

Effects of Colonial Policies on Pastoralism among the Pokot Community of Kenya, 1920-1963

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Abstract:

Extensive parts of African lands can support pastoralism due to vastness of land and level of aridity. Pastoralism is an economic activity in which people make a living by tending large number of livestock. This paper analyzes the effects of colonial policies on pastoralism among the Pokot community of Kenya, 1920-1963. The overall objective of this study was to give an account on how colonial policies affected the practice of pastoralism among the Pokot pastoralists. The study utilized a descriptive research design. Purposive and snowball sampling methods were used to select participants in the study. The researcher targeted the entire Pokot pastoralist community and sampled knowledgeable people to inform the study. The researcher collected primary data from the Kenya National Archives in Nairobi, and also from eight participants during interview. The study relied heavily on the archival information. Secondary data was collected from institutional libraries and from the internet. The findings of the study revealed that, the British colonial government introduced different policies that affected the practice and development of pastoralism among the Pokot community. Based on the findings of the study, recommendations are made that: the policymakers should formulate workable policies that can sustainably encourage livestock development in all seasons, to reduce nomadic pastoral mobility; in the event that pastoralists move with their children, there should be enough mobile schools to help the children learn; and, pastoralists should be provided with enhanced marketing strategies to reduce economic loss of livestock during unprecedented drought. The researcher posits that, a further study be conducted that would investigate policy gaps that govern livestock keeping and pastoralism among the Pokot community.

Keywords: Pastoralism, pastoral community, policy, livestock, herding, transhumance

1. Introduction:

Pastoralism is an economic subsistence practice in which people make a living by tending a large number of livestock. Extensive parts of African lands can support pastoralism due to vastness of land and level of aridity (Galaty & Johnson, 1990).

There are essentially two forms of pastoralism namely; nomadic and transhumance. Pastoral nomads follow a seasonal migratory pattern that can vary from year to year while transhumance pastoralists follow a cyclical pattern of migrations

that usually takes them to cool highland valleys in the summer and warmer lowland valleys in the winter. As conditions change, pastoralists usually adjust. This can result in a traditionally nomadic society or some families within it becoming more or less transhumance in their migratory patterns if the opportunity arises (Kandagor, 2010).

The Karamojong, Maasai, Pokot, Turkana and the Samburu are the main nomadic pastoralists of East Africa (John, et al, 2018). In Kenya, pastoralism practices are estimated to be 10% of the country's total GDP (Akoyo & Songok, 2012), albeit some experts believe that the contribution of pastoralism to the national economy could be somewhat higher. Most pastoralists belong to the highly marginalized communities in Kenya. The Pokot people community is divided into two groups: The Hill Pökot and the Plains Pokot, with the latter inhabiting the highlands which experiences high rainfall that can support agriculture. The Plains Pokot live in the arid plains with low soil fertility and rainfall, presenting condition favourable for livestock keeping (John, et al, 2018).

2. The Statement of the Problem:

Colonial intrusion in Kenya was coupled with policies that positively and negatively affected African communities in different ways. Among the sectors affected with this move was pastoralism, and this was particularly among the Pokot. The British colonial state, taking advantage of the ignorance of the native communities-imposed policies that interfered both with the culture and lifestyle of these communities. The Pokot community was pushed by these policies such as hut tax and poll tax policy, which led to poverty among the Pokot pastoral community. The other policy was the destocking policy which led to the reduction of the number of livestock among the Pokot pastoralists. A study needed to be conducted to address how these policies affected pastoralism practices among the Pokot community of Kenya, hence the current study.

3. Literature Review: Colonial Policies and Pastoralism:

In Nigeria, the British government implemented tax policies that negatively influenced livestock

husbandry. The colonial administration imposed taxes on pastoralist's herds which was initially paid by livestock, and later, paid in cash. However, cash could only be obtained through sale of livestock and through monetary trading system (Adriansen, 1997). Such taxation policy imposition enhanced colonial domination and exploitation on the pastoral communities.

