate the number of Samburu employed apart from documenting that some Samburu were employed by the government. The employed Samburu appeared to have come mainly from relatively poor Samburu families. These families needed no much livestock management tasks (Lakupe, O.I. 1991). These "*nkang'ite ltorobo*", which means people who owned a few livestock were motivated by the hope of rebuilding their herds through their salaries. However, there is no evidence to disclose

whether these persons ever used their salaries to buy livestock. The main reason was that they earned low salaries that would not make them purchase cattle or small stocks. Oral traditions indicate that an employed Samburu earned 5 rupees. This meagre wage could not sustain the person and his family (Lerete O.I. 1997), let alone for buying livestock.

In 1922 the administrators recruited 8 Samburu elders from each clan of the Samburu as chiefs and headmen. They were lemanges ole lemantile, L. Lekolool Lowabere and Leleruk they came from Lukumae, Nyaparai, Lomusi, Lpisikishu and Lorokushu clans respectively (KNA/DCNFD/Sam 1/1, 1922). These persons were used by the government to administer the Samburu. The appointment of the Samburu chiefs and Headmen was occasioned by the mounting pressure for the restoration of the Samburu alienated land to the white settlers. Official records indicate that during this period the administrators in Samburu District held several meetings with some Samburu elders on the subject of the alienated land and the extension of the southern Samburu boundary into Laikipia District (Ibid).

The administrators found out that the Samburu chiefs and headmen represented the Samburu interests instead of defending the government. For example in 1922, these

famines caused by droughts and diseases which forced them out of the pastoral economy and in search of employment outside the district . These calamities claimed a large number of livestock, especially cattle. Consequently, many families suffered loss of the capacity for and the reproductivity of their livestock and means to purchase non-pastoral products.

The need for alternative sources of livelihood therefore became prevalent. There were two main reason at this point why the Samburu aimed at acquiring jobs. First, so that they could get money to provide them with basic needs for individuals and their families. Secondly, looked for employment in order to get money to purchase livestock and start a new basis for pastoral subsistence.

The Samburu found considerable employment outside the district on the white settlers farms in Laikipia district. A considerable number of young morans got employed on white settlers' farms to herd livestock. Many respondents hold that a number of Samburu got employment at Marimarnet, Muge and Nanyuki areas of Laikipia District. They further suggest that the Samburu were mostly given ration of maize meal and milk during the tenure of their employment. The white settlers paid extremely low wages to the Samburu workers and instead provided them with a lot of foodstuff: milk

Although the white settlers liked the Samburu labourers because they knew how to manage livestock, their labour was however, unreliable. The Samburu labourers spent short periods on the European farms since they did not see the long - term value of these jobs. One respondent remarked that:

> "*There was no point to stay on the white settlers ranches for you cannot be able to save enough money to buy a cow. They paid us no money at all rather they gave a lot of food.*" (Lerete, Leletia, and Lesadala, O.I. 1997).

Samburu also did not stay long on jobs because they knew that at the end of a drought and famine there was going to be enough milk and performance of many cultural celebrations.

Natural calamities alone cannot adequately explain the increased numbers of the Samburu employed by 1929. The introduction of cash hut tax in 1928 among the Samburu no doubt played a significant role. From the above discussion,it is apparent that several Samburu then sought money to pay the hut tax, given that there were cattle trade restrictions imposed on the community. The Samburu elders pushed their sons to look for wage labour so that they could pay in cash hut tax (Leretia. O.I. 1997). However, Samburu labour did not seem viable because they worked on the European farms until they raised enough money to pay hut tax for a year, which was 2 shillings, and then fled.

Between 1930 and 1935, the number of Samburu working for the government multiplied considerably. The latter through the chiefs and headmen mobilized the Samburu morans to work on the construction of roads and killing of locusts. The administrators ensured that each clan of the Samburu contributed morans according to their number of families. In addition to this they contributed a certain number of elders to help in the supervision and in the control of the morans.

The supervisors made the Samburu morans work in difficult conditions. Many respondents disclosed that the supervisors made the morans to work for long hours. During this time they were whipped and abused. On many occasions they fought their supervisors who in turn retaliated with punishment. This made them work for a longer period, usually seven months (Lemarket, O.I. 1997). The Samburu also delinked themselves from public works where they were not paid any wages. The Samburu community were asked to feed the morans working on the public works. One respondent put it aptly: "*Nemutaki iyoo Lmuzungo (European) suom, kore paue eshunye e suom re nereuni nkulikai*" This literally means the British finished the Samburu livestock for as one group of livestock was slaughtered and finished another was brought in (Op.Cit). The mistreatment of the Samburu morans by the

administration caused them to move to the white settlers farms until the conviction period was over. Some of them left their homesteads and lived in the wilderness. This group caused untold troubles in the neighbouring communities.

## 4.2 Trade in Livestock and Marketing

Trade centers in Samburu District emerged with the establishment of British administrative posts. The history of these centers began in 1909 when the Samburu of the Northern Kenya were brought under control of the colonial state. By 1921 there were two trading centers in the district, Archer's Post and Barsaloi, the Headquarters of the Samburu District. The British encouraged the emergence of trade centers with shops since they believed that they would encourage the nomads to become sedentary (Dalleo, 1975, 127). This assumption was based on the principle that the Samburu would be drawn by the availability of goods and services in trade centers and settle near them. It soon became apparent that this assumption held no water. The British also believed that they would be able to monitor the trading activities so that traders would not cheat the nomadic pastoralists especially the Samburu herders.

Although the British promoted shopkeepers' trade in

these centers, they were, however, discouraged by the proliferation of many of these centers. The mushrooming of trade centers in the Northern Frontier District (NFD) came to be deemed as security menace. It was for this reason that the colonial administrators restricted the issuing of trading licenses in the district. For example the administrators only granted 4 shops trading licences in the whole of Samburu District in 1921. These were granted to Mohammed Moti, a British Indian, Issa Juma Mohammed and Ahmed Ismail, a Somalij (KNA/NFD/DC/SAM1/1/, 1921).

Available evidence shows that at this point there were no Samburu shopkeepers and itinerant traders. It appears that the Samburu had ambivalent attitude towards townships. They only looked at these centers as the source to provide the needed goods. Many of the respondents disclosed that the Samburu believed that trade centers made herders to loose their livestock. Lekupe succinctly put this point clearly when he stated that: "*Keperto Lkereng'eti na Keisho Ltung'ana ayaye suom ayaye entuikitin nematimali Lkereng'eti*". This literally means trade centers make people waste a lot of time and that town dwellers are lured to sell all their livestock for luxury goods (Lekupe, O.I. , 1997).

Nevertheless, the Samburu maintained a strong bond

with the trading centers. They obtained their goods from the trade centers and from hawkers. They traded in cattle, sheep and goats, and donkeys. Official records show that between 1921 and 1924 the Samburu's demand the merchant goods was low. For example, it is reported that in 1924, there were 19 safaris for trade goods that went to Barsaloi for the 'Dukawalla' shopkeepers. For there were 10,080 Lbs of maize meal, 106 blankets, 9 oil tims and 2,500 yards of American cloth (KNA/DCNFD/Sam/1/1/4, 1924). These figures are low for the whole of the Samburu community and some Turkana residents in the district.

One of the reasons for the low demands of goods by the Samburu was the self-sufficiency of their livestock economy. They were satisfied with some of their needs from livestock products such as milk, blood and meat. They also had a negative attitude to non-pastoral products. They believed that these would make herders lose their livestock - Lekupe put this point more clearly that:

> *"Keperto tauni, na Itungana Ltorbo letaun" it literally means trade centers make one have no inclination for livestock, and is a place for poor people (Lekupe o.i. 1997).*

Other respondents disclosed that the Samburu were herders and had no business owning shops. Between 1921 ad 1925

the Samburu traded in cattle, sheep and goats with the Indians and Somali traders in the trade centers. They exchanged livestock with posho or maize meal,, cotton cloth and to tobacco (KNA/NFD/DC/SAM/1/1/1921). The Samburu also traded with itinerant traders who moved about in their territory selling the same goods. Some of these traders included the Kikuyu, Meru and White settlers.

The Samburu livestock trade had many problems caused by the interplay of several forces. Among these factors were the British colonial policy, the corrupt traders, and natural calamities in the area. The British administrators imposed restrictive trade conditions in the Samburu district with a view to govern and control trade operations. The British authorities assumed that with a minimal number of outside traders in the district the administrators would collect revenue without many problem. It was, however, difficult to monitor trading in the milk, meat, blood, animals skins and skinshoes (Lepulelei, O.I. 1997). During this occasion their demand was limited to cotton clothes, tobacco, and cutlasses. Colonial documents show that these goods were on high demand among the Samburu for they were considered necessary. In the words of an administrator;

"*Meru, Kikuyu, and Nandi carry on a small trade*

*in tobacco, knives, blankets, and cotton clothes. THey are welcomed by the Samburu as they supply articles considered necessary, spend a long time acquiring a few goats".* (KNA/DCNFD/SAM.3/1/1922).

Also the low demand on the non-pastoral products was due to the fact that the Samburu were discouraged by the low prices for their livestock. Available evidence shows that the Somali traders paid low prices for the Samburu livestock. In reaction to this, the Samburu refused to sell their livestock. This fact is brought out by the complaint by one administrator who stated that:

> "*The prices of the Samburu livestock are low and yet the prices of trade goods are high ... the Samburu have been closed fist with their sheep and goats... their small wants are supplied by Meru and Kikuyu*" (KNA/DCFD/Sam, 3.1.1923).

It was in the above context that the administrators formulated a proposal for the Samburu chiefs and headmen to be advised in their sections with an objective to promote Samburu in trade in livestock even outside the district in places such as Nyeri and Isiolo towns. The proposal was implemented and the Samburu started to drive goats and sheep to other towns for sale and purchase of trade goods though for a brief period. With this, the Samburu soon realized that the trade was

involving and was not compatible with the demands of livestock management. They also experienced losses in the sale of their livestock because each herder sold a cow or two which was a sale and hence unprofitable. (Lerantileni, O.I. 1997). This trade essentially was uneconomical for the Samburu as they only sold one or two goats or sheep. It was , therefore, more convenient to sell to local traders.

Between 1924 and 1929 livestock trade gained momentum because of the effects of natural calamities and cash hut tax. From mid 1924 and 1929 the nature of the Samburu livestock experienced stress which was occasioned both by drought and diseases. Thus, in 1925, the Samburu cattle died in large numbers from pleuro-pneumonia and rinderpest and continued up to 1926. This caused a drastic decrease in Samburu cattle. In a report of 1926, the Samburu District Commissioner wrote;

> "*In 1925 all the cattle in the Samburuland suffered from plenro-pneumonia which caused very heavy losses. At the present [1926] cattle are still dying from plenro-pneumonia and rinderpest.*"(KNA/DCNFD/SAM1/1, 1926).

From available evidence, it is difficult to know how many cattle died during this period. This is because there were no

official figures for the Samburu cattle. However, the reality is that the 1924 figure of the livestock must have been considerable. Between 1924 and 1926, this figure had drastically reduced.

Of significance is the relative dependency of the Samburu on the trade goods in order to sustain their social reproductivity. Consequently, during these years, they traded largely in sheep and goat. In commenting about this fact C.A. Cornell, Acting District Officer, Samburu District, reported that 57 trading safaris consisting of Europeans, Kikuyu and Meru, obtained permission during the year to enter the district for trade. They brought in goods to exchange for sheep and goats with the Samburu. These trading safaris were thought to have effects on the animal population in the district. Cattle were not allowed to be moved at certain times owing to quarantine regulations imposed after outbreak of rinderpest (KNA/DCNFD/SAM 1/1,1926).

It is apparent that the structure of livestock economy of the Samburu was not only caused by the natural ecological process but also defined by administrative policy interventions like quarantine regulations on the Samburu cattle. In 1924 the veterinary department imposed quarantine rules on Samburu cattle thereby barring their profitable sale. As a result of this

move, the Samburu traded in sheep and goats only. This trade reached unprecedented proportion in 1925. The effect of it on the Samburu sheep and goats population became worrisome to the administration in the district. They protested thus;

"*...the total has decreased at very considerable amount of late, and this applies more especially to the sheep to the large number which have left the district with trading safaris. It is not uncommon thing for a man who a year or so previously owned only a flock of 80 to 100 sheep and goats to have now only about 30 and I think the time will come if it has not already arrived when the question of closing the district entirely for a period for the exportation of sheep and goats will have to be considered*" (KNA/DCNFD/SAM1, 1925).

Available evidence reveals that the purpose of the quarantine was to keep off the nomads' cattle from the market. The white settlers feared competition from the nomads because they invested heavily in exotic cattle in terms of veterinary services. Consequently, the cost for livestock production was relatively high. On the other hand, the nomads' cattle were less costly to rear in comparison. The white settlers, therefore, put pressure on the veterinary department to bar the nomads' cattle from reaching the market.

Initially the department refused to comply with the wishes of the white settlers. It was not until 1922 when the Rift Valley colonial authorities seceded in shutting off exports from the Northern Frontier District (NFD). Originally they sought to stop the spread of pleuro-pneumonia and rinderpest

suspected cattle to be brought into the white highlands from the pastoral areas. As one group pointed out the 1930;

> *"If the cattle traders re-opened trade it would jeopardize a large number of cattle by spreading the disease especially pleuro-pneumonia and because there is no other alternative route for cattle from the Northern Frontier Province through Lamu."*(KNA/VET/STOCK17/8, KABETE, 1930).

Between 1927 and 1930, trade in sheep and goats was beset by many problems caused by the decreased number of goats and sheep due to diseases and lack of market. The Samburu lost large quantities of goats and sheep in 1927 through pleuro - pneumonia and worms. It is estimated that during this period about 40% of the Samburu goats died (KNA/DCNFD/Sam1/1, 1927). As a result of this the Samburu withheld the sale of goats because of the conflicts between monetary demands and the cultural function. The Samburu used goats in the Lumung'et celebrations. During this time they traded mainly in sheep and to some extent in hides and other articles of demand.

Another problem the Samburu faced between 1927 and 1929 was the exorbitant prices for maize meal and low prices for sheep and hides. As an administrator put I.

> *"the severity of the drought which prevailed throughout the district during the year (1928) had the impact of increasing to an unprecedented extent both the supply of hides for sale and the*

*demand for maize meal"* (KNA/VET/STOCK 17/8, KABETE, 1930)

Under these circumstances, the Samburu were forced to slaughter bullocks (Lmongi) both for meat and hides for sale since cattle movement was barred by the quarantine regulations.

In 1930 sheep and goats trade deteriorated further from lack of market. The Samburu faced a hardtime in selling sheep and goats at Nyeri because of the effects of the 1929 famine on the Kikuyu. Commenting on the seriousness of the sheep and goats trade, the Isiolo District Commissioner reported.

> *"The demand of sheep at Nyeri felt considerably owing to the severity of several famine on the Kikuyu... I believe it to be a fact that NFD sheep and goats have on occasion been exchanged at Nyeri for a cup of tea".* (KNA/DC NFD/ISIOLO 1 (2, 1930).

In addition to the above factor, the supply of sheep and goats at Nyeri exceeded its demand because all the nomads from the Northern Frontier Province were only allowed to sell sheep and goats at Nyeri. Below is the livestock export trade table for 1930.

| MONTH | SHEEP AND GOATS | NUMBER OF HORSES & MULES |
|---|---|---|
| January | 862 | - |
| February | 732 | - |
| March | 6889 | - |
| April | 10153 | 6 |
| May | 3070 | 18 |
| June | 5415 | 25 |
| July | 7503 | 3 |
| August | 3474 | |
| September | 900 | |
| October | 64680 | |
| November | 1699 | |
| December | 6376 | |
| | 58,342 | |

*Source (KNA/DC NFD/ISIOLO1/2/1930)*

| MONTH | SHEEP AND GOATS | HORSES AND MULES |
|---|---|---|
| JANUARY | 10,091 | 8 |
| FEBRUARY | 10,236 | 26 |
| MARCH | 7,917 | 13 |
| APRIL | 7,266 | 36 |
| MAY | 7,138 | 7 |
| JUNE | 4,468 | 23 |
| JULY | 5,887 | 3 |
| AUGUST | 7,905 | 25 |
| SEPTEMBER | 3,225 | - |
| OCTOBER | 560 | 7 |
| NOVEMBER | 5,039 | - |
| DECEMBER | 119 | - |
| | 69851 | 146 |

*Source (KNA/DC NFD/ISIOLO1/2/1931)*

These figures are for the whole Northern Frontier Province; Marsabit, Moyale, Mandera, Wajir, Garissa, Gabra-Tulla, Isiolo and the Samburu districts. Although they appear

big their impact on the nomads was insignificant given the high number of herders who brought in sheep and goats for sale. During this period, many shops closed due to problems of sustainablity in profit making despite reduction of plot rents. The statements of District Commissioner of Isiolo Districts (Gabra Tulla, Samburu and Isiolo District in 1929) brings this fact more abundantly clear. He asserted that:

> *"the years [1930s] have been difficult trade depression and money scarce, it could not be expected that any district would be able to report a year of great progress and prosperity. "(KNA/DC/Sam/1, 1926).*

The acting Samburu District Commissioner, a Mr. D. Mckay, popularized the notion of ghee dairy among the Samburu through meetings with the Samburu chiefs. The Samburu raised Shs. 1650/- for purchase of Dairy kitchen for manufacture of ghee (KNA/DC NFD/ISIOLO ½ 1930).