The establishment of ranches in East Africa by the colonial administrators, and which was meant to suppress of pastoralism, affected major pastoral communities such as the Maasai (Githinji, 2017). The creation of these ranches made the Maasai to lose their prime land to the British colonial state through the two Anglo-Maasai Agreements. The ones of 1904 and 1911, in which the Maasai community was pushed to the Laikipia area and Ngong reserve respectively, led to loss of pasture land. The Maasai were the first pastoral community to be taxed in 1907 (Githinji, 2017). Such displacement greatly interfered with pastoral practices among the Maasai community. In addition, Guyo (2017) points out that colonial policies led to the integration of the Borana pastoralists into the colonial economic system.

Different policies influenced pastoralism development in Botswana, a country where pastoralism is the main backbone of the economy. From 1975, the government introduced the National Policy on Tribal Grazing Land (White paper No. 2 of 1975). The policy was known as Tribal Grazing Land Policy (TGLP), which allowed zoning of grazing lands and establishment of community ranches (Government of Botswana-GoB, 1975).

In Chad, the government introduced a policy in which the pastoral communities would be educated on their welfare through a mobile school system to cater for the pastoralists' children (GoB, 1975). The same scenario was also witnessed in Cameroon where the government allowed sons and daughters of pastoralists to design and implement appropriate livestock development measures. This was also meant to promote the liberation of pastoralists (GoB, 1975), leading to the development of pastoralism system. The Nigerian

government introduced policies that promoted pastoralism development and practices, by improving infrastructure to make easy livestock marketing. The government developed services meant to increase the supply of livestock to the market (Adriansen, 1997).

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) also experienced policy implementation that affected pastoralism, the Belgian government established pastoral settlements that authorized the confinement of pastoral communities within demarcated range lands. The policy was meant to limit the mobility of the pastoral nomads. In Burundi, the colonial government imposed intensive system of livestock production which required the replacement of local cattle breeds with exotic ones; the local breeds were cross-bred in order to improve yield (Adriansen, 1997). The government of Kenya, through her policy to counteract effects of drought among the pastoral communities, established Early Warning System (EWS) in 1987. The objective of this study was to analyze the effects of colonial policies on pastoralism among the Pokot community of Kenya, 1920-1963.

4. Research Methodology:

The Pokot community is a sub-tribe of the larger Kalenjin tribe who are dominant in the former Rift Valley Province of Kenya. The Pokot live in West Pokot and Baringo Counties. They also inhabit in the eastern Karamoja region in Uganda (Ayub, 2024). The study was conducted among the Pokot who live within West Pokot County, and excluded the inhabitants of the other regions. The study used a descriptive research design in the collection of data, analysis, and interpretation of data.

The researcher targeted the entire pastoral community with the study area. The informants were sampled from experienced pastoralists, the young herders, and the custodians of historical knowledge in the community. The researcher employed purposive sampling technique and snowballing method. This method helped the researcher to get suitable participants where

informants were difficult to come across (Coleman, 1958) due to sparse settlement.

Data was collected by interview guide, telephone calls, and from the archives. Semi-structured and unstructured questions were used to collect data. The data that the researcher collected were both primary and secondary in nature. Primary data was collected from the field and the Kenya National Archives (KNA), while secondary data was collected from theses, books, internet platforms, and journal articles.

Validity is the accuracy and meaningfulness of influence which are based on research thus enabling the researcher to verify the accuracy of the instruments to be used (Mugenda, A., & Mugenda, O., 2003). To ascertain validity of the research instruments, sample questions were discussed with the experts in the related field. The researcher used face validity, which is about whether a test appears to measure what it is supposed to measure (Bhandari, 2023), to establish reliability of data collection instruments.

The approach of the analysis of data required some steps. First, the collected data set was transcribed into readable word format. Next, the data was cleaned and sorted. Lastly, the emerging themes from the content were grouped in order to provide the researcher with ease in applying thematic and discourse analyses of the emergent themes.

5. Results and Discussion:

Pastoralism is a major form of land use and livelihood strategy in many parts of Africa. However, pastoral lands have been subjected to various forms of alienation and land-grabbing. Pastoralism has been mistakenly treated as a primitive and backward practice compared to crop cultivation. Cultivators have been given undue preference in obtaining land (Shivji, 1998).

As much as the Pokot are inherently pastoralists, they also practised agriculture since some parts of their lands are arable. The Pokot were initially known as the Suk, the change from Suk to Pokot was initiated by the British in 1925. The Pokot superiority over its neighbours was enhanced from the time they started buying guns from the

Karamojong pastoral community of Uganda (Kenya National Archives-KNA, 1963). The acquisition of guns encouraged the Pokot community to wield unmatched domination over the neighbouring communities. The Pokot also believed that all animals reared by the neighbouring communities are theirs (Oral Informant-OI, 2020). This shows that the Pokot was the chief agent that championed inter-tribal unrest and cattle-rustling invasions witnessed in the region. Based on the findings of the study, let us now segue into the discourses on the effects of colonial policies on pastoralism among the Pokot community.

5.1 Taxation Policy:

The colonial authority-imposed taxes among the pastoral communities in Kenya, which as well had drastic impact on the Pokot pastoralists. One of the prime goals of initiating such taxation pastoralists in general and the Pokot in particular, was the imposition of taxes. Since tax was meant to be paid in monetary forms, the colonial authority expected the Pokot to sell their animals to obtain the required amount of money (Rothwell, 1934; OI, 2020). It is important to note, that, the British government was determined to condition Africans in Kenya to pay both hut tax and poll tax with little concern on what Africans were going through. The pastoral communities were as well enmeshed in this bid; only the widows were exempted from paying taxes (Rothwell, 1934). Everyone, whether male or female, had to pay for the hut in which he/she lived (hut tax), while poll tax was paid by every male adult. Such tax imposition continued to impoverish the Pokot pastoral community (Tignor, 1976).

By 1920, the tax compulsion amid poor performance in livestock rearing compelled the Pokot pastoralist to slightly resort to trading in animals such as donkeys. But to their dismay, the colonial state paradoxically abolished such trade, hence further exacerbating tax burden among the pastoralists (KNA, 1920). Amidst the plight faced, the Pokot pastoralists felt that they were politically excluded, and were seen as a community that did not warrant any favour from the colonial state. Their socio-economic livelihoods were drastically

frustrated. The only saving grace in regard to taxation was realized when the demand for livestock among the settlers was enhanced by the colonial state, which overlooked unnecessary restrictions (OI, 2020).

5.2 Economic Integration Policy:

The British colonial government in Kenya introduced socio-economic and political policies to facilitate the integration of Kenyan societies into colonial economy (Guyo, 2017). For pastoral communities in northern Kenya, the colonial government challenged the legitimacy of pastoral institutions. The policies included destocking, controlled grazing, and restricting livestock mobility; the process which led to the integration of pastoral communities into colonial economy. The move by the colonial state, also affected the Pokot pastoralists, who were initially fond of a culture of pastoralism. Also, the Pokot animals were not in excess to warrant destocking and restriction in movement, as explicitly explained by an informant:

The colonial intrusion seriously interfered with our pastoralism practices. Also, the colonial policies prevented us from practicing the knowledge and skills that through apprenticeship acquired from our ancestors. They wanted to convert our animals into money.... We are not interested in money, but in our animals, to which we are highly inclined to, since their presence around us makes us feel secure. Their behavior makes us know when danger looms, or when there is already danger (OI, 2020).

This, notwithstanding, it is also important to note that the value of livestock rose after 1922 but quarantines were imposed, to protect European livestock (Jacobs, 1963). This situation drastically affected livestock production and sale among the Pokot community. This is also in line with the findings of the study as narrated thus, by an informant:

Here, prices of our livestock only go up when the buyers know that they are going to make abnormal profits from us. However, it is not always realistic to experience the actual value of our livestock due to the presence of middle-men. They come to our

land ahead of time when information has not reached us on livestock prices and use the ignorance of our people to exploit the pastoralists who appear to be desperate with their stocks (OI, 2020).

The assertions above clearly show that the Pokot, in respect with national pricing of livestock, did not have prior knowledge of the prices of livestock. This might also imply that the Pokot pastoralists could not even predict when livestock prices would go up or down. The absence of such important knowledge imposed a great impediment on pastoralism.