The interplay of factors combined to cause the development of the ghee industry at this point first. The British administrators were particular to exterminate the barter system and introduce the cash trade among the Samburu. They were, however, in difficulty in devising ways of substituting barter trade with cash trade. because of the problems in the Samburu livestock trade, emanating from policy which barred the

movement of cattle from the District and hence the operation of small stock trade. The reproduction of capital through livestock trade was therefore undermined by the colonial policies.

In the years of 1925 and 1926 the number of sheep and goats had reduced because of the effects of pleuro - pneumonia and rinderpest diseases. The quantities was far reduced by the large sales of these animals. As an administrator observed, " it is not an uncommon thing for a man who a year or so owned a flock of 80 to 100 sheep and goats to have now only about 30". (KNA/DCNFD/Sam1/1,1925).

## 4.3 GHEE INDUSTRY

The concern of the British administrators at this point was how the Samburu would pay the hut tax about to be introduced among the Samburu. It was under these circumstances that they had to encourage the growth of the ghee industry to support the dwindling small stock trade. They nevertheless, were content with the indecisive government policy on the Lorrokzi plateau. The government was under pressure from the white settlers to alienate this plateau for them. It was therefore for this reason that the first initiative to begin the ghee operation in 1927 failed. In this year, the British

administrators constructed a dairy firm and kitchen at Maralal and equipped with a separator and churncarns. This process was halted because of the impending plan to annex the plateau (Op cit). Commenting on the removal of the Samburu from the latter, Edward Denham, the Governor of the Kenya Colony noted.

> *"Samburu you must know that Iorroki was not your country and you must leave it"* (KNA/DCNFD/SAM1/1, 1927).

The programme had to be postponed until later. The ghee industry was also hindered by drought and diseases. Between 1928 and 1929, the whole Samburu District was struck by a severe and prolonged drought. It was a difficult period for the Samburu because of poor livestock trade and famine caused by drought and locusts. There was an improvement in the ghee dairy from towards the end of 1929 to 1930. The Samburu traded (66,000lbs) of ghee to the traders. They were, however, paid low prices. "The Provincial Commissioner noted;

*"it is regrettable that the prices paid for the Samburu ghee have been less than half what they should have received"* (KNA/PCNFD/ISIOLO 4/1/4,1930).

In the year 1930 the British administration decided to start ghee industry in Wamba at the foot of Mt. Mathew

Ranges as an alternative site. A dairy equipment, Kitchen and quarters for the instructor were constructed at a cost of shs. 250/-. A Boran instructor was obtained from Marsabit. Ghee marketing commenced on 25th October, 1930. At this point the Samburu had come to look at the ghee industry as a source of cash. Within a month the supply of milk to the dairy firm became so large that it was unable to cope with this supply (KNA/PCNFD/ISIOLO 4/1/4, 1930). It was for this reason that preparation for the second ghee industry commenced and by the end of the year it was completed. This dairy was built at the Barsaloi Ford.

During the same year the veterinary officer, NFD took over the supervision of the Samburu ghee industry. In the following year the third ghee industry was opened at Kisima due to high demand of ghee and insistence by the Samburu for more dairies. With the establishment of these dairies there arose supervision problem. One reason for this was that the three ghee industries were hundred kilometers apart. The Provincial Commissioner reported.

> *"It was apparent that with the station so far removed, it will never be possible for the administration unaided by the veterinary Department to give the ghee industry the attention that in a normal year it may well merit". (KNA/PCNFD/ISIOLO 14/1/4,1930).*

In addition to these factors the ghee industry was affected by the climatic conditions. During the wet season the supply of ghee was high and vice-versa.

The export of ghee varying periods of 1931 - 1933.

| YEAR 1931 | WAMBA GHEE INDUSTRY | KSHS. | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6Th February, 1931<br>20th February, 1931<br>27th February, 1931<br>13th March, 1931 | 65 tins of ghee sold<br>"<br>"<br>" | 1,481.6<br>0<br>405.00<br>136.00<br>195.00 | |
| YEAR 1932 | Kisima Ghee Industry<br>19 tins of ghee sold<br>13 tins of ghee sold | 403.80<br>93.20 | |
| WAMBA YEAR 1932 | TINS GHEE LBS | GHEE LBS | VALUE SHS.CTS |
| WAMBAA<br>MARALAL<br>KISIMA | 76<br>53<br>44 | 2861<br>1966<br>1601 | 1589.43<br>1088.89<br>889.44 |

*Source: KNA/PCNFD/ISIOLO 4/1/14,1933*

| 1933 | TINS | GHEE LBS | SHS. CTS |
|---|---|---|---|
| WAMBA<br>MARALAL<br>KISIMA | 4<br>27<br>17 | 153<br>1010<br>633 | 91.80<br>603.80<br>398.69 |

*Source: KNA/PCNFD/ISIOLO 4/1/14,1933*

Apart from the impact of the climatic variations the Samburu were discouraged by low prices. Oral traditions reveal that the traders paid as low as fifty cents per 2 kilograms of ghee. One

of our respondents put it succinctly "*Nkichoyo tepechou Lkisich*" In literal translation, this means, we gave out our ghee freely (Lekoluai, O.I., 1997). The payment system also hindered the full participation of the Samburu in this ghee industry. The administrators who managed the Samburu ghee dairies took a long time to pay herders. For example, in 1934, the administrators suspended temporarily all the ghee diaries to allow clearing up of the areas of money due to the Samburu (KNA/DCNFD/ISIOLO/4, 1930). The articulation process between the pastoral economy and capital economy seemed destructive.

### 4.4 Hides and Skins Industries

Samburu traded in hides with the Wameru, Wakikuyu, Nandi and Somali traders. They were also paid low prices for their hides. In 1927, however, there was a rise in the prices due to the competition introduced by an Indian trader. The Indian Merchant came from Meru to Kisima in the Samburu District. He paid as high as 27/= per frasila hide. This was maintained in the next year by the effects of the drought on the Samburu livestock. Colonial records reveal that during the drought, the Samburu increased the supply of hides. It was reported that;

*"the severity of the drought which prevailed throughout the district during the year had the effect of increasing to an unprecedented extent the supply of hides for sale."* (KNA/DCNFD/ISIOLO, 1930).

There were two reasons for this increment. Firstly, during drought the Samburu had to slaughter bullocks and old cows for food because livestock produced little milk. Secondly, they also slaughtered dying cattle from drought.

Nevertheless, towards the end of 1928, the prices of hides dropped considerably and this tendency was maintained during 1929. The traders made insignificant profits from the sale of hides to market due to high cost of transport. The trend continued up to 1935 when this situation improved official records disclose that during this year the Samburu exported about 6,000 hides. This change was caused by improvement of conditions in the world economic depression of the 1930s.

As a matter of fact the trade in hides during this period was unprofitable for the Samburu. There are no figures for the prices of hides, which can enable us to see the extent to which these traders exploited the Samburu. There is evidence that the Samburu were paid extremely low prices for hides. This is confirmed by a protest from the British Administrator. He lamented;

> *"the Somali and the Indian traders does much harm to trade by forming rings and giving a stupidly small prices for articles on which he wants to make at least 200 % profit."* (KNA/PVR/DC/SAM1/3, 1935).

The administrators were forced to intervene and stop the hawking by traders who undertook their trade away from the recognized markets. In this way, they would be monitored in their operations. Not withstanding these efforts, the Samburu avoided trading in these markets for fear of being asked to pay tax or contribute money for unexplained projects by the administrators (Leshomo. O.I. 1997). Commenting on this situation, H.B. Sharpe, the District Commissioner stated;

> *"the Samburu does not realize he will benefit by an open market more than he can ever do in a hide and corner bargains with an astituted somali and indian trader. It is only education and certain amounts of compulsion that will open his eyes"* (KNA/DC/LAIKIPIA. SAMBURU2/, 1935).

**Summary**

Many Samburu did not want to be employed either by the government or by an individual during the first years of the establishment of the colonial rule among the Samburu. They were forced to work on the public projects for short periods.

In the face of a dysfunctional livestock economy as a result of droughts and diseases, a few Samburu left homes for employment both inside and outside the district. They, nevertheless, did not stay long for they were always quick to go back home and try to rebuild their livestock when conditions improved.

The Samburu traded in livestock with traders from outside the Samburu District. The livestock trade was affected by the interplay of many factors. Among these were Quarantine regulations and undeveloped infrastructural networks. The Samburu came to rely heavily on sheep and goats for trade. These conditions underdeveloped the Samburu pastoral economy and disadvantaged the community as compared to other people in the colonial political economy.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# 5.0. TRANSFORMATION IN LABOUR PATTERNS, TRADE, LIVESTOCK TRADE AND MARKETING, 1936 - 1963

## 5.1. Changing Labour Patterns

During the period between 1936 and 1963, there were profound changes in the nature of employment of the Samburu. There was an upsurge in the demand for employment in many sectors of the British economy colony. The Samburu acquired some knowledge of basic rights of employment. Further they gained experience in modern business enterprises that helped them attend to economic business in their district and thereby challenged alien traders. They, therefore, began to play a central role in trading activities such as shopkeeping, butchery, and livestock trade activities.

Available evidence shows that during the period between 1936 and 1940, the attitude of the Samburu to wage labour remained largely unchanged. This fact is attested to by the colonial state's forced labour policy among the Samburu community. The administration used chiefs and headmen to mobilize force labour. The Samburu morans to come out for road and dam construction, public works and the killing of locusts. Oral traditions disclose that during this period chiefs and headmen visited every household with an aim of obtaining

a moran for the government activities. One respondent recalled how the morans were hunted for by the headman Lempirias for almost a whole month. He stated

> *"the government search for labourers was a nuance among the Moran. One day when we were looking after out cattle we saw at a distant headmen Lempirias accompanied by a group of Kenya regiments and instantly knew what they were after. We ran leaving behind our cattle in the bush and for about a month we kept away from homesteads."* (Lekupe, O.I. 1997).

Many morans opposed the conscription of labour and left homes to look for employment on the white settler farms until the conscription exercise came to an end. They argued that government labour programmes were for the government and these were used to destroy the Samburu Community (Lepulelei, O.I. 1997).

Initially the Samburu morans did not want to be employed in the King's African Rifles (KAR) for they thought that they could not come back alive. As one respondent observed.

> *"We were told by elders that the military forces were not good places to work for many people got killed. Waged employment was not good place for morans"* (Lekoluai, O.I. 1997).

For this reason the administrators and chiefs and

headmen raided homesteads at dawn to capture morans for military purposes. There was, however, sudden change of attitude towards this occupation after the year 1940. They came to understand the economic benefits of working in the military forces particularly the King's African Rifles (KAR). For example it became abundantly clear that wage employment as a matter of fact helped to build the economic sustainability of the livestock economy, although it was preferable in periods of extreme drought. Indeed, other considerations began to count. Colonial records indicate that in 1940, about 300 morans from all sections of the Samburu converged at Maralal town looking for employment. The KAR recruited only 100 morans and many of them were turned away. The change of attitude may be explained as perceived attractions in the military as compared with other sectors of the economy.

From the above exposition, the trend for employment changed in favour of the military. It became a common phenomenon for many morans to ask to be given an opportunity to serve as volunteers in the military services. The colonial state explained this change of attitude in these words;

> *"...The motive inspiring these volunteers were probably the glamour of military uniforms and a desire to defend the colony"* (KNA/DC/Sam 1/3, 1940).

This was confirmed by many respondents. They asserted that many morans pleaded with both the administrators and their counterparts in the KAR to request their superiors to employ the Samburu Morans. The latter preferred to work in the King's African Rifles because its organisation and objectives were similar to that of the moran institution. This similarity is aptly put by one of the respondent who asserted that:

> *"Keara Moran Mang'ati eti ami nakore paye eponu kangite netukinemuat kaik (Lekupe O. O.I. 1997).*

That when Samburu morans employed in the KAR killed enemies and came home for holidays, they were honoured by the community by performing traditional rituals of cleansing and decorations.

In the Inter-war years, the Samburu Livestock economy experienced difficulties occasioned by natural calamities. There was, therefore, a reduction of livestock as further outbreak of disease generated compulsory livestock trade. The Samburu found it hard to subsist on diminished livestock resources as the surviving livestock produced little or no milk. They were, therefore, forced to rely heavily on the items of trade such as maize meal, sugar and tea. Since they had in-sufficient money,

they were forced to sell livestock in order to get cash which was used to obtain these items. It is on record that between 1941 and 1942 the Samburu imported considerable amounts of maize meal. This made it hard for the government to regulate its supply (KNA/DC/Sam 1/3, 1942). However, it was not all the Samburu who had enough cattle to trade for foodstuffs.

The above group of Samburu had to find an alternative source for economic livelihood, mainly through wage employment. Colonial records show that the Samburu morans employed by the King's African Rifles remitted some of their wages to their families. Some of these monies were used to buy food stuffs while others were used to purchase livestock. During the inter-war years, many Samburu people worked outside their district. Evidence disclosed that;

> *"More than 15% of the adult males of the district were employed outside of the district in occupations which enabled their family to subsist on less to cattle than formerly. Samburu are apt to accumulate wages to buy more cattle"* (KNA/DC/Sam1/3, 1942).

Between 1940 and 1963 the number of the Samburu working outside the district increased considerably. By the end of the Second World War, there were about 272 Samburu

morans employed in the KAR alone. This figure might even be higher, given that many Samburu morans got killed in the war and their number was not accounted for.

It was not only in the military forces that the Samburu found employment. They were also hired in the private sector. Available evidence shows that by 1951 the Samburu had flooded the labour market in Laikipia District. They had even started to spread to the neighbouring districts such as Nakuru, Kericho and even Kitale to work on the white settlers' farms (KNA/DC/Sam 1/3, 1952). Because they had no professional skills, they were mainly employed as herdsmen and watchmen. The white settles liked them because they had herding skills. It is, however, noticeable that during this period many Samburu got employed in growing numbers within the district.

After the end of the Second World War about 50% of the Samburu morans in the KAR were discharged. Some of these were re-employed by the government as `Laiqwanak' spokesmen for the morans and paid as Re-absorption Assistants and were given various badges of office (KNA/DC/Sam 1/3, 1946). The government had hoped to tap the vast experience of these ex-soldiers so that they could influence the attitude of the morans towards the government activities. They, in contrast, failed to make the morans to cooperate with the

government on public activities. This is partly explained by the fact that the traditional laigwanak had no administrative function apart from guiding discussion in public meeting by contributing ideas. There were growing mutual suspicions towards this institution. For example, the "Laigwanani Lesirkali", a member of the laigwanak was considered by the community as a spy and less acceptable among the morans. (Lenkaak, O. I. 1997). Available evidence shows that the administrators were forced to pay the morans and other Samburu when they performed these laigwanak roles in order to compensate for the harassment from the community.

The government had aimed at linking up the traditional moran organization with the government mechanisms on public activities. The Laigwanak had to educate his counterpart on the benefit of working on the public programmes. The administrators, however, failed to achieve this objective as the morans refused to cooperate not only with the "Laigwanak" but also with the government. A disappointed administrator protested that

> *"on the whole the experiment has been rather disappointing for great difficulty was encountered in turning out the moran for locust work"* (KNA/DC/Sam 1/3, 1946).

There were many reasons why the Samburu morans

refused to work on public programmes. The most important was that they perceived this as an instrument of exploitation by the administrators. They demanded for payment whenever they worked on public programmes. In the words of ex-soldier Ldos Lekoluai, a veteran in the Second World War;

> *"We came to understand the unjust British system and how they exploited and oppressed our people through grazing scheme and forced labour"* (Lekoluai, O.I. 1997).

The Samburu gained knowledge of their basic rights from the wider society. It was within the above context that the Samburu morans working with the King's African Rifles (KAR) championed for the rights of their people. They wrote letters to the Samburu District Commissioner protesting against the restriction on the number of cattle permitted on the Lorroki plateau. Reacting to this accusation the administrator warned.

> *"the Grazing scheme on the Lorroki plateau is very unpopular and was the cause of complaints of most Samburu soldiers on leaves and writing to their families from their units (KNA/DC/Sam 1/3/1944).*

From 1950 to 1963 the Colonial government recruited educated Samburu for various jobs in the district. Some of the Samburu elites included Paul Rurumba, Daniel Lenemiria, David Lentaya, John Lenayairra and Peter Lontitiyo. Paul Rurumba was employed by the government as a head teacher of Maralal

on the District Education Board Elementary School (D.E.B.). Daniel Lenemiria became head teacher to Wamba Preliminary School at Wamba township. They replaced the Maasai teachers in the district. They had a giant task in promoting Western Education among the Samburu. According to David Letaiya, the group organized home-stead to homestead campaign to popularize Western education in the district. They held meetings with Samburu Chiefs, headmen and elders (Letaiya O.I. 1997). It resulted into many Samburu children in the primary schools.

During the 1950s the Veterinary Department built an abattoir at Archer's Post and absorbed many Samburu as employees. They worked as slaughterers and hide and skin specialists. In this group were Lelekatap, Tumbo Lekupe and Letoimonga (Loririo, 0-1, 1997). This was done in the light of the administration policy to replace Meru workers with Samburu workers in the district. It was in this context that Lobuk Longoline, Stephen Lekulal, Hassan Lentilalu, Lekupe and James Leletia were employed in various departments in the district. This trend seems to have continued until the end of colonial era in 1963.

## 5.2 Expansion of Trade and Samburu Shopkeepers

In the years between 1936 and 1948 trade assumed a new dimension as the volume of trade goods expanded and there emerged native markets. Beginning from 1936 to 1940, the administration concentrated on the establishment of livestock trade in the district at the expense of hawking trade. The administrators realized that they had very little control over the hawking trade since it was operated away from the main trading centers, Baragoi, Maralal and Wamba. During this period the administration found it hard to collect taxes from the Samburu who used any little chance to trade away from these centers. It was in the light of this that they stopped the hawking trade licencing and created payment of cash tax of the so called native markets.

In 1936 the administration started three native markets at Maralal, Wamba and Baragoi and mandated market masters, veterinary officers to auction Samburu livestock in these places (KNA/DC/Sam 1/3/1938). Conflict over the auction of livestock was to become one of the major problems of this area. This practice was inconvenient to the Samburu, particularly those who lived away from these market places. They had their money held for long time since the auction was conducted once a month. The Samburu came to see this as a means to obtain cash for any desired action. The practice

became a permanent feature as the Samburu obtained collect non-pastoral products from the trading centers every month with cash from the auction. The auctioning of the livestock also offered the Samburu an opportunity to acquire money to buy trade goods.

The Samburu sold more and more livestock during dry seasons in order to obtain cash money to buy foodstuffs- maize meal, sugar and tea. Given that the livestock produced small quantity of milk that was insufficient to feed a family diversification of diet became necessary. Between 1942 and 1949 the importation of foodstuffs increased in Samburuland. This was due to the effects of drought and locusts on the Samburu livestock. Consequently, the traders (shopkeepers) imported about 1,239 bags of posho (maize meal) to the district in the year 1949 (KNA/DC/Sam 1/3, 1949).

Another source of cash money was the family allotment. This was money came from those Samburu working in the military forces who sent to their homes part of their salaried money. The money was used to pay partly to cash hut tax while the rest was used for maintenance of their families. The administrators' arrangement ensured that the Samburu could not buy livestock for rearing from their salaries on the ground that the district was overstocked, and resulted in the

degradation of pastureland (KNA/DC/Sam1, 13, 1949).

Although the Samburu acquired considerable sums of money through livestock trade and family remittance they however, lacked accessibility to trade goods. There was a colonial administrative policy which regulated the quantities of goods imported to Samburu District. For example, in 1948 the shopkeepers were allowed to import only 300 bags of posho when it was clearly apparent that the demand for this was much higher. The Samburu elders responded to this by protesting to the administrators in the district to release sufficient quantities of foodstuffs to be sold to the Samburu through normal trade channels (KNA/DC/Sam 1/3, 1948).

In 1948, the Samburu for the first time entered into *duka* business. Lepore started a shop at Loknnono near Maralal town. Towards the end of this year the number of Samburu applicants for trading plots grew to unprecedented level. The administration, nevertheless, refused to give them trading licenses on the ground that there were no gazetted towns in the district (KNA/DC/Sam 1/3, 1948). They also pointed to the low demand of the non-pastoral goods, particularly during rainy seasons. These factors explain why some Samburu directed their attention to butchery trading. In 1951 Namba Lekalja opened a butchery at Maralal town. He faired well in this

business as manifested by the fact that he bought a car and a lorry in the same year. He attributed his success to the assistance given by the administrators. They awarded him a meat tender to supply meat to the government servants stationed at Maralal.

One reason perhaps why many Samburu had interest in retail trading lay in the fact that there were no other available avenues to invest at this point. It was the government policy to restrict the number of traders in the district. Moreover, the administration permitted Kenya Meat Commission (KMC) to buy cattle from the district. It refused to give livestock trading licenses to individual persons (Mohammed O.I. 1997). As one respondent aptly asserted that:

> *"I had money that I got from my benefits from the KAR. The administrators did not allow us (Samburu) to purchase livestock either for trading or for keeping. I had nothing else to do with the money but invest in retail trading"* (Lekorere O.I. 1997).

In the 1950's and 1960s the Samburu applicants for plot trading multiplied considerably. The administration was however careful with the issuing of shop trading licenses on the ground that the Samburu should maintain their traditional economy that is keeping of livestock. In the early 1950s a number of Samburu men were issued with shop trading

licences. These included; Johana Longojine, headmen Lalaikipiani, Jeremia Leaduma, Letelen Lenaitorono, David Letaiya and L. Lenamarai. They were allocated plots in different parts of the district. Jeremiah Leaduma and Lenaitorono started shops at Marti trading center, while David Lentaiya opened a shop at Wamba, and Lalaikipiani and Johana Longojine operated shops at Maralal town. The above persons seemed to understand the options and stakes involved in generating wealth in the colonial economy. A number of Samburu men joined missionaries in undertaking Christian evangelism Johanna Longojine worked with the Biblical Missionary Church of Scotland (BMCS) as a catechist for many years. Others opted for other pre-occupations. For example, J. Leaduma and L. Lenaitorono were in the military forces. Yet others joined the teaching fraternity. A typical example was David Letaiya who was a teacher.

Rising through the ranks was not easy L. Lepore was a sergeant in the King's African Rifles. In the Words of Leaduma:

> "*the government respected us because of our war contribution and thus wanted to honour us by building decent houses for the Samburu ex soldiers. They also wanted us to live a different life from other Samburu*" (Leaduma. OI.I 1997).

Despite these experiences, the early Samburu shopkeepers had stiff competition from the Somali and Indian traders. The Samburu district Commissioner observed.

> "*Trade was almost entirely in the hands of Local Somali, Indian and Greek traders. There are a few Samburu who owned shops but they seem to be quite unable to compete with these alien traders*" (KNA/DC/Sam1/10, 1952).

It is evident that the Samburu traders had many problems with the intricate operation of shop trading. They lacked enough capital for stocking their shops with bulky goods. Consequently, they could not make meaningful profits from shop-keeping as compared to those with large scale operations. They were mainly retail shop keepers and stocked their shops with a few bags of posho, sugar, packets of tea, tobacco, beads, cotton clothes, and salt. The administrators in a number of ways tried to assist the Samburu traders. One of the ways it did this was to deny outsiders Somalis and Indians, trading licenses to operate in specific areas. For example, they denied Ismail Mohammed a trading licence to operate in the northern part of the district south Horr, Tuum, Lesirikan and Letakweny until 1960s. They also instructed the government workers to buy from the Samburu shops (Lokerere O.I. 1997).

It was not only the stiff competition from outside traders

that affected the operation of the Samburu shop traders. The problem also related to the influence of culture with its trappings. The feeling of brotherhood inculcated by the traditional socialization through initiation was extended to commercial trade. The Samburu shopkeepers gave credit to their relatives and friends and this often led to collapse of their shops. Nevertheless, many Samburu joined in this trade as the years went by because they considered this as a means to accumulate wealth in a faster way. By the beginning of the 1960s about 90% of the shops in Samburu district were owned and operated by the Samburu themselves.

## 5.3 Trade in Livestock

The period between 1936 and 1950 was a time of great difficulty for the Samburu because of the interplay of several factors. These included the government's restrictive livestock policy, lack of livestock traders, low prices of livestock, and the effect of droughts and diseases.

In the year 1936 the administration stopped issuing itinerant livestock trading licenses to Somali and other African traders. This was on the ground that these traders conducted trade in a dishonest and crooked manner (KNA/DC/Sam 1/10, 1937). Although this may form part of the explanation, yet

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available evidence seems to suggest a different reason for the action. According to this point of view, the administrators wanted to tighten the tax collection process among the Samburu, given their growing restlessness against the government programmes. This condition was as a result of the imposition of the levy force on the Samburu between 1935 and 1936. This was done as a punishment to the Samburu for suppressing evidence of the killings of the white settlers in Laikipia District in the years 1932 and 1935 (KNA/DC/Sam 1/10, 1937).

In the place of the hawking livestock trade the administration established the native markets at Baragoi, Maralal and Wamba. The Market masters conducted livestock auctioning once a month at Baragoi, Maralal and Wamba. During this period, the administrators permitted the Liebig Company to purchase cattle from Samburu District. It appears that the Samburu were impressed by the prices offered by the company as in response, they brought in large number of cattle. For example, in 1937, they earned Kshs. 185, 000/- in excess of the amount paid in poll-tax and local native council cess (LNC) KSHS. 48,985/= (KNA/DC/Sam 1/10, 1937).

There was, however, a downward trend in the livestock trade with the exit of the company at the end of the year 1937.

There is no reason given for the withdrawal of the company. Perhaps the high costs incurred in transport warranted the action because livestock could not be driven via the Rumuruti route. The Laikipia Farmers Association had totally blocked it on the health ground of health. Nevertheless, the cattle trade continued, albeit, at low levels until 1940. During this period, the Veterinary Department's Officer and the Samburu District Officer Major, H.D. White and A.J. Simpson respectively, were the only buyers in the sub-district.

In the inter-war period the livestock trade maintained a steady trend because of the role of the supply meat control Board. During this period the Samburu herders sold a total of 15, 858 head of cattle and 9, 865 sheep and goats (KNA/DC/Sam 1/10, 1945). Not withstanding, this livestock trade was affected by low prices largely due to drought and locusts. The fluctuation of livestock prices greatly discouraged the Samburu. For instance, in 1940 the price of cattle averaged about Kshs. 23 per head. This discouraged the Samburu and as a resu!t the administration was forced had to use excessive force. They allotted a certain quota of cattle to each clan of the Samburu. In addition to this they were required to contribute cattle depending on the members of the clan towards the war effort supply. It is difficult to know how

many cattle the Samburu contributed towards this programme during the period of demand. Of significance, however, was the fact that the government administrators did not pay fully for these cows. Also, the Samburu contributed this quota every six months (Letoijoni, O.I. 1997). The sales to the Meat Control Board between 1940 and 1945 is shown below:

| YEAR | HEAD OF CATTLE | HEAD OF SHEEP AND GOATS |
|---|---|---|
| 1940 | 869 | - |
| 1941 | 3,837 | - |
| 1942 | 2,693 | - |
| 1943 | 1,190 | 2,820 |
| 1944 | 2,422 | 3,767 |
| 1945 | 4,347 | 3,865 |
| | **15,858** | **9,865** |

*Source: KNA/DC/sami/3/1945*

The variation in the figures is brought about by the effects of drought and locusts. In the years 1943, 1944 and 1945, the Samburu suffered from famine caused by severe drought and locusts. During these years they contributed sheep and goats with a view to making for the deficiency. The Samburu were allotted 5,000 head of cattle a year.

The Samburu opposed this programme for three reasons. They were not happy with the prices paid for their livestock.

It is reported that;

> *"the Samburu have become heartily sick of compulsory sales during the year, but they were greatly encouraged by good prices. Before this the average price paid for a cattle was Ksh. 23/- per head and now about Ksh. 34/- - 50/- depending on the quality and size of the cattle"* (KNA/DC/Sam 1/3, 1946).

The Samburu were not allowed to use the money from the sales of livestock to purchase livestock because they would not use all the money. This is because their demands were simple and limited. They comprised of posho, sugar, tea, cotton clothes tobacco and such likes. The demand for these goods corresponded to the seasons when the milk production was scarce and had to rely almost entirely on these goods to supplement livestock's product.

Secondly, the Samburu livestock had decreased considerably over the years because of livestock trade and the effect of natural calamities such as droughts and diseases. Many respondents disclosed that in the early 1930s an average Samburu had about 50 head of cattle. By the 1940s this figure had gone down to 10 head of cattle. Thirdly, they further testified that the Samburu sold almost all young and old bullocks and this endangered the reproductive cycle of the livestock economy. This is because the Samburu slaughtered

bullocks in their traditional ceremonies such as "R*mungeti*" and marriage as 'rikoret'. In the absence of bullocks they slaughtered cows and this meant undermining the mechanisms of sustainability of biological self-reproduction (Lepile, O.I. 1997).

The colonial records show that the government was aware of the above danger. It exposed Samburu cattle to the Meat Marketing Board that replaced the Meat Supply Control Board. It was guided by the objective to purchase old cows and immature bullocks among the Samburu. Encouraged by this policy the Samburu livestock trade registered an upward trend in 1949 and 1950. In these years the Samburu sold a total of 7,185 head of cattle, 2,859 head of sheep, and 6,649 head of cattle and 2,860 head of sheep and goats respectively (KNA/DC/Sam 1/3, 1950).

In 1950's and 1960's, the Samburu experienced market problems for their livestock after the withdrawal of both the Meat Marketing Board (MMB) and the Kenya Meat Commission (KMC) in 1950 and 1951 respectively. The Samburu could not move livestock for sale either via Isiolo or Thomson's Falls (Nyahururu) because of the veterinary quarantine regulations and opposition from the Laikipia Farmer's Association. Consequently, for the last five months of 1951 there was no

sale of cattle because there was lack of livestock traders in the district. One reason for this was that apart from the administrative restrictions on livestock trading policy the individual private buyers found the cost of taking sheep and goats out by lorry too crippling (KNA/DC/Sam 1/3, 1951). It was under these circumstances that the Veterinary Department in conjunction with the administration of the district started an Abattoir Factory at Archer's Post.

The Abattoir started to buy the Samburu livestock though at extremely low prices. The Veterinary Officers bought a cow at Kshs. 48.20 cents. In the first year, the Samburu were, however, encouraged by the fact that the Abattoir bought old cows (Lentilalu, O.I. 1997). During this year the Samburu entered into the livestock trade for the first time. In the year 1951, Namba Lekalja was issued with a butchery trading licence to operate a butchery at Maralal town (KNA/DC/Sam 1/3, 1952). Lekalja was a member of the African District Council (ADC). The administration awarded him with a meat supply tender to supply meat to the government workers at Maralal town (Leaduma O.I. 1997). It also ensured that it was only Lekalja who operated a butchery in the town. Lekalja therefore enjoyed a monopoly of butchery trade in Maralal town. Of great significance is the fact that he bought

livestock from the Samburu for slaughtering purpose. It is, however, impossible to determine the number of livestock he bought per day or even annually because there are records to provide the figures.

The administration issued additional livestock trading licenses to more Samburu. In the 1950s and 1960s a number of Samburu became livestock traders. These included Leparimarai, Leluata, David Lekaso, Jeremiah Leaduma and Letalan Lenaitorono (Leaduma. O.I. 1997). This group bought livestock from the Samburu and transported them down to the Kenya Meat Commission (KMC) at Athi River, near Nairobi.

The Samburu livestock traders had many problems. In the words of Jeremiah Leaduma;

> "*In 1956, the government allowed a few Samburu to transport cattle and sold them at Kenya Meat Commission. Our main problem was transport for there were a few lorries in the district and these belonged to the Somali traders who were also in the same business*". (Leaduma O.I. 1997).

They had therefore to drive cattle from Maralal to Nyahururu town where they loaded them in train to KMC at Athi river. This was a distance of about 360 km and the animals lost weight.

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One reason why the government permitted the Samburu

to engage livestock trade was mainly because of the mounting pressure from the Samburu. In the 1950s the administration allowed the African Livestock Marketing Organization (ALMO) as the sole livestock purchaser in the district. It paid extremely low prices for Samburu livestock. Lenaitorono put aptly the marketing problem in the district when remarked;

> "*... when the Samburu brought their cattle for auction at the native markets, the administrators and the European traders did not allow the Samburu to bargain for the prices of their cattle. The Europeans only looked at a cow and prized it according to their wishes. Furthermore the auction was done after 3 months*" (Lenaitorono. O.I. 1997).

Many respondents disclosed that the elders, chiefs and headmen petitioned the administrators to allow private livestock dealers in the district. They contended that they would get better prices from open livestock auctions where traders' prices would be regulated by the forces of demand and supply. The Samburu herders feeling is best captured in this statement;

> "*you make me sell my cattle which I do not want to do, you make me sell it to you rather than to the best buyer and now you force me to accept ludicrously low prices for it* " (KNA/DC/Sam1/, 10, 1958).

From this it is clear that the administrators attempted to

solve this problem by allowing some Samburu elders and businessmen to operate livestock trade. Some of the Samburu livestock traders mentioned above were among them. Although this happened, the Samburu livestock traders encountered some problems in the trade. The most profound problem was that of capital. Because they had no source of funding, they were compelled by this factor to start joint partnerships in livestock trade in order to raise capital to enable them engage in this business. For example three Leparimarai brothers pooled their resources and operated a successful livestock trade business (Leparimari O.I. 1997). Even under this arrangement they were not able to pay at once the full amount of money for all cattle. They therefore arranged with the sellers so that they paid them in instalment. They were encouraged by good prices for the cattle and this greatly assisted them to make substantial profits. Available evidence shows that in the late 1950s a kilogram of meat was sold at 75 cent by the KMC (Mohammed O.I. 1997).

The Samburu livestock traders were also cushioned against stiff competition from well established traders by the administrative policy that prohibited external and even internal traders from flooding the livestock trade. Many respondents disclosed that there were only 5 Samburu livestock traders

during this period. There were Jeremiah Leaduma, Letelen Lenaitorono, Leparimarai, David Lekaaso and Leluata. These traders also bought livestock far away from the native market centers where the Almo agent bought the Samburu cattle. The colonial records show that some of these traders became successful. For example Leparimarai, Jeremiah Leaduma and Letelen Lenaitorono are recorded as successful Traders (Leparimarai, O.I. 1997).