5.3 Land Policy:

Before colonial land policy was enacted, the Pokot communally owned large tracts of pasture land. This greatly ensured security of livestock as well as creating strong kinship bond among the clans. However, the Pokot later lost their land to the white settlers (Ogalo, 2017). The findings by Ogalo further reveals that the Pokot lost large tracts of land to the white settlers in Kitale without any compensation. The Pokot were also restricted from accessing their grazing lands at Pene Plains which were their alternative grazing lands during droughts. In addition, one informant explained that losing land to the settlers and to the colonial authorities was a great blow to the Pokot pastoralists. That, nothing deterred the colonial administrators from doing anything unpleasant to the Pokot as long as they could benefit, hence affecting pastoralism among the Pokot (OI, 2020).

5.4 Migrant Labour Policy:

The tax demands demands compelled a larger number of male population from Suk (Pokot) in 1925, to work in colonial farms in Trans-Nzoia for wage labour. Since acquisition of cattle was reported to be the main habit of the Pokot natives, their move out of the home district to look for wage labour gave them discomfort (KNA, 1925). This implies that pastoral practices somewhat suffered. The truth of the matter is that the natives of Pokot pastoralists could not make ends meet with single means of earning such as livestock (KNA, 1925).

The calamity of drought, which either killed or decimated many livestock, made life more unbearable to the Pokot pastoralists. Although trade on sheep and goats provided the pastoralists with good returns, the outbreak of drought dashed their hope in relying so much on this trade (KNA, 1925). As much as wage labour led to mass migration of the male pastoralists from the Pokot land, the colonial authority insisted that Pokot land could only be exploited for pastoral activities, as contained in West Suk District Annual Report of 1926, and which states:

The Suk country does not lend itself to advanced agriculture nor have the natives have any desire at all to better their crops. The greater part of the district is unsuited for agriculture and development must be in a pastoral rather in an agricultural orientation (KNA, 1926).

The above vividly elucidates that pastoral activities were the key components of livelihoods among the Pokot. Even if the adult males had gone out for wage labour, most of them did not have experience in working in crop farms. As such, they would end up coming back home to continue with pastoral activities.

The hill-Suk basically practiced agriculture, owned few cattle and a large number of goats and sheep; the plain Suk kept large heads of cattle, sheep, goats and some donkeys (KNA, 1927). This shows that much pastoral practices were carried out by the plain Suk who relied on their herds for existence. This might also imply that both the hill and the plain Suk were affected by migrant labour, hence, affecting both agriculture and pastoral activities. By 1928, the colonial authority had concluded that the Pokot people were inordinately adamant to change, as thus stated:

The Suk tribe is inherently clannish and conservative, and not open to new ideas. The Suk is a gentleman in his way not interfering with others and prefers to be left alone. He lacks driving force and the qualities of leadership. The period, during which they have been administered, they should have made greater progress (KNA, 1928).

It is clear that the Pokot cultural traits impeded any colonial bid to bring about transformation in pastoral engagement among the pastoralists. Between 1929 and 1932, many Africans in employment lost their jobs, catapulting people back to the rural to embark on commodity production. The Great Depression of 1929-1939 caused drastic price fall, and some primary commodities lost half their value (Kanogo, 1989). Later, in 1934, the international economy improved, and prices began to rise; only to drop again between 1938 and 1939 (Ngege, 1992). The Pokot pastoralists found themselves sandwiched within this economic dilemma due to fluctuation in commodity prices, as explained hereunder by an informant:

Livestock population among the Pokot community increased during this period, occasioning decline in local prices due to low demand of livestock products. Pastoralism became the one major source of earning livelihoods. For this reason, there was no any other viable means of income since people had lost employment. The frequency of interactions of pastoralists with livestock increased (OI, 2020).

Putting the above into consideration, there is indication that the depression did not encourage economic empowerment among the Pokot pastoral community. The Pokot pastoralists could not transport their livestock to better markets, more particularly, the international markets. Up to 1938, the Turkana and the British pushed a section of Pokot from Kenya into southern Karamoja in Uganda due to rinderpest epidemics (Barber, 1968).