## 5.4 Trade in Livestock Products

Between 1936 and 1948 the Samburu trade in hides was bedeviled by a number of problems. The most outstanding was lack of organised marketing strategies. The Samburu individually sold hides to local traders who exploited their ignorance of the operation of forces of demand and supply. The traders paid extremely low prices. It is difficult to gain the full extent of this exploitation because there are no records of these transactions. Many respondents revealed that the traders took away Samburu hides and skins almost freely. They further indicated that the traders cited poor quality of hides.

In 1936 the Veterinary Department was forced to intervene in the trade because of its exploitative nature. It applied rules for shade drying of hides in an effort to improve

the marketability of hides in the district. The veterinary officers instructed the Samburu on how to prepare ground sundried hides (KNA/DC/Sam 1/10, 1936). They also suspended the Lorroki grazing mark in order to avoid unnecessary marks on the hides. By the end of 1936, examined evidence shows that there was a general improvement in the operations of hides and skin industries in the Samburu District.

Despite the efforts of the administrators, however, the hides and skins industries continued to suffer from lack of adequate marketability. The local traders were only able to purchase small quantities of hides from the Samburu. For example in the year 1936, the hides export stood at 526 sundried hides. The administrative efforts to market the products outside the district failed. They did this in order to sustain livestock trade among the Samburu. During this period the administrators attempted to convince the old Mombasa hides and skins Company Limited to buy hides from the Samburu. This did not materialize because of the stringent conditions the company set up for the sundried and shade dried hides (KNA/DC/Sam 1/3, 1937).

The hides and skins industry was further affected by the establishment of the grazing schemes on the Lorroki Plateau in 1936. The administrators removed all the goats from the

plateau to low-country and left behind a small number of sheep on the plateau. They also concentrated on the implementation of the grazing controlled scheme at the expense of the industry. By 1940 the price of hides in the industry had completely plummeted.

By 1949, the Samburu Local Native Council in its development planning included items for the construction of hides band and purchase of hides in 1950 estimates. In the same year the Veterinary Department selected two Samburu; Lesorongol and Lomewret, for training in hides and skins handling at Ngong. Veterinary Training School. They were from Lpisikishun clans. Following these efforts the hides and skins industry registered considerable improvement. For instance, in the year 1951, hides and skin exported were 21,247 hides and 43,155 skins. These figures were a result of the establishment of the Abattoir at Archer's Post in 1950. The Abattoir factory aimed at the production of hides, dried beef, fat bone and food meat fertilizers. Its opening offered the Samburu a market for their livestock products.

For the first time, the administrators permitted the Samburu to operate hides and skins trading licenses. In 1951, Namba, Lakalja was issued with a butchery, hide and skin trading licence. He was followed by other Samburu traders

such as Jeremiah Leaduma and Letelen Lenaitorono in the subsequent years. They sold hides and skins to the Old East African Trading Company and Mombasa Hides and Skins Limited. The following were hides and skins exported from Samburu District between 1956 and 1959

| YEAR | HIDES | SKIN |
|---|---|---|
| 1956 | 3,492 | 20,177 |
| 1957 | 11,646 | 85,046 |
| 1958 | 4,700 | 53,225 |
| 1959 | 11,346 | 66,114 |

*Source;* KNA/DC/sam I/1959

The hides and skins trade was heavily affected by drought and diseases. In the dry season, the supply of the hides and skins indicated an upward trend. During this period, the Samburu supplemented the scarce milk with meat of goats and sheep and very rarely of cattle. They also sold hides and skins to trade with an aim to acquire posho and other valuable articles of trade. (Lepartngat O.I. 1947). In the wet season the consumption of meat declined thereby reducing the supply of hides and skins. Furthermore, during droughts, the quality of hides was low. Many respondents attested to the fact that traders refused to buy hides during such times because of their

poor quality.

Between 1951 and 1960 the Samburu relied heavily on the hides and skins trade because of the fluctuation in livestock trade. The research findings reveal that skins came mainly from the low country (Baragoi, Wamba, Kauro) since the administrators had removed all the goats from the Lorroki plateau to the lowland in 1936. They also restricted the number of sheep on the plateau. The Lorrokian people became dependent mainly on the hides for trading purposes.

The British colonial policy on the hides and skins industry helped improve the quality of these products. In 1951, the administrators sent 30 Samburu and Turkana men to Ngong near Nairobi for training as instructors in hides and skins handling. After the training, they were posted in Lorroki, Wamba, Baragoi, Archer's Posts to work in the Abattoir and Kauro. Some of the instructors were Tumbo Lekupe, L. Lotoimaga, Lemangaro, L. Leboko and L. Lelekatap. It appears that they performed well and there was a general improvement in the quality of hides and skins produced in the district. In official reports, it is reported that:

> "*the instructors on the whole have done a good work particularly in the low country* (KNA/DC/Sam 1/10, 1955).

The Samburu herders sold large quantities of hides and

skins in the late 1950s because they believed this was the most appropriate means to acquire cash to pay for tax and supplement their livestock products. The small stock reproduces kids within a short period. This characteristic helped them to multiply at faster rate than cattle. This explains why they perfected the art of preparing hides and skins towards the beginning of the 1960s.

### 5.5 Ghee Industry

The Ghee industry gained popularity among the Samburu when they realized its economic advantages. In 1936, the Samburu chiefs and headmen led, by Lemanges Lemantile, asked the administrators to allow them to establish many ghee dairies in Samburu district. Following this meeting they started 2 more ghee dairies on Lorroki plateau at Maralal and Sirata Oirobi.

Despite the above measures, the Samburu ghee industry had a number of problems. The traders concentrated their efforts on keeping the quality of ghee low in order to buy it cheaply. As the District Officer of Samburu Division noted;

> *"the traders have done considerable amount of harm on ghee industry by persuading the natives to bring in home made ghee which they buy at cheaper rates."*

(KNA/DC/Maralal/5/4/1936).

The administration arranged for the Samburu to bring their ghee to the Native Council Markets at Baragoi, Maralal and Wamba where they were auctioned.

This assistance from the government enbled the Samburu herders to establish more and more ghee dairies on the Lorroki plateau. By 1938 the position on the plateau was that ghee dairies existed within 8 miles of every home stead. The table below shows the Ghee export between 1942 and 1945.

| YEAR | TINS | GHEE (LBS) | KSHS. |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1942 | 362 | 9.032 | 6.669.50 |
| 1943 | 136 | 5,182.86 | 3.360.00 |
| 1944 | 266 | 13.114.97 | 10.923.90 |
| 1945 | 1,033 | 49.898.71 | 44.224.00 |

*Source* KNA/DC/sami/3/1945

The Ghee industry was also affected by climatic conditions. The supply of Ghee depended on the seasons. For example, in 1943, the Samburu supplied 136 tins of ghee because of the severe starvation that resulted from abnormally low rainfall and invasion of locusts. During this occasion the cattle produced insufficient milk that could not produce enough ghee. As a result of good rain on the Lorroki plateau the ghee supplies increased from 13,114.97 lbs in 1994 to 49,898.71

lbs in 1945.

In the year 1948, the administrators suspended the operation of the ghee industry in Samburu District. They considered the Lorroki Plateau as a primarily ranching country. They also contended that the zebu type of Samburu cattle produced low quality of milk. Nevertheless available evidence shows that there was a management problem which led to the closure of the Ghee industry by the administrators. During this period, there were only two qualified veterinary officers in the district. This made it hard for them to monitor the ghee industry effectively. In addition to this the administrators wanted to turn the district into a beef producing area. They, therefore, promoted the idea of beef production and its related hides and skins industry (KNA/DC/Maralal, 2/5/4. 1948).

**Summary**

The labour process of the Samburu was characterized by a growing change of attitude in favour of wage employment. This change of attitude was the product of a combination of many factors. Some of these included the role of natural calamities such as diseases locusts and drought which undermined the growth of the livestock economy. Consequently, many Samburu were forced out of the district in

search of an alternative economic source of livelihood.

The Samburu also came to understand the advantages of livestock trade and entrepreneurship in butchery business. Although they engaged in these trading activities in large number in the 1950s and early 1960s, lack of capital, and cultural conservation constituted the main obstacles. As a way to surmount these problems they devised various approaches and methods which enabled them undertake and realize successful trade operations. Among these approaches was the formation of the joint business partnership.

One area that the Samburu traders proved shrewd traders in was livestock and livestock products trade. They avoided trading in competitive trading centers and operated in the rural areas where outside traders feared to trade. They further marketed their livestock in the distant urban market centers such as Nairobi and Isiolo. On their part, the administrators promoted Samburu trading activities through selective issuing of trading licenses. Furthermore, the administrators encouraged the Samburu traders to operate within specific areas where they enjoyed some degree of monopoly far away from outside traders.

# CHAPTER SIX

# TRANSFORMATION OF THE SAMBURU LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT 1921-1963.

## 6.0 Introduction

The Samburu livestock economy underwent profound changes in the period between 1921 and 1963 because of the impact of colonial policies. These policies resulted in an unbalanced relationship between livestock and pastureland in Samburuland and this undermined the traditional livestock management strategies. Inadequate pastureland was caused by shortage of land due to earlier alienation of large chunks of Samburuland by the British colonial authorities in their new approach to livestock organization and exploitation of the Samburu rangeland.

The British colonial authorities were compelled to formulate new strategies for livestock management to repair the damage caused by their distortion of the Samburu traditional livestock management systems. Among the strategies initiated were grazing on the basis of controlled programmes and adopting a destocking policy. The articulatory effects of these measures proved cumbersome and often untenable because of financial constraints and the harsh ecological nature of Samburuland.

## 6.1 Consequence of Land alienation on the Samburu livestock economy.

By the year 1920, the Samburu herders had already lost large portions of pastureland to the Turkana in the north-west, Gabra and Rendille in the north, Boran in the north-east and to the European settlers in the south (Fumagalli, 1977/73) After the end of the First World War many, veterans, mostly senior military officers, came to the Kenya colony. Their coming caused the need for further alienation of land which was difficult to come by due to shortage of such alienable land. It appears that the only left land for alienation was the Samburuland that formed part of the Laikipia District which had not been alienated during the removal of the Purko Maasai in 1904 and 1911 respectively. Before 1920, the Samburu had been removed from the Nanyuki and Ichoki areas in the east of Nyahururu and Rumuruti in Laikipia District to create a land for the first White settlers.

In 1921, the British authorities evacuated the Samburu from Kiromet (Isiolo), Waso Nyiro Ldonyo Nyiro, in Isiolo and Ichoki in Laikipia districts respectively and settled them in a newly created Samburu district (Reserve). The administrators had to use excessive force because the Samburu refused to cooperate with the military forces. They felt that the

government had already taken a lot of their pastureland and had no more land to graze their animals (Leshomo O.I.1997). Prior to this movement the British colonial government had pushed out the Samburu from Timau, Nanyuki and Rumuruti areas to the southern part of the river Waso Nyiro and Isiolo areas.

The Samburu had hardly settled down in Barsaloi, Lorroki Plateau and Wamba areas when they organized a delegation to the Acting Samburu District Commissioner, Captain R. Mahony at Barsaloi, the headquarters of Samburu District. The delegation demanded for the extension of the southern Samburu boundary (KNA/NFD DC/SAM 1/3, 1922). The delegation of Samburu elders, led by L.Leleruk and L.Lemantile, asked the Commissioner for inclusion of Banyangala, Seiya, Suguta Marmar and Kirimon into the "Samburu Researve". The District Commissioner responded by making recommendations which he forwarded to the Gorvernor of the Kenya colony.

The above situation was complicated by the interference of the White settlers in Laikipia district. They opposed the demands by the Samburu on a number of grounds. First, the white settlers contended that the Samburu livestock was infected with endemic diseases and their close proximity would endanger their livestock. Secondly, they contended that the Samburu had no moral right to these areas for they did not

belong to them but rather to the Lpurko Maasai who had been ejected from the Laikipia plateau through the colonial government and Lenana's agreement of 1904 and 1911.

It is evident that the Samburu needed more grazing land for their livestock. In 1924, the Samburu elders, chiefs and headmen held a crucial meeting with the Acting Samburu District Commissioner, Mr Cornell at Barsaloi. The deliberations focused on the critical situation of Samburu grazing grounds. The Samburu representatives, L.Leleruk and L.Lemantile, requested the D.C. for the removal of the Turkana from the Elbarta plains. The Samburu thought that the evacuation of the latter would create more grazing grounds for the Samburu livestock (Lelaono, 0.1.1997) The Samburu suggestion that they be granted more grazing land was rejected because the British authorities regarded the Turkana as more hard working than the Samburu.

The nature of the Samuru Reserve was in itself another problem. It was pointed out in chapter two that the " Lpurkel" low country of Samburuland was characterized by high aridity, scarcity of water and fragile ecological systems. As a matter of fact, much of Samburu District lies in the Lpurkel country. From this we can, therefore, safely conclude that the Samburu herders had hard time in managing livestock in the low areas of

their country. It is apparent that the latter could not accommodate the whole lot of livestock of the Samburu community, given that they were prohibited from moving out of the reserve.

Available evidence shows that during the early 1920s the Samburu possessed large populations of animals. For example, the estimates of cattle population for 1922 are shown below.

| Cattle | Sheep | Goats | Donkeys |
|---|---|---|---|
| 150,00 | 130,000 | - | - |

*Source: KNA/DC NFD/SAM 1/3/1929*

The British administors were only interested in the domestic herbivores for the reason of minimizing the amount of pressure exerted on the grazing grounds in the Samburu Reserve. Also of significance was the fact that the actual figures might have been higher than presented above because Samburu would have probably hidden some of their livestock from the British administrators for fear of being charged much more higher animal taxes. (Lemarkat. 0.1.1997). It was also a taboo in Samburu land to pin point animals when counting the way the administrators did.

Under these circumstances the Samburu were compelled to devise an appropriate strategy for exploiting their ecological environment. Oral traditions reveals that the Samburu divided themselves into groups, *of Lpurkel Enyekwe* and *Lorere Lodonyo*. This means, inhabitants of Lowland and highland. A big number of the Samburu, about numbering 80 homesteads found settlement on top of the Lorroki plateau, in the region of Kirimon, Kilele, Klsima, Marti, Engare Narok and Naborkeju. It is difficult to know the total number of livestock herded in these areas. Nevertheless, what is evident is that these families grazed about 80,000 head of cattle (Lemarket, O.I. 1997). They were attracted to the plateau by heavy rainfall, abundant grass and water and also the freedom from all forms of stock diseases.

If we go by the livestock estimates of 1922 then about 70,000 head of cattle were herded in the Lpurkel Engwekwe in the (Low country) particularly in Barsaloi, Swari, Wamba and on the footholds of Mts Ndoto and Mathew Ranges. The Samburu were prohibited from grazing in the hill tops of these mountains as they formed part of the Great North Game Reserve. Oral traditions indicate that the Lpurkel Enywekwe had larger proportion of sheep , goats, and camels than the Lorroki plateau. This is because goats and camels are adapted

to low country (Lelekatap O.I. 1997).

The clans found on the Ipurkel Enywekwe included Lukumae, lorokushu, Longelli and some sub-clans of Lmasula-Kurtugeta Surto. These clans preferred to herd large numbers of sheep, goats and camels in the low land because of their adaptability to it. On the other hand, Lpisikishu, Ngwesi, Lomusi, some sub-clans of Lmasula (Lmosiat, Lmarato, Lparsipia) and Nyaparai settled on the Lorroki plateau. These clans mostly kept sheep goats, and cattle. The latter are well adapted to Highland conditions (Lesangurunguri. O.I. 1997).

The implication of the above arrangement was detrimental to the grazing grounds. The whole pastureland was continuously under livestock. Under these circumstances the Samburu herders had no opportunity to practise patterns of their old traditional grazing patterns, determined by climatic conditions, and availability of water and pastures. The colonial programme resulted in overcrowding of animals around water points where pasture was rapidly consumed in the dry seasons (Lesangurunguri, O.I. 1997). This situational function of rotational grazing could work perfectly where the land carrying capacity had not yet reached its optimal point and was also a basic requirement for pastoral sustainablity.

It is evident that the colonial administrative coercion

made Samburuland reach its optimal level too early. The District Commissioner reported,

> *"During the months of August, September and October, 1928, the Samburu country was grazed to its maximum capacity. It was found inadequate to accommodate all the stock to which it contained"* (KNA/DC/NFDDC/SAM 3/1,1928).

From this source we learn that the Lorroki plateau had over 120,000 head of cattle, 140,000 sheep and goats. It is well worthwhile to note that overgrazing on the Plateau had also contributed a by large number of wild herbivores of zebra, wildbeast, and impala. Available evidence shows that this Plateau is homeland to the biggest numbers of wild herbivores in the whole Samburu district. This is because this area is a grassland country.

Faced with such conditions, the Samburu herders had difficult options to make if the probability of saving at least a small number of their livestock was something to go by. They were, therefore, forced to choose between letting animals graze in the open glassland where the grass was scarce but the area was free from livestock diseases or to graze them in areas afflicted with poisonous weeds of Tinga in the Plateau region. The forested areas of Mt. Nyiro, Ndoto and Mathew Ranges were infested with *Saati-* a poisonous grass. The latter grazing areas were chosen by the majority of the Lpurkel Enyekwe

during the 1928 and 1929 drought. At the end of the drought period, however, colonial data shows that they lost a large number of cattle (KNA/DC/NFD/DC/Sam 3/1/1928).

Between 1928 and 1929, the British administrators found it necessary to step in and seek for a short term solution to the crisis of the Samburu livestock's needs for grazing. It was within this context that the Provincial Commissioner, Northern Province, R.W. Hemsted, travelled to Barsaloi and announced to the Samburu his decision to permit their grazing in parts of the River Waso Nyiro and its vicinity, Basilinga Ford and Archer's post in southern part of the district. He also informed them that they were not allowed to settle in the southern part of the River Waso Nyiro but only undertake periodical grazing of their livestock on both sides of the river (KNA/DNFDPC/Sam 3/1, 1928).

At the end of the dry season in 1929, only a small number of the Samburu returned to their Reserve. The majority of them settled along boundary areas of the district following the dissolution of the Samburu District and its amalgamation to Isiolo and Gabra Tulla districts. The new district was now Isiolo District. This measure seemed to have temporarily helped overgrazing as the Samburu livestock spread into parts of the newly created district. On the Mt. Nyiro areas, the

Samburu crossed over to Mt. Kulal in the North-west of Marsabit district (Op. Cit).

At this juncture, the Samburu herders mainly struggled with the inconvenience created by the indecisive question of the ownership of the Lorroki plateau. The history of this issue went back to 1927 when the Governor of the Kenya Colony, Sir, Edward Denham, informed the Samburu that the Lorroki Plateau was not their land and they should vacate it. Nevertheless, the Samburu had defied the order and remained on the Plateau.

From this point, it appears that the government was under pressure from the White settlers in the Laikipia District to alienate the Lorroki Plateau and integrate it to Laikipa District. The White settlers contended that the Plateau was an extension of Laikipia Plateau and it used to belong to the Lpurko Maasai who had been removed by the government in 1911 (Fumagalli, 1977, 170 - 174). The Samburu had contested this claim on the ground that they used to occupy the Lorroki plateau before the outbreak of the Laikipak wars of the 1880s (Lemoosa, 1996 3-5).

Between 1930 and 1933, the British authorities desperately attempted to resolve the question of the right of ownership of the Lorroki Plateau. In 1930, Sir Edward Grigg,

the Governor of the Kenya Colony formed a committee to examine the possible areas that would be an alternative to the Lorroki Plateau for possible occupation by the Samburu. The committee interviewed a number of Samburu elders in Barsaloi, Archer's Post and Basilinga Fords and left via Nanyuki to Nairobi. They discussed with the Samburu their preferable grazing areas and the history of the Lorroki Plateau. However, nothing of substance came out of this effort.

In the latter part of 1932 and at the beginning of the 1933, the Kenya Land Commission (KLC), chaired by Sir Morris Carter, Captain F.O.B. Wilson and accompanied by the Provincial Commissioner for NFD, R.W. Hemsted, conducted inquiries among the Samburu both in the lowland and the Lorroki Plateau about their land claims and grievances over livestock and grazing grounds (Kenya Land Commission evidence, 1933, 1567 - 1569, 1713 - 1715). The Committee also organized a meeting attended by the Samburu and White settlers from Laikipia District in the Lorroki Plateau. A very fascinating witness of them all was Mzee Lekisima. He stood up and informed the gathering that:

> *"In the midst of this gathering there are Lekisima and Lekelele members. These persons are not young neither their families nor their names, Lekisima and Lekelele. Mine is simply to demonstrate a basic fact*

*that the Samburu in the Lorroki plateau are as old as these places" (Lekoluai, O.I. 1997).*

It was perhaps due to these reasons that the Kenya Land Commission awarded the Lorroki Plateau to the Samburu community in 1934 (KLC evidence, 1932, 1605).

Available evidence shows that towards the end of the 1920s and at the beginning of the 1930s, the Samburu were struck by a series of disasters which were caused by droughts and the presence of locusts. For example, in 1933, the Samburu herders experienced an abnormal drought occasioned by shortage of rainfall and the invasion of locusts on the grass. During this period the Samburu herders also lost about 20% of their cattle through the effects of drought, Bovine Pleuro pneumonia and 'Embene' weed poisoning plants (KNA/NFDDC/SAM 1/3, 1933).

It is apparent that the solution of the Samburu livestock crisis lies beyond the simple extension of the grazing ground in Isiolo and Laikipia districts. There was an ecological crisis which worsened the Samburu pastoral problem.

## 6.2 Grazing on a Controlled Scheme and the Destocking Programme

By the year 1933 the deteriorating state of Samburu pastureland had crystally emerged as a problem and it was appreciated by the Kenya Land Commission. A shocked Commissioner of the Kenya Land Commission (KLC) warned that:

> "*The Samburuland experienced a depressing accounts of grazing. The whole area was grazed down. It never looked like a country that could carry a lot of cattle. And the land to the east of the Mathew Ranges was a perfectly terrible country no water and it just slopes down to desert*" (Kenya Land Commission, evidence 1933. 1562 - 1569, 1713 - 1715).

There were many reasons for the state of the Samburu pastureland. Of utter most significance is the fact that since 1922, when the Veterinary Department in Isiolo district imposed quarantine restrictions on the Samburu cattle. The Samburu herders had, to a large extent, accumulated great numbers of cattle. Official records show that in 1934, the Samburu had, more than 190,00 head of cattle. It is abundantly clear that this figure could not be contained by the land reserved for the Samburu because of its high aridity. The matter was complicated by the forceful confinement of the

Samburu to their former Reserve following the outcry of the white settlers in Laikipia district. This was as a result of the massacre of the White settlers by the Samburu morans, particularly of Lpisikishu and Lorokushu clans of the Samburu between 1931 and 1933. During this period the Samburu killed more than 30 white settlers and their herdsmen (KNA/DC/MARALAL 1/1/1. 1934 - 1935).

In the early years of colonial rule, the Samburu were concentrated in some specific favourable areas in order to avoid grazing their livestock in the weed poisoning infected forested areas, both in the highlands and lowlands. Oral traditions reveal that the Samburu settled in large numbers in Kauro, Basilinga in Wamba, Barsaloi and in some parts of Lorroki Plateau. It resulted in grave overgrazing and deterioration of these areas.

It was under such circumstances that the government formulated the grazing control programme in 1935. In this year, the Rift Valley Provincial Commissioner, Mr. Welby, travelled from Nakuru to Kisima on the Lorroki Plateau and announced to the Samburu elders, chiefs and headmen the impending introduction of the grazing control measures on the Plateau. These measures included the effort to recondition the deteriorating Samburu pastureland through adopting a

controlled approach to livestock grazing in a specific area. This objective was to be achieved by reducing the size of herd either by way of destocking or removal of some livestock from the Lorroki Plateau or any other place to uncontrolled areas. The British administrators thought that with a minimal number of livestock, the destruction of ecological system would be minimized. They hoped, therefore, that the land would quickly regenerate its vitality (Fumagalli, 1997, 184).

The Samburu perceived differently the whole issue. They became political about the purpose and meaning of both the grazing on controlled scheme basis and the destocking programme. From their point of view, these measures were just one more tactical move in the battle for the Lorroki Plateau. It seemed that their suspicions were confirmed by the announcement of destocking policy which essentially formed the core of the whole programme (Spencer, 1973, 179). The Samburu did not regard the rationale of the grazing on controlled programme as compatible with their traditional grazing management. According to their experience, grazing control did not mean reduction of livestock but rather grazing management.

By the year 1936, the administrators had only managed to remove all goats from the Lorroki grazing controlled scheme.

It was, perhaps, for this reason that the chief Native Commissioner, Mr. Marchenant, visited Samburuland and held meetings with the Samburu elders, chiefs and headmen at Maralal in 1937. He advised them on the advantages of the government grazing controlled programme and its destocking policy. He remarked.

> "*There was no use for the Samburu to be breeding large number of cattle only to see them die of disease or starvation.. The government was going to help the Samburu herders with facilities for immunization against rinderpest they should keep the number of their beasts steady and to improve their quality rather than to breed more beasts than the land could carry*" (KNA/DC RVP 6A/5/6, 1937).

The administrators took more time to educate the Samburu on the benefits and principles of the destocking programme. As a preliminary to the start of the latter, the Governor posted J.T. Vermin at Maralal to reduce the number of zebra in the Lorroki Plateau. By September, some 5,000 zebra had been exterminated and the government was ready to commence the culling of the livestock (KNA/DC/MARALAL 1/5/3, 1938). The Samburu organized a protest meeting at Maralal station. The administrators though provoked by these meetings they did not attempt to stop them.

C.M. Cowley and the District Officer of Samburu District and C.W. Lewis Stock Inspector, handled the whole operation with great skills through propaganda and politicized campaign. They organized an educational tour to Baringo for the influential Samburu leaders such as Lekolool and Senior Chief Lengerassi, Chief Leperkon and Champati Lanson to see re-conditioning programme elsewhere. This strategy helped in enhancing the success of the destocking policy as the administrators started culling the cattle of these persons before proceeding to the rest of the Samburu's Livestock (KNA/DC/MARARAL 1/5/3, 1938).

Nevertheless during this period the administrators made hardly any progress in implementing the programme. This is because of the persistent opposition by the Samburu. As a matter of fact, by early 1939, the latter declined to cooperate in the preliminary survey to identify the excess number of the Lorroki cattle. It was a government policy to have only 40,000 head of cattle in the lorroki grazing controlled Scheme. In may, 1939, the Samburu led by ex-chief Lemanges Lemantile, held a meeting with M. Cowley and W. Lewis without the presence of Samburu chiefs at Kisima to deliberate on the programme.

The Samburu elders demanded the withdrawal of the whole grazing control and destocking programmes and the removal of the veterinary Department from Samburu District

and the return of the alienated Samburuland. The administrators refused to comply and invited the Kenya Force of 15th Kenya Police Forces to intervene and bring normalcy in the district, particularly in the Lorroki Grazing Controlled Scheme. The forces arrested and detained Lemanges Lemantile at Kisima and deported his family to Basilinga Ford in Wamba, about 100 kilometers from Maralal station. In addition, the administrators imposed a levy force of #1,500 for the maintenance of the Kenya Police Force in the district for a period of one year (KNA/DC/Maralal 1/1/1. 1938).

The whole programme was disorganised and untenable because of its contradicting pursuits. First, while the British authorities emphasized destocking measure as a means of reconditioning Samburuland the veterinary quarantine restrictive policy made the accomplishment of the programme difficult. Secondly, the Laikipia Farmer's Association exerted pressure that the Samburu livestock be prohibited from using the Thomson's Fall (Nyahururu) stock route. In addition to these the pursuit of the closed district legislation heavily curtailed the free operation of private livestock traders. It is apparent that during the year 1937 there were only two livestock traders in the whole district namely, Liebig company, and J. Simpson and B.D. Emiley. The Laikipia - Samburu District

Commissioner pointed out that;

> *"It is not intended to discuss the question of destocking in Samburu in details as any future action will have to take the form of an entirely new campaign. It does seem though that unless the Samburu have a regular market and easy means of access to it and unless very much more consideration is given to the anthropological aspect of the Samburu nothing will be achieved except by direct compulsion"* (KNA/DC/MARALAL 1/1/3, 1939).

From 1940, the administrators attempted to learn from their past experiences and approached both the grazing control and destocking policies in a more tactiful way. They had to organize for a baraza with the Samburu herders and advise them on the benefits of the programme. They introduced the grazing permits and limited these to 50 head of cattle and sheep for each member of the Lorroki Grazing Controlled Scheme. The members paid fifty cents per cow and twenty cents per sheep (Lesangurunguri O.I. 1997). They also branded the Lorroki cattle with *MLE* mark for easy identification. These measures were reinforced by periodical counting of the Lorroki livestock and establishing a provision of fine or imprisonment for the grazing offenders. These were those people who kept unpermitted livestock or the trespassers among the Lpurkel' herders. This experience is told by one the respondents when he observed;

> *"We had a difficult time with the veterinary officers. Almost on daily basis C. Lewis (Stock Inspector) accompanied by Grazing Guard Inkirisinged, a corruption of Grazing Guard, raided our homesteads at dawn. They checked every animal to ensure that we did not hide "nkishu" eramoc unpermitted cattle. If they found one, they drove it away to Maralal where they slaughtered it* "(Lekoluai. O.I. 1997).

The measures elicited often confrontation between the stock inspectors and grazing guards on one hand and Samburu herders on the other. The Samburu morans sometimes attempted to retrieve the confiscate livestocks thereby clashing with guards. Some morans were arrested and imprisoned by the administrators in this first phase of the programme.

The administrators had a difficult time in implementing successfully the Grazing Controlled Programme because of the scarcity of water in Samburuland. Most of Samburuland lies in the lowland area which was characterised by high temperature and erratic rainfall (See chapter two). Consequently, there are no permanent rivers apart from the River Waso Nyiro on the boundary between Isiolo and Samburu districts. In the district, the few, often seasonal streams are scattered in the many mountains in various parts of Samburuland. Moreover, these seasonal streams do not drain their waters away from the

hilltops. The latter had been demarcated as forests and grazing there was prohibited.

It was in trying to solve the problem that the Samburu Local Native Council established the Lorroki Development Fund for improving water supplies in the Lorroki Grazing Scheme in terms of the acquisition of equipment in the year 1943. The equipment was for dams construction. It consisted of team, trek chains, ploughs and oxen. The fund was also for the payment for the dam construction team (KNA/DC/MARALAL/1/1, 1943). The latter began the work in the same year. The constructed water holes with the help of *jembe* implements, wheelbarrows, axes and other equipments. They first started in Maralal station's dam and by the end of 1943 had built 2 dams at Maralal station and a third at Porror, 20 kilometers north of Maralal station (KNA/DC/MARALAL/1/1, 1943). In the following year, the dam constructions had spread into most parts of the Lorroki Grazing Controlled Scheme. They constructed dams at upper Nomotio, Lpartuk, Naibor Engare, and Nekeju emunyi.

By 1945, the administrators were ready to extend the grazing schemes to the lowland areas of the district. Thus, in this year, the chief Native Commissioner, Colonel A.C. Marcheant and the Acting Provincial Commissioner Rift Valley

Province, Hamilton - Ross, visited the district and held a series of 'baraza' meetings with the Samburu elders at Ngarua, Kisima, Wamba and Baragoi. The subject matter focused on the whole question of grazing control both in the lowland areas and Lorroki plateau (KNA/DC/MARALAL 1/2/1, 1945). One reason for this action was that the lowland region had experienced degradation due to overstocking and overgrazing. This was complicated by the effects of a locust outbreak in the lowland areas during this period. This reality is pointed out by the Samburu District Commissioner when he asserted:

> "*the monthly sales of stock to the Livestocks Control Board realized reasonable success though the conditions of cattle in the low country was poor the first 8 months of the year (1945) due to lack of grazing caused by prolonged drought and locusts. It resulted in a heavy rejection of cattle brought to Wamba and Baragoi*" (KNA/DC/MARALAL 1/1/1, 1945).

It was in the 1940s that the Samburu had come to appreciate the advantages of the grazing schemes. They were largely influenced by the result of the Lorroki Grazing Controlled Scheme. Many respondents disclosed that the Lorroki cattle were of high quality. They attributed this to the presence of pastures and water in the schemes throughout the year. The statement below brings out this reality clearly;

*"Neponu Loiko ashamu sikimi tekaraki kepiri nkishu namanya neata kule kumo nesupatisii leshau Lenshe"* (Lenkaak. O.I. 19970.

The statement by Lenkaak literally means the Samburu come to like grazing schemes because the cattle in the schemes were of good health and they had a lot of milk. Their calves were of high quality. Official evidence also supported this view:

> *"the Lorroki Grazing controlled scheme took primacy in the discussion. There was an increased numbers of stock holders seeking grazing permits by about 2,100 head of stock."* (Ibid).

Between 1946 and 1960s, the administrators were concerned mainly with the expansion of the grazing schemes both in the Lorroki Plateau and the lowland areas, water provision and the management of these schemes. In 1946, the administrators started experimental grazing controlled schemes on the Marti Plateau, Al Barta Plains and Wamba valley in Lpurkel. These areas were overcrowded with livestock because of availability of water provided by the government. The Samburu Veterinary Stock Inspector warned that:

> *"There were far too many cattle and particularly sheep and goats in the low country for the land to accommodate".* (KNA/DC/MARALA 1/1/3, 1946).

This situation called for the expansion of water supplies

in order to spread out the grazing scheme so as to reduce pressure on the areas surrounding permanent water sources, such as dams and streams on the foot of the Nyiro and Ndoto mountains.

It was in line with this objective that the administrators constructed two dams in Baragoi area at Ngillai and Nkorieni (Silango ELesepe). The provision of water in the lower regions was made difficult by their climatic conditions. As we have seen earlier, most of the lowland lacked permanent rivers and streams. They also have high temperatures. The inhabitants of these areas relied mainly on the underground water made available through digging up the surface of the earth on the floors of seasonal streams or rivers (Lekupe O.I. 1997). The problem with this is that much of the topsoil is sand which is porous. The Samburu were, therefore, forced to dig many meters underneath the soil before they reached the waret table. Even this water was only temporary because of high evaporation rates that led to the disappearance of the water - holes within a short period of time. As the Samburu district officer pointed out:

> *".... the dams already constructed will be most valuable but it is doubtful if really permanent new water supplies will be provided by dam-building. These must await until a boring plant is available."*

*(KNA/DC/Maralal 1/5/4, 1948).*

Between 1951 and 1953 the African Land utilization and settlement and Samburu African District Council (ADC) purchased Ferguson tractors to enhance water supplies through both dam building and drilling of boreholes. By 1953 the Samburu Dixey borehole programme had drilled 25 boreholes in Lorroki, Baragoi, Marti and Wamba. These boreholes facilitated grazing livestock in waterless areas in the dry weather which in the past had been grazed only during the rainy season (KNA/DC/MARALAL 1/5/4, 1948).