5.5 Livestock Marketing Policy:

The Great Depression ushered in a new dimension in the arena of marketing livestock, thus affecting pastoralism. In 1929, large number of goats and sheep were exported to the Trans-Nzoia. The number exported was 3, 339, which was well above that of 1928 which registered 1, 459 and 6, 659 in 1927, which was the largest within the three seasons compared. Also, 2, 632 goats and sheep were exported to Uganda. During the same year,

rinderpest disease also broke out but only among the Somali pastoralists at Rukwasela Trading Centre (KNA, 1929).

Apparently, the Pokot pastoralists are involved in trade in crops with the Turkana. The Annual Report for West Suk, 1930 shows that agricultural activities were confined to the eastern side of the district. Precisely put, thus:

The natives, by use of irrigation, grow crops such as wimbi, tobacco and mtama in considerable quantity. There are also a few small shambas along the Turkwell River (Suam River) and some patches of wimbi grown near Mount Kaibos. The proceeds from the farm is transported to Turkana in exchange of cattle, sheep, goats or donkeys (KNA, 1930).

From the above, it is clear that the Pokot pastoralists expanded their capacity of obtaining more animals as much as securing ground for marketing their livestock. They could secure additional income from farm produce to purchase more livestock.

However, during the year 1931, the Pokot experienced great loss in crop production that had already given them rays of hope. The locusts invaded and devastated their shambas, leading to severe food shortage (KNA, 1931). Once there is food shortage, it might not be possible to expand livestock production and marketing enhancement. This implies that locust invasion resulted to draw backs in the marketing of livestock and affected the progress of pastoralism. By 1933, there was grave need to provide some relief in food to the Suk people due to famine. Drought had ravaged the Suk land leading to dismal performance in yield, and led to food shortage in the district (KNA, 1933). This implies that livestock marketing would benefit the pastoralists.

5.6 Irrigation Policy:

By 1934, the colonial authority felt that it was imperative to find ways of improving general agriculture among the Pokot pastoralists. In response to perennial drought, the state came up with a strategy that aimed at improving crop production by use of irrigation. As documented in

the West Suk District Annual Report of 1934, the greatest need of the Suk was to enhance improved methods of irrigation (KNA, 1934).

The main concern that informed the introduction of irrigation methods among the Pokot, was that, it would enable the pastoralists to live settled life. This would help the pastoralists to avoid unnecessary movement in search of pasture and water. In addition, irrigation would improve crop production to exchange for livestock. Lastly, irrigation would solve the problem of frequent food shortage, and promote pastoralism among the Pokot. The Annual Report for West Suk of 1935 convincingly indicates that before the introduction of irrigation methods, the only crops grown by the Suk were wimbi and mtama, with savage farming practices (KNA, 1935).

5.7 Destocking Policy:

By 1936, it was evident that the Pokot pastoralists were progressively expanding their livestock production. This could be perhaps attributed to the gains made in the field of irrigation in the preceding years. The West Suk District Annual Report for 1936 (KNA, 1936) explains that, there was need to reduce stock, an implication that livestock production had increased. The Pokot were breaching the report that had been directed by the Kenya Land Commission that required them to reduce stock. For deeper understanding, the following assertions will suffice:

It is difficult for us to speak with moderation of the enormous number of stocks which the Suk have been allowed to accumulate, with extreme problems. My predecessor had talked about measures that required for de-stocking, and I honestly find this need to be urgent (KNA, 1936).

The above report shows that there was grave overstocking among the Pokot pastoralists, very excessive to the extent that it readily drew attention of Livestock Officers in two consecutive seasons. Again, the report implies that there was expansion in livestock production among the Pokot pastoralists.

Right through 1937, it was lamentable that even the native reserves remained heavily overstocked. The

situation was further worsened by the restriction that had been put on livestock exports that inhibited provision of an outlet (KNA, 1937). It was proved that, even with easy export facilities, the Suk would not destock to any great extent and it would appear plain that some form of compulsion such as an excess stock tax must eventually be instituted (KNA, 1937). During the year, 1938, the Pokot pastoralists who had been living peacefully with their neighbours for quite a while had started experiencing conflicts caused by overstocking (KNA, 1938).