The above efforts helped to change the attitude of the Samburu herders. They came to appreciate the significance of the provision of water supplies. Because the ADC resolved that the Samburu herders should contribute to the provision and maintenance of dams and boreholes in 1948. In 1951, the ADC voted £600, for the maintenance of 8 boreholes in Lorroki. The Samburu herders paid cents - 05 per head of cattle or camel and cents - 01 per sheep or goats per month. To reduce its cost, the Samburu herders belonging to a given Grazing Controlled Scheme begun to mobilize its members for free labour whenever a dam was constructed or a borehole was set up in their grazing schemes.

It is apparent that the deterioration of Samburuland had

by the 1950's, not been arrested even with the presence of Grazing Controlled Schemes in many parts of Samburu district. This fact is brought out in an official statement in colonial records:

> *"S.J. Simpson, the Samburu District Officer, was of the opinion (In Jan, 1950) that Lorroki was deteriorating, but at the time of handing over to me, he considered that the deterioration had been arrested by good rains (KNA*/DC/DAM/1/3, 1950).

There were many reasons for this situation. Of great importance was the haphazard way in which grazing was organized in the Grazing Controlled Schemes. The policy of closing some parts of these schemes whenever they showed signs of deterioration led to a concentration of livestock gradually to the rest of the parts of the scheme. Another reason was that the greater number of livestock on the Lorroki Plateau more the damage was done. It was the administration policy to have only 40,00 head of stock in the Lorroki Plateau. Available evidence, however discloses that the Samburu permit holders on the Lorroki Plateau had increased their unpermitted livestocks by forging the Lorroki 'J' brand to more than 40,000 head of cattle over the years.

To rectify the problem the administrators re-defined new the Lorroki's boundary by erecting beacons on the western

side of the scheme. At the same time, they rebranded new Lorroki cattle and removed about all the excess cattle which had been concealed among those that had grazing permits. They also attempted to solve the poor management of grazing patterns. This resulted in the creation of 40,000 acres of the Lorroki Grazing scheme. The Samburu, nevertheless, opposed this policy on the argument that Illegal livestock was grazed on the tse tse-fly infected areas, especially Tinga region on western boundary of the Lorroki scheme (Letoijoni, O.I. 1997). The administrators forcefully evicted from the latter area all illegal cattle and re-defined grazing boundaries.

With the removal of the excess livestock from the areas, the Assistant Agricultural officer, Mr. Oates, drew up a rotational grazing scheme for the Lorroki Grazing Scheme. This went into operation in 1949. It involved systematic grazing plans covering about 10,000 acres of the 40,000 acres of the Lorroki Grazing Controlled Scheme. The Grazing Guards assisted by the Tribal Police enforced the programme. Its purpose was to preserve the greenery of this area in order to avoid the old somewhat haphazardous system of closing areas when they showed deterioration (KNA/DC/DAM/1/3/1950).

The administrators, A.D. Shireff, the Samburu District Commissioner, L. Lewis, the Stock Inspector and Mr. Oates,

the Assistant Agricultural Officer organized 'baraza' meetings with the Samburu elders both in the lower region and the Grazing Scheme in an effort to popularize the much resisted programme. Many oral respondents revealed that the Samburu did not want the notion of restrictive movement of people and livestock. The administrators were, therefore, to associate the Samburu directly with undermining the good grazing management.

It was in this context that the administrators set up grazing committees of elders in 1950 at Maralal, Wamba and Baragoi to manage the grazing scheme. They were granted the responsibility of suggesting any useful ideas. In addition, they held the duty of carrying out the closing of areas under the general supervision of the District Commissioner, the Stock Inspector and the Assistant Agricultural Officer (KNA/DC/Sam/13/1950). The role of the Samburu Committee of Elders is pointed out by A.D. Shireff, when he asserted;

> "*there is no doubt that they are of the greatest benefit and that as a result of them the tribesmen are beginning to realise that grazing is an immediate necessity and not a form of punishment imposed on them by the government*" (KNA/DC/Sam/13/1950).

Following the successful implementation of the Rotational Grazing Scheme Mr. Seed, the Assistant District

Agricultural Officer, of Samburu District, put into operation the small closed block grazing approach in the schemes. In this arrangement, herds were concentrated on 10,000 acres of the Lorroki Grazing Controlled Scheme. In the first phase of the programme, the Lorroki permit holders were confirmed in the Bawa, Ldereto, Naborkeju, and Muramur in the southern part of Maralal town. It was supervised by Letoijoni, Lenairoshi, headmen Lalaikipiani, and Lesilele. They ensured that each permit holder had to graze his livestock only in one portion of the Bawa Grazing Scheme for about 4 months in a year (Letoijoni O.I. 1997). This was an effort to train the Samburu herders to take a real interest in the welfare of their livestock and observe the basic modern principles of grass management and grazing practices.

The operation of the closed grazing schemes proved difficult because of some parts of the Lorroki schemes which could not be grazed upon in the dry season due to lack of water. The Samburu had, therefore, seemingly overgrazed around water points of the schemes. The degradation of these areas became a critical issue in 1955. Consequently, the administrators concentrated on providing water supplies in many areas of the Lorroki grazing schemes as possible. This objective was appreciated by the African Land Development

Board (ALD) which granted $6,000, in 1954, for the purpose of building dams in each of the 4 block grazing schemes in the Lorroki (KNA/DC/Sam 1/4, 1954).

With the provision of water catered for, the stage was set for the gradual stabilization of the people in the sectional areas. In 1956, Mr. Brauner, the Agricultural Officer of Samburu district divided the 4 blocks of grazing schemes of the Lorroki Grazing Scheme into sections. As such, Nyaparai, Lmasula, Lpisikishu Lukumae, Ngwesi, Lorokushu, and Longelli clans were moved and settled at Lpartuk, Naimaral (Maralal), Bawa Kisima, Lkuroto and Ledera areas respectively (Lekoluai, O.I. 1997). The specified section areas meant that the elders of each section (clans) were directly responsible for the well being of their own areas. The elders ensured that members of other clans did not graze their livestock on their clan's grazing controlled scheme.

By 1958, the smaller closed grazing schemes had advanced to exhibit some sophisticated characteristics. The sub-division of the sectional grazing areas into smaller portions seemed advantageous. The administrators sub-divided the blocks of smaller grazing units of the schemes into 60 separate grazing areas in the Lorroki scheme. Of these, 35 were put on rotational basis of 4 months (KNA/DC/Sam/1/4, 1954).

Nevertheless, the grazing on the controlled schemes were bedeviled by several problems. The Samburu continued to oppose the whole concept of grazing on the basis of a controlled programme. This is because they perceived it as an instrument used by the British authorities to destroy their livestock economy. One of our oral informants aptly put it this way;

> *"Grazing schemes were one means the colonial administrators exploited the Samburu. They confiscated large number of livestocks from the Samburu. These animals were never returned to our people. Even the remaining livestock had no place to graze for the Samburu pastureland was demarcated as forests around Mts, Ndoto, Nyiro, Mathew mountain Ranges and Lorroki Plateau (Lepulelei, O.I. 1997)*

The oral informant lamented that Samburu who were owners of the land were refused permission to graze their livestock. They disliked the whole idea of regimenting people according to clans because historically they had evolved a complicated social relations which had helped them to exist as a community. They philosophized these relations in these words '*kore Ltung'ana na Ldupa soroi*' in literary translation this means that persons are brothers and sisters because relations are fluid and go beyond social and political definitions.

Although the British had worked hard to promote better grazing on the controlled schemes in Samburuland, its performance was hampered by poor destocking measures. It is evident that they were only able to achieve as a small proportion of good livestock husbandry due to lack of markets and effects of quarantine restrictive policies. Below is the distribution of Samburu cattle in 3 areas of the Samburu district in 1950.

| YEAR | AREA | ADULTS | CALVES | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1950 | LORROKI | 43,300 | 19,200 | 61,550 |
| | WAMBA | 64,400 | 29,300 | 93,700 |
| | BARAGOI | 58,500 | 26,100 | 84,600 |
| | | 165,200 | 76,650 | 239,850 |

*Adopted from animal annual report of the Veterinary Department,* 1950

It is documented that in 1950, the total cattle exported from Samburu district was 3,403 head of cattle. If we consider this figure as the ideal cattle size per herd from the 76,650 calves produced in the same year, then the difference is 73,247. From this it is abundantly clear that the destocking policy made no sense in helping to arrest the degrading of pastureland.

It is no wonder that in the 1950s, after fifteen years of the existence of the destocking programme, the main concern

of the Samburu administrators still was the deterioration of pastureland because of overstocking. In the annual report of 1956, the Samburu District Commissioner wrote;

> *"the district was carrying approximately 1 bovine unit to 14 acres. It is apparent from the state of the land that the Samburu district is deteriorating very fast. This is further complicated by persistent long drought.... resulting in cattle dying in large numbers and the land depreciating and getting worse in condition than ever before* (KNA/DC/SAM1/4, 1956).

The role of droughts in the destocking of the Samburu livestock was significant. The Samburu experienced one disaster after an other. These were caused mainly by abnormal drought and the presence of locusts. For example, they were struck by a series of droughts between 1959, and 1961. It is recorded that these droughts claimed about 30% of the Samburu cattle. As the Samburu District Commissioner remarked;

> *"After 4 seasons of drought which by January 1961 had reduced the district to blasted health, about 100,000 cattle died.... the death of 30% of their cattle was a disaster to many, but it was also a benediction on the tribe because a high proportion of deaths had been of milk stocks and calves and so caused the famine. The rate of natural increase will be impeded for some years to come. The essential*

*perennial grasses will thus, have a chance to re-establish themselves"* (KNA/DC/Sam 1/4, 1961).

## 6.3 Livestock Disease and Veterinary Services

The role of livestock diseases in the transformation of the Samburu livestock economy was largely significant. Diseases had detrimental effects on cattle. In 1922, a number of cattle in the Barsaloi area died from Bovine Pleuro-Pneumonia (BPP) and Rinderpest diseases. Although livestock diseases had claimed livestock in large numbers in the past, they had not been properly accounted for. During the colonial period, of the practice of livestock concentration in specific areas seemed to minimize the problem for a period of time. The Samburu herders were not allowed to graze animals outside Samburu district. This forced them to concentrate in areas that were comparatively favourable to them. As such they had to graze even in tsetse fly infected areas when pastures were scarce in open pastureland. They were also prohibited from burning these areas by the British authorities. The British regarded this measure as destructive to the environment (Leriete O.I. 1997).

The policy reduced the Samburu to victims of the widespread tsetsefly in many parts of Samburu pastureland throughout the colonial era (KNA/NFD DC/SAM 1/3 1942).

This state of affairs is also confirmed by oral traditions. According to the latter, the tsetsefly was a nuisance in the lowland areas and that it even spread to the highlands. It resulted in infections of human and animal trypanosomiasis. It also led to the infection of the East Coast Yellow Fever. All these diseases are associated with tsetsefly.

Between 1926 and 1935, the government showed a concerted effort to provide veterinary services to the Samburu herders. In 1927, Mr. Campbell, the stock Inspector arrived at Barsaloi from Isiolo town for the purposes of inoculating livestock. He first built a shed near the Waso Nyiro Ford on the Barsaloi - Isiolo road and commenced inoculation in October. By the end of the 1927, he had inoculated 20,255 cattle. Before the end of the year, the government also sent 15 Samburu to Ngong for training as veterinary Scouts for a period of three months. Some of these included, L. Lesorongol, R. Lerete and L. Lepopoko (Leririo, O.I. 1997). These scouts worked under the overall Veterinary Officer in the district.

During this period, the Samburu herders had developed a keen interest in selective veterinary services. This was because of the large death of livestock from Bovine Pluro Pneumonia and rinderpest diseases. Both colonial records and oral traditions show there was a prevalence of livestock

diseases among the Samburu herds in the 1920s and 1930s. Some of these included Bovine Pleuro - Pneumonia, Rinder pest, Trypanosomiasis, Black Quarter and Anthrax (Fumagalli, 1977, 183). Oral traditions hold that the Samburu feared some of these diseases because they were disastrous to their livestock. Many oral informants revealed that the Samburu had no effective herbs for treating some of these diseases. Their measures to develop a vaccine against those maladies were fruitless. These efforts were in the form of cutting open the veins of animal and pouring in the content of bile from an infected animal sometime helped to vaccinate against these diseases (Lekupe, O.I. 1997).

It was for this reason that the Samburu herders purchased large quantities of stibophen drugs and used to treat Trypanosomiasis and dimidium drugs for treating Rinderpest and Bovine Pleuro Pneumonia. They believed in their efficacy. As one oral respondent asserted that; "*Mara Ldewa Pooki Osham suom ketai ndewa Lelodua, Olokipei*" *(Lekoluai, O.I. 1997).* In literary- translation this means that the Samburu did not like all livestock drugs because not all livestock drugs, cure diseases. There were drugs for Rinderpest and Bovine Pleuro-Pneumonia .

In 1929, the Veterinary Department brought a flock of

pure breed black sheep and a large number of rams of the same to the Veterinary Station in Isiolo town. The purpose of this was to experiment with an object to improve the breed of indigenous sheep in the Northern Frontier Province (NFP). There were also 50 Samburu and Gabra sheep for cross-breeding. This experiment failed, however, because the veterinary officers found out that the pure breed black headed Persian sheep were to a large extent more susceptible to disease than the indigenous sheep (KNA/NFD DC/Sam 1/3, 1929).

It is evident from available records that during the early part of the 1930s, the diseases still claimed a large number of livestock in Samburu district. Furthermore, the research findings seems to indicate that the Veterinary Department in Samburu was poorly staffed and it lacked proper veterinary services. For example, in 1933 it is reported that inoculation was not carried out in the district because of shortage of veterinary staff and yet 96% of the Samburu herds were infected with Bovine Pleuro-Pneumonia (KNA/NFD DC/Sam 1/3, 1929).

Nevertheless, the trend seemed to have changed after 1935. In the year 1934 the Veterinary Department at Isiolo District transferred one veterinary officer and 2 stock

inspectors from Isiolo to Maralal. Here they had a big task of establishing veterinary services in the district. By the end of 1934, they had inoculated 21,101 head of cattle at Maralal. The government also built a veterinary station at Nomotio River, about two and half miles from Maralal town. The station was equipped with a livestock shed, a temporary Laboratory for vaccine making and hide drying (KNA/NFD DC 'Sam/1/3 1929). The colonial government aimed at eradicating Bovine Pleuro-Pneumonia among the Samburu herds through the provision of veterinary drugs. It also introduced Borana and Sahiwal cattle which were of high quality for cross breeding purposes. The veterinary officers encouraged the Lorroki grazing permit holders to purchase the exotic cattle. They also gave out exotic bulls to the best oxen during auctions as a means of popularizing the Boran and Sahiwal cattle among the Samburu herders. This idea was not well received by the latter because of low disease resistance.

It is abundantly clear from the foregoing discussion, that the colonial government was determined to popularize veterinary services among the Samburu herders during the 1930s. As a result, before the end of 1934, the veterinary officers in Samburu District had built sheds at Maralal, Wamba, Baragoi, Barsaloi, the South Valley, Latakweny, and Kirimon.

The intention of the colonial government was summed up in a statement by the Samburu District Officer, in 1934 when he wrote;

> *"It is intended by the Veterinary Departemnt to make a sustained effort for at least 5 years during which period the Samburu will have to bring in their livestock for complette inoculations"* (KNA/DC/ISIOLO 1/2, 1934).

During the inter - war years, the government improved the provision of veterinary services in Samburu District. Thus, in 1942, the Director of Veterinary Services in Nairobi appointed J. Ward as a Senior Instructor in stock for Samburu District. The Veterinary authorities made inoculations of livestock compulsory. It was in practice closely bound up with grazing controls. The Samburu District Officer compelled the Samburu to bring in livestock for inoculation. Many oral informants disclosed that many Samburu herders, particularly the Lorroki permit holders lost grazing permits for refusing to bring in their livestock for inoculation at Maralal. Below are inoculation beginners for the Lorroki grazing controlled scheme in 1943.

| YEAR | PLACE | 1ST | 2ND | 3RD | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1943 | Lorroki stocks | 52,542 | 38,547 | 5,547 | 96,636 |

There were several reasons why the Samburu herders refused to cooperate in the inoculation of their livestock and to bring about the scenario. First, the Samburu did not believe in the efficacy of some drugs. They therefore, only brought in cattle when the veterinary officers administered inoculations for rinderpest, trypanosomiasis and bovine pleuro-pneuomonia (Lesangurunguri, O.I. 1997). Secondly, they believed that the Veterinary Department had a hidden agenda to kill their livestock. Many respondents seemed to say that the veterinary officers injected Samburu livestock with poisonous drugs which killed calves and old cows. Thirdly, the Samburu herders were scared away by the Veterinary Officer's behaviour of Confiscating some of the herds as payment for drugs and services.

Nevertheless, by the late 1950s, the veterinary services had become popular among the Samburu because they had come to appreciate the benefits of inoculations. They realised that they could save a lot of their livestock by treating them with modern drugs. The popularity of the veterinary services is aptly pointed out by F. Gavagham, the Samburu District

Commissioner, when he reported that:

> *"the work of the Veterinary Department was immensely popular and the figures of disease control show the ever increasing demand for preventive inoculations"* (KNA/DC/Sam 1/4, 1953).

**Summary**

The alienation of the Samburu pastureland had adverse effects on the livestock and grazing management. The Samburu herders were forced to graze in tsetse fly infected areas due to shortage of pastures in open pastureland. The concentration of livestock in specific favourable areas of the district enhanced the widespread infection of livestock by diseases such as pleuro-pneumonia and rinderpest. Increasingly, the Samburu herders came to show keen interest in veterinary services as a means of managing healthy livestock.

The Samburu herders persistently oppose the whole notion of grazing on controlled schemes under special programmes for it directly contradicted the traditional principles of grazing. These principles formed the very essence of the pastoral economy In terms of socio-economic institutions mediating the relationships between human beings and animals. The Samburu resented colonial administrative structures and

policies. This is because they were coercive in their application. They believed that Samburu herders were destroying their pastureland by keeping large herds of cattle.

Nevertheless, even the colonial government itself was hampered by shortage of manpower. It could not provide adequate veterinary services. Moreover, it fell victim to the manipulation of the White settlers. The Samburu herders seemed to understand the inefficiency of Western technology and went for what appeared essential to them. These were basically veterinary services related to purchase of effective veterinary drugs such as stibophen, and dimidium.

# CHAPTER SEVEN

## CONCLUSION

It is abundantly clear from the proceeding discussions that the Samburu pastoral economy underwent a profound economic transformation. There were fundamental changes in their way of living. More specifically, changes occurred in the peoples land use, livestock management, labour trade and technology during the colonial period.

Prior to the year 1909 the Samburu practised a system of communal ownership of land. The principles of this system allowed any member of this community access for the exploitation of the *enkop el Loikop*. The land tenure system institutionalized sets of regulations and rules pertaining to the utilization of each portion of pastureland. Although some members of the community had exclusive rights of ownership of certain aspects of rangeland, these rights were never rigid rather the system only gave them priorities in the order of their exploitation of water and pasture resources.

By 1921, the relevance of the principles of communal land tenure among the Samburu was adversely affected by colonial policy. This was the case particularly for the policy of land alienation. During the colonial period the Samburu lost 60% of their original pastureland, either to the White settlers,

Gabra or Turkana. It meant loss of proper administration and management of pasture and grazing rights by the *Kiama*. The *Kiama* was replaced by a class of comprador functionaries.

Between 1935 and 1963, further changes in land use were incepted with the introduction of the Grazing Controlled Programmes. Colonial policies provided for the development of sectional rights of ownership as a consequence of the division of the grazing schemes along sectional lines. According to this arrangement, non members of a clan settled in one grazing scheme were prohibited by law from grazing in this scheme. The elders of that clan arrested and sued trespassers in their grazing scheme pastureland.

The colonial administrators introduced the programmes with an objective to redress the deteriorated Samburu pastureland through reconditioning strategies. It was enforced by the administrators with the assistance of grazing guards, the tribal police forces and Samburu committees of elders. Although these programmes were abolished in 1961 communal rights of ownership were never reverted to the full but rather, this collectivity of tenure became vested in members of clans.

Before the introduction of forced wage labour among the Samburu community in the 1920s, they offered their labour in exchange for other kinds of commodities among themselves.

During the colonial period they were forced by the colonial circumstances to seek for employment in order to supplement the livestock products and to pay taxes. The Samburu preferred to be employed in the military force because this institution had similar challenges as the moran institution among the Samburu.

In the face of the limited number of recruits imposed by military policy by way of establishing quotas for different ethnic groups, the Samburu turned to the White settlers' farms as herdsmen, watchmen and foremen. Nevertheless, Samburu labour was short-lived because of their strong cultural attachment to livestock and other conservative cultural trappings. They worked on the white settler farms as long as they needed to raise money to pay taxes.

From the 1950s and 1960s many Samburu people got employment within their district as teachers, clerks and interpreters. This group of Samburu were skilled in their different professions. They contributed to the expansion of Western education within the Samburu community. Many other Samburu were employed as grazing guards or got employed with grazing committees. Working experiences enlarged the world view of the Samburu particularly equipped them with the knowledge of the colonial monetary system.

Before the advent of the British rule, the Samburu, operated a barter trade among themselves and their neighbouring ethnic communities, such as the Borana, Meru, Rendille, Turkana and Somali. They exchanged a goat with a calf or exchanged livestock products with weapons and other implements. Before money economy had evolved the Samburu used trade items, such as animal skins as a form of medium of exchange.

In the later part of the 19th century the Samburu begun to trade with long distance trade merchants. They traded in livestock- goats, sheep, donkeys, cattle. Livestock products milk, animal skins. Ivory and rhino horns were also involved in this trade. They traded these with posho, kumbao (tobacco), beads nanga (clothes) and iron wares. Generally the volume of trade was small and restricted to local regions of the Samburuland.

Beginning in the 1950s, the Samburu started to participate in large numbers in the *duka* retail business. They drew inspiration from their experiences in the military forces while others drew inspiration from western education. Lack of capital among some Samburu forced them to form joint business partners. In the same period, they also ventured into livestock trade. They had a stiff competition from non-

indigenous livestock traders. The Samburu livestock traders were encouraged by good prices offered for their livestock by the Kenya Meat Commission (KMC). This trade expanded gradually as more Samburu joined in so that by 1960s, they came to dominant it. They, in spite of this, persistently faced high cost of transport due to poor transport facilities.

Prior to the era of the British rule among the Samburu community, cash economy was hardly known. This change came about during the colonial period. In the 1920s the colonial government abolished the payment of taxes in kind. The Samburu were forced to pay cash tax. It resulted in a need of cash for this purpose. The Samburu raised cash tax through two main ways namely the selling of livestock and the engagement in wage labour. In addition to these the Samburu had to raise money for many other purposes. The effects of droughts on the Samburu livestock led herders to look for trading centers where they could procure the needed trade goods, such as foodstuffs, clothes, tobacco, steel wares and beads. They also raised money through selling of livestock or working to raise money to purchase livestock drugs.

During the colonial period, animal husbandry underwent changes. In the pre-colonial era, the Samburu had been used to accumulating large herds of livestock. They perceived

large sizes of livestock as a form of social and economic security. They subsisted on animals milk, blood, meat, and also made shoes, clothes and bedding *Lshonito,* from animal skins. Livestock was also used to cement social relations among members of the Samburu community in various ways. The Samburu employed the *paran* system as a means of transferring animals from one kinsman to another and between in-laws from different clans.

In the colonial period the trend changed almost completely. From the 1920s the colonial administrators imposed demands on the Samburu to reduce the numbers of their cattle because the British perceived large herds to be a serious danger to the rangeland. The Samburu, nevertheless, opposed this notion thereby compelling the government to force them to destock their livestock. One of the methods which the administrators resorted to included coercion of the Samburu to sell their cattle for money. It resulted in the establishment of Native Markets at Baragoi, Maralal and Wamba. Although these markets were operated once a month they made little impact on the Livestock sale.

The Samburu believed that livestock provided economic security against famines and other natural disasters. In addition to this, they were discouraged by low prices provided

by livestock traders. The situation was aggravated by the colonial government policy by which only one or two livestock traders were allowed to monopolize livestock trade in the District. The creation of monopolies is a typical feature of peripheral economies. In many countries, these peripheral economies are dominated by the multi-national corporations coming from technologically advanced countries in the west.

In the 1940s and 1950s the government facilitated the livestock marketing in the district. In 1950, the administrators built an abattoir at Archer's Post for the purpose of enhancing the marketing of the Samburu livestock. It did this by slaughtering livestock and selling their products at KMC.

The administrators also built the Samburu ranch at Kirimon with the purpose of effecting some change in the principles of livestock management and trade among the Samburu. The veterinary officers who operated the ranch bought young bullocks and later sold them at a profit to the KMC. The profits realised in this trade were based on unequal exchange which was characteristic of merchant-capital in its under developing activities.

The government also introduced high quality cattle the, sahiwa among the Samburu cattle and also the zebu and Boran type. These were experimented at Nomotio near Maralal and

sold to the Samburu annually. The cross breed of these animals produced much quantity milk used for commercial and domestic purposes. This helped change the Samburu livestock economy.

The economic transformation of the Samburu was not uniform. It depended on where the Samburu lived, whether it was in the *Lpurkel* or *Ldonyo* highlands. Thus, the Samburu who settled in the grazing schemes seem to have experienced profound economic transformation. This transformation changed their way of life as compared to the Samburu in the lowlands.

In 1950, the government started a ranch at Kirimon with an object of effecting new principles of livestock trade among the Samburu so as to induce them to purchase items from centers and sell bullocks. This helped to provide some continuity in the livestock trade. The problem was, however, not with the marketability of livestock in terms of quality livestock and potential buyers, rather it was the whole position of the veterinary department among the Samburu, given their conservative attitudes.

In the pre-colonial period, the Samburu had accumulated, over the years, a profound knowledge of their environment which helped them to develop efficiency in ethno-

medicine for the treatment of their livestock. The ethno-herbal treatment of livestock diseases involved the use of Llosung,'seketet,'Ikiloriti', Lorishachio! and 'saar' to treat livestock suffering from pleuro-pneumonia, trypanosomiasis and wounds. The Samburu were being turned into dependents on the colonial Western medical technology for themselves and their livestock.

In the colonial era, the government imposed demands on the Samburu to bring their livestock for veterinary attention. They however, resisted this policy arguing that veterinary services were ineffective and in some cases detrimental to the health of their livestock. Consequently, the colonial government resorted to coercion. Coercion was used as an instrument of instilling fear among the people. The self-confidence of the Samburu was undermined by these retrogressive measures. During this period the veterinary department pursued what appeared to the Samburu as harsh policies, namely the promotion of destocking through compulsory livestock sales and imposition of quarantines on the Samburu cattle.

The Samburu went for some veterinary drugs such as stibophen to treat trypane-somiasis and rinderpest diseases respectively. They experimented with these drugs and found

out that they were useful and unharmful to their livestock. They continued to apply these alongside with their medicinal herbs while many Samburu practices were discarded thereby undermining the basis of indigenous technology and knowledge.

The changes in the Samburu pastoral economy were largely in those sectors which the colonialists thought changes would be beneficial to colonial economy. This explains why the colonial government initiated such services as veterinary services and destocking programmes among the Samburu. The British colonial administration figured out the economic gains they could derive from the Samburu livestock. It did not follow a uniform development policy, rather it developed some areas, for example the Lorroki Plateau and left others hardly developed. As a result, there was serious uneven development in the area. But why did the colonial government promote a livestock economy among the Samburu and discouraged the cultivation of crops? Why did the colonial government play an insignificant role in the provision of Western education among the Samburu? These are some of the questions African scholars need to undertake immediately.

The history of underdevelopment in Samburuland is relatively crucial phenomenon which is full of evidence of the social and

economic indigenous processes in the dislocation of the culture and practices of people.

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## (Oral Information) List of Names of Oral Traditions Informants

| | NAME | BIRTH | PLACE | DATE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | LEMATITI LEPADAASA | 22/7/1948 | TUUM | 27/2/1997 |
| 2 | LEMADAU LERIANO | 16/5/1945 | TUUM | 24.2.1997 |
| 3 | WURAN LEPPITE | 28/8/1933 | TUUM | 28/2/1997 |
| 4 | LOLKER LESANTAN | 27/5/1938 | SUKUTA MARMAR | 28/2/1997 |
| 5 | APTELA LENANO | 4/10/1950 | TUUM | 25/2/1997 |
| 6 | MAYEEN LELAONO | 15/4/1930 | TUUM | 28/2/1997 |
| 7 | LEPOIS LELEKOITIEN | 6/4/1943 | SUKTA MARMAR | 24/2/1997 |
| 8 | MOIKA LESUORONO | 7/6/1946 | SUKUTA MARMAR | 24/2/1997 |
| 9 | NYIRI LEBILE LESIRA | 8/5/1956 | SUKUTA MARMAR | 23/2/1997 |
| 10 | JOSEPH NASIBO | 11/6/1940 | SUKUTA MARMAR | 22/2/1997 |
| 11 | DAVID LEPARIKIRAS | 2/9/1949 | SUKUTA MARMAR | 20/2/1997 |
| 12 | JAMES LELETIA | 16/5/1945 | MARALAL | 19/2/1997 |
| 13 | LERAI LEIRIRIO | 28/8/1933 | LKUROTO | 19/2/1997 |
| 14 | LDOS LEKOLUAI | 27/5/1938 | BAWA | 17/2/1997 |
| 15 | SAMWEL LENYAKOPIRO | 4/10/1935 | KISIMA | 17/2/1997 |
| 16 | SAIDIMO LENAIROKOTO | 27/5/1938 | MARALAL | 12/2/1997 |
| 17 | JAMES LESILELE | 4/10/1950 | MARALAL | 15/2/1997 |
| 18 | ALI MOHAMMED | 15/4/1930 | MARALAL | 11/2/1997 |
| 19 | LMEKURI LERANTILENI | 6/4/1943 | KURUNGU | 28/4/1992 |
| 20 | RUNAIKU LETOIJONI | 7/6/1946 | BAWA | 10/2/1997 |
| 21 | LODUKAI LEMARKAT | 11/5/1949 | SOUTH HORR | 27/3/1997 |
| 22 | KUTEI LENAITITAI | 8/9/1934 | SOUTH HORR | 9/2/1997 |
| 23 | LENGESEP LELEKATAP | 16/7/1959 | SOUTH HORR | 9/2/1997 |
| 24 | LENAI LEMASHULE | 27/5/1938 | SOUTH HORR | 8/2/1997 |
| 25 | MKE LENANO | 4/10/1950 | TUUM | 6/2/1997 |
| 26 | DANIEL LELEKOITIEN | 15/4/1930 | SUGTA MARMAR | 6/2/1997 |
| 27 | LESUPET LEMARKAT | 6/4/1943 | NGORILE | 6/2/1997 |
| 28 | NDEKEYAN LEMOSA | 7/6/1946 | SOUTH HORR | 1/2/1997 |
| 29 | KUMAR LEKOYOYO | 8/9/1934 | SOUTH HORR | 5/2/1997 |
| 30 | HASSAN LEUTILALU | 16/7/1959 | WAMBA | 2/2/1997 |
| 31 | LORUYUO LEMARATO | 12/7/1934 | SOUTH HORR | 2/2/1997 |
| 32 | LWERIKOI LEUKAAK | 13/8/1945 | SOUTH HORR | 15/2/1997 |
| 33 | LOISIK LERETE | 13/5/1950 | SOUTH HORR | 18/2/1997 |
| 34 | ALBERT LELESHEP | 4/10/1935 | SOUTH HORR | 17/2/1997 |
| 35 | WILSON LEPARITINGAT | 27/5/1938 | LUDOKENJEK | 2/2/1997 |
| 36 | NDEGE LOLEKIPIANI | 4/10/1950 | KISIMA | 2/2/1997 |
| 37 | DAVID LETAIYA | 15/4/1930 | WAMBA | 13/2/1997 |
| 38 | PETER LEPARIMARAI | 6/4/1943 | WAMBA | 3/2/1997 |
| 39 | L. LEKISAAT | 7/6/1946 | BARAGOI | 3/2/1997 |
| 40 | LETELEN LENAITORONO | 11/5/1949 | BARAGOI | 17/2/1997 |
| 41 | JEREMIAH LEADUMA | 8/9/1934 | LUSHUK | 12/2/1997 |
| 42 | LOCLUIMAI LEPULELEI | 16/7/1959 | SOUTH HORR | |

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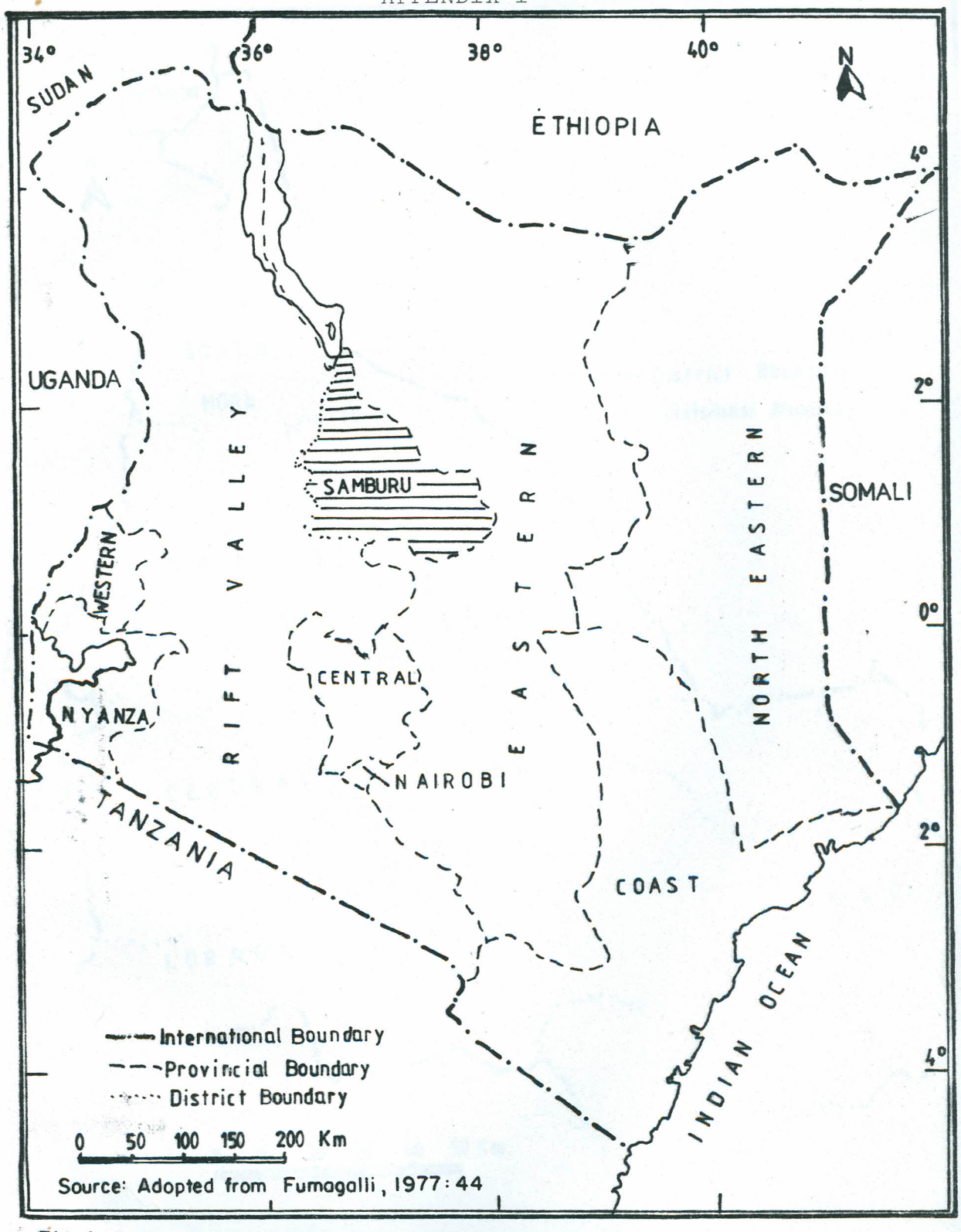