5.8 Pricing Policy:

The outbreak of the Second World War from 1939-1945 had economic effects on African communities (Onduru, 1992). There was compulsory sale of livestock meant to supply meat for the military, which increased the general annual sales of cattle in Kenya (Waller, 1977). After the war, a change in official policy on pastoralism occurred in Kenya, to expand livestock marketing. This was influenced by the situation in the African native reserves which were overpopulated with livestock and people (Migot-Adholla, 1981). The main aim of this was for the colonial administration to protect European ranches, which resulted in lowering of official prices set for pastoral livestock. On one hand, the Europeans were paid higher prices for their livestock since it was claimed that they incurred higher production costs. On the other hand, Africans were paid lower prices pegged on the same justification on production but in this case incurring lower cost of production (Lemma, 1987). The war also affected livestock prices among the Pokot pastoralists, as explained hereunder by an informant:

We toiled day and night to look for pasture and water for our animals, but only for our livestock to be taken with low prices as if we picked them from the river banks. We spend sleepless nights taking vigil over our animals against theft, only to be rewarded with low pay. Had it not been for the war that has devastated the entire national economy, the Pokot pastoralists should have been proudly enjoying their labour on pastoralism (O I, 2020).

It is established that the Second World War brought about marked impact on pastoralism. Since the informant is reported that at times their livestock could go with low pay, it appears that destocking of animals was being carried out among the Pokot. The colonial authorities could camouflage under the pretext of low prices in their bid to accomplish their destocking mission among the Pokot pastoralists.

5.9 Grazing Policy:

Since the 1940s, the twin issue of overgrazing that had initially necessitated destocking, and off-take rates had been endlessly a concern in the formulation of policies related to pastoralism. The issues had all the while been the main concerns that needed to be addressed for pastoralism to benefit the concerned communities. Again, the demand for livestock and their products encouraged the pastoral communities, including the Pokot, to supply these essentialities to meet the demand (Kerven, 1992).

The colonial government also introduced grazing controls in order to promote the marketing of livestock, which was slowly gaining ground in the international market. The demand for meat-supply to feed the soldiers during the Second World War boosted livestock prices within the Kenyan colony. Controlled grazing was introduced by the colonial authority so as to produce quality stock for the international market. This is recorded in the West Suk Annual Report, 1940, which further illustrates that controlled grazing did not only aim at improving quality stock, but was also a way of controlling diseases such as foot and mouth (KNA, 1940).

Controlled grazing went on up to the following years, and by 1944, various areas were closed for reconditioning grazing and all cattle excluded. The chiefs often closed areas of their jurisdiction, and appointed grazing guards to check the extent to which controlled grazing was carried out. However, tsetse fly infestation causing nagana disease became a threat to approaches to control grazing lands. This was coupled with another blow, the outbreak of rinderpest disease (KNA, 1944).

On August 15, 1945, the Second World War came to an end, with Japan's unconditional surrender (Koikari, 2011). During this year, the Pokot pastoralists were showing great commitment to pastoral activities. The West Suk District Annual Report of 1945 documents that:

During the year, Riwa and Masol areas are fully devoted to cattle and should be fed by Mnagei, Mwina and Wei-Wei locations. The chiefs have at last realized the value of closing grazing areas and in most locations, there are at least areas surrounded with a thorn fence and are left until grass has come back. But from the 1st January yearly until the rains come, all these enclosures are opened to grazing (KNA, 1945).

Within the understanding of the above assertions, it is clear that controlled grazing policy was producing some success. Probably, much of this success might have been due to destocking policy that was geared towards availing livestock for the international market. Grazing was also controlled as a mechanism of reducing livestock among the pastoralist.

5.10 Livestock Sales:

The end of the Second World War (WW2) in 1945 was followed by myriad of challenges that also faced the Pokot pastoralists. As much as the end of WW2 was characterized by political tranquility and stability, economic status of the Pokot pastoralists had not improved much. An informant expressed reasons for this situation, as thus:

Pastoralism practices preoccupied us to the extent that we could not anticipate anything good realized after the war. The kind of intimidation that the Pokot pastoralists underwent during the war period left us with great fear. We could not trust anybody with our animals even in the name of exchange for money. This is one of the factors that influenced the Pokot people to be hostile as people say. But, the Pokot are not a hostile community neither the pastoralists in particular (OI, 2020).

Compulsory sale of livestock was enforced as a policy as the colonial authorities strategized on livestock marketing. Any success in the destocking plan was due to the existence of attractive market

whereas (Kerven, 1992). Although destocking was seen to be having a bearing on the availability of livestock market, the rationale that informed this policy was that, overstocking and overgrazing were causing soil erosion (Spencer, 1973). All the while, the Pokot had wished that the colonial authority departs from their land. The new post-war activities of the colonial government dismayed the Pokot, who once again discovered that there was no chance of the British leaving their territory (KNA, 1963).

Record from West Suk District, 1947 Annual Report also indicate that, by 1947, there was overstocking coupled with foot and mouth diseases. This situation necessitated massive cattle sale in order to reduce the number of livestock (KNA, 1947). For a deeper understanding, the foregoing source further puts it that:

It is of the greatest importance that these cattle sales become firmly established and as part of the normal life of the reserve, as selling surplus maize to the shops. The Kenya Land Commission reported in the strongest terms on the gross overstocking in Suk. The greatest important development of the year is the start of cattle sales in June (KNA, 1947).

It is clear from the above sources that, grave overstocking among the Pokot during this period led to increased sale of animals. This is as well to say that the post-war period influenced increase in cattle production among the Pokot pastoralists. It is also clear that during this period, West Suk was one of the districts that registered low prices of cattle paid by the Meat Marketing Board (MMB) (KNA, 1947).

Sale of cattle was exploitative to the Pokot pastoralists during the year 1948 since there was abnormal overstocking. This was confirmed by the West Suk District 1948 Annual Report, which indicated that monthly cattle sale to the MMB was the only official stock market which took place in the reserves (KNA, 1949). More precisely put:

Cattle sales organized by the Meat Marketing Board in West Suk have proved popular and during the year, arrangements were made with the local Indian traders to take their lorries filled with

the more popular lines of goods-beads, copper wire, sheets of all colours, jembes and sugar as could be carried to the sales. Tea is also brewed on the spot and on the whole, the cattle sales are on the increase (KNA, 1949).

Based on the above assertion, conclusion can be drawn that the Pokot pastoralists compromised quality prices of cattle sales in exchange of goods. The Indian traders took advantage on the long distance between the pastoralists and the major towns in which goods they longed for, were manufactured.

5.11 National Policy on Meat Industry:

In the 1950s, the colonial authority came up with a national policy which aimed at developing meat industry in Kenya. The plan subsumed all other efforts that were directed towards pastoral communities (Kerven, 1992). This approach at first drastically affected the Pokot pastoralists as more livestock were required for supply meat to the factories. At the initial stages, the approach was totally new to pastoralists since the motive was unclear. It was only later when the Pokot pastoralists could get some good money for their animals, that they started feeling economic relief. As much as the Pokot realized some benefits, their culture of wanting to see animals around them was still a challenge, as thus explained by an informant:

It is true that the meat factory and livestock-related businesses have improved our economic livelihoods after the war. However, our animals are sold away from us. When we locally exchange the animals within the locality for other needs that we have, we still feel that our livestock are still alive within our locality. But when they are taken away to be slaughtered in Nairobi without us seeing their bones and skins, then we feel like the whole community is committing a crime against our culture (OI, 2020).

It is like the Pokot pastoralists kept their animals basically for prestige and economic purposes was secondary. This means that attachment of culture to pastoralism emerges stronger than anything else. The strategy to develop meat industry was aimed at reducing the number of animals and to control soil

erosion. According to West Suk District, 1950 Annual Report (KNA, 1950), a lot of meat business was going on. This was reported by livestock officers who encouraged improvement of skills in hides and skin management, as explained hereunder:

During the past year, three men were sent on courses in connection with the Hides and Skins Improvement, two more local men have been employed for this work. Courses for them have been applied for. At the Local Native Council Meeting, a demonstration was given to all chiefs and elders in the considered best method of drying, i.e., suspension shade drying on a square frame. Fleshing