FIG. 1: LOCATION OF SAMBURU DISTRICT IN KENYA

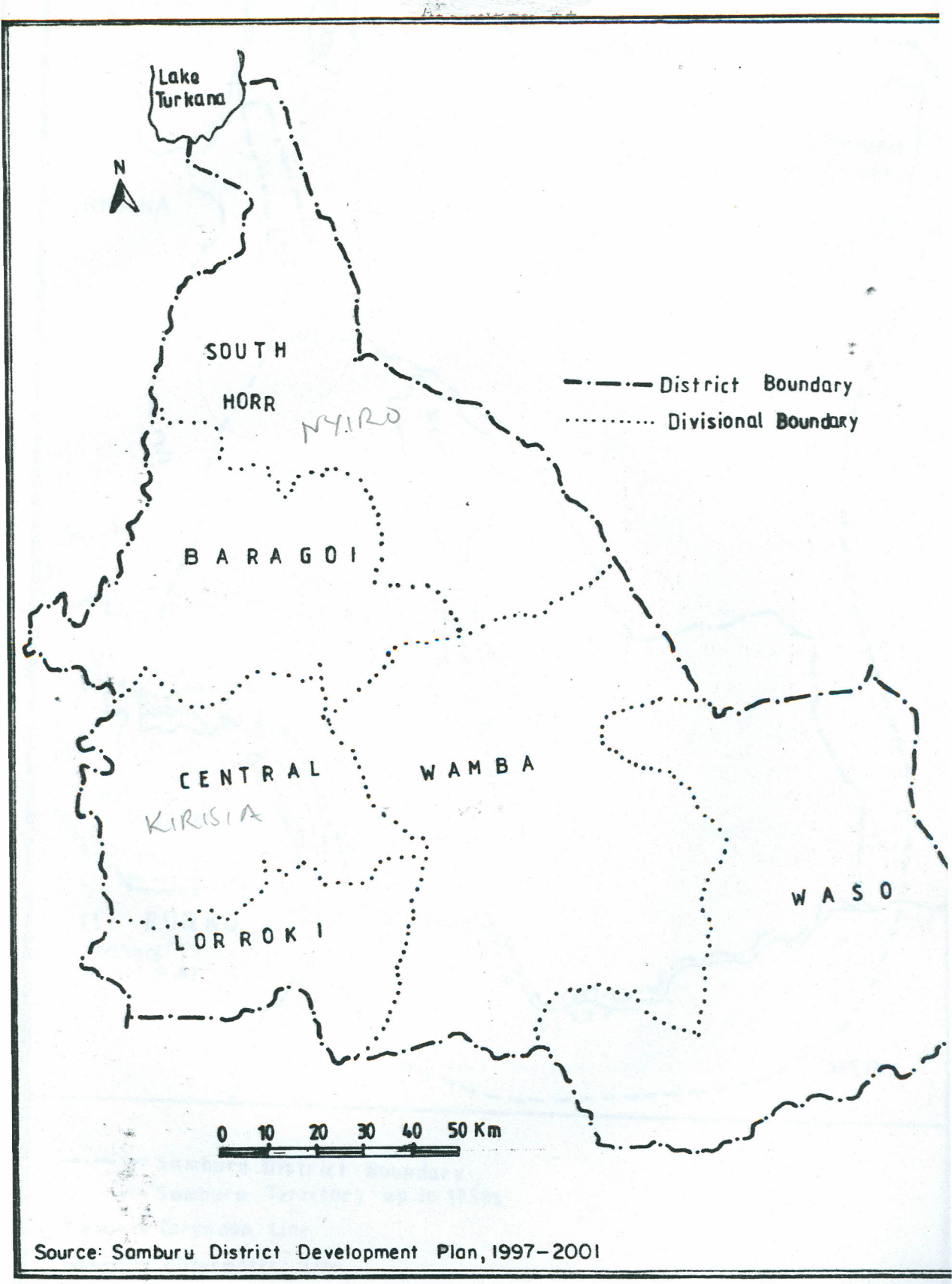


FIG. 2: ADMINSTRATIVE BOUNDARIES

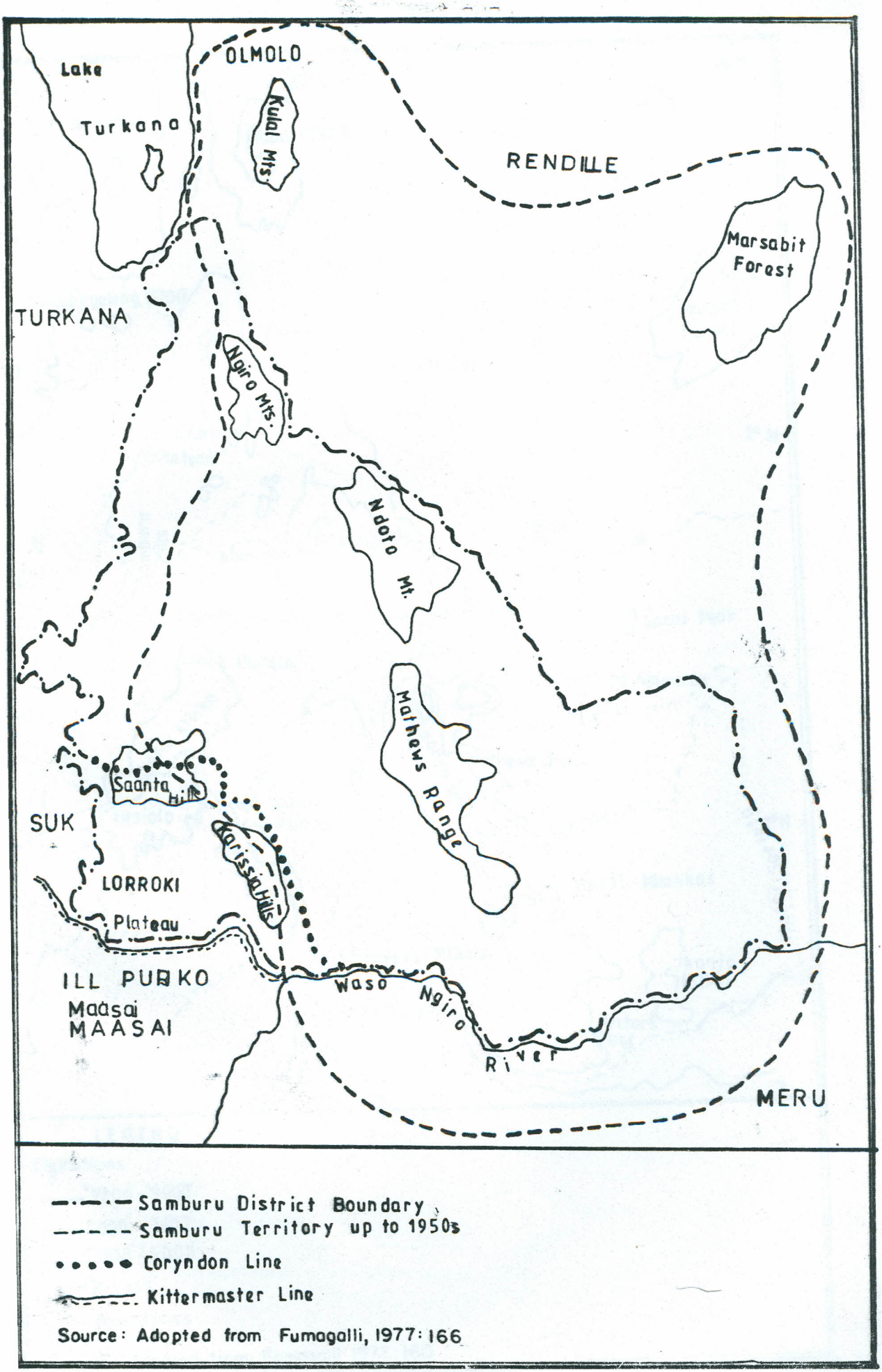


FIG. 3: SAMBURU TERRITORY (1900) AND THE SOUTHWESTERN BOUNDARY

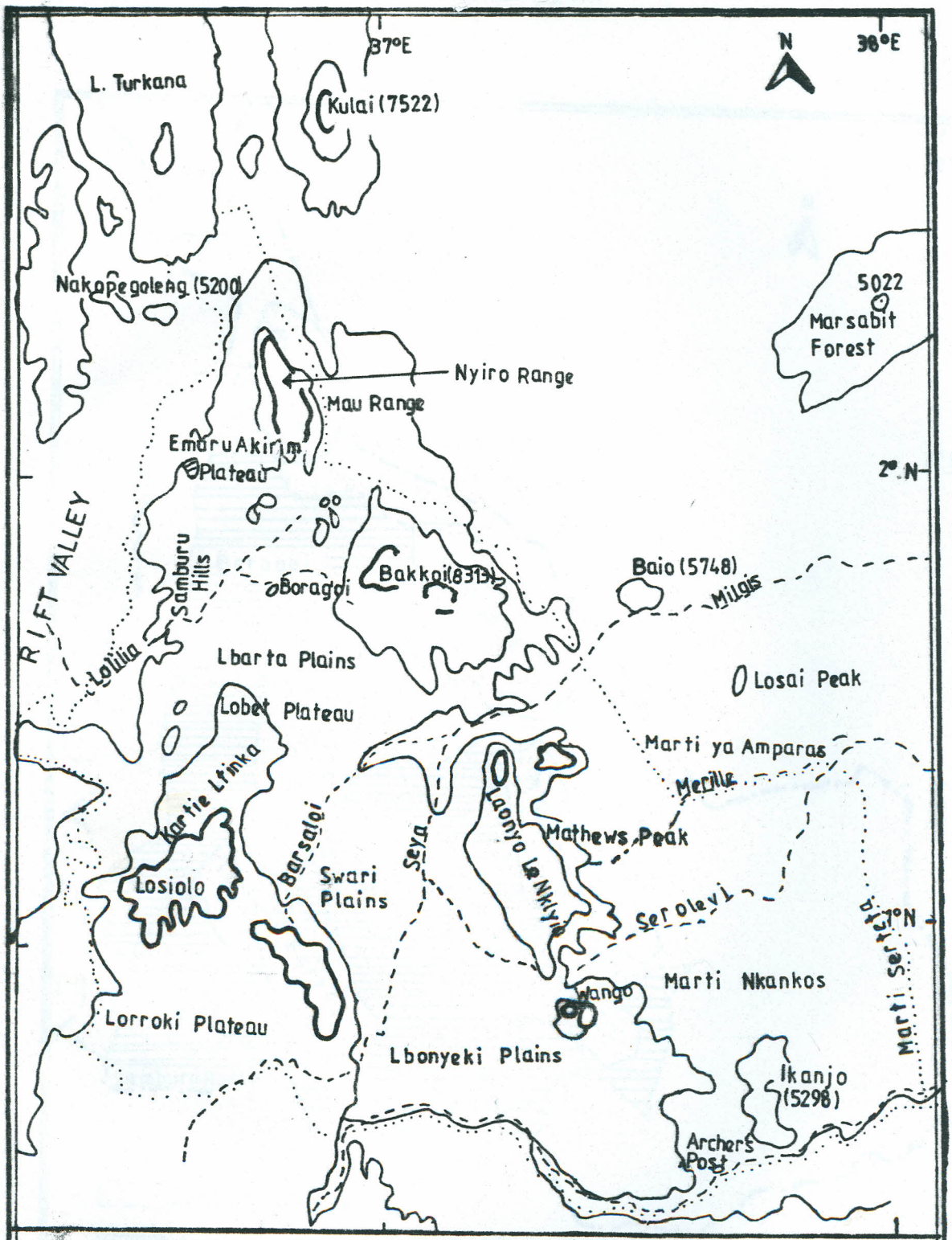


Fig.4: Samburu District Topography

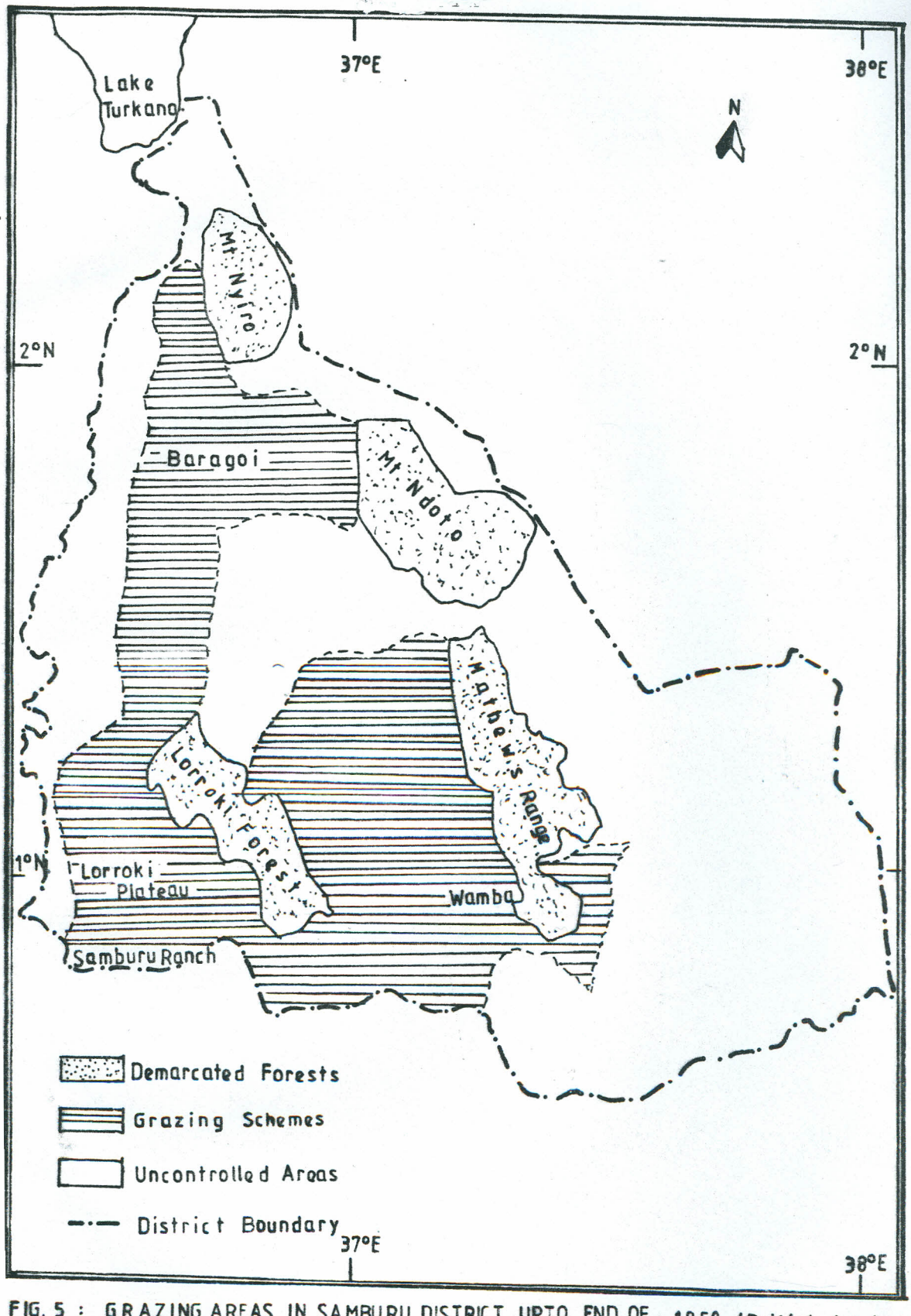


FIG. 5 : GRAZING AREAS IN SAMBURU DISTRICT UPTO END OF 1950 (British Adminstrative records, 1950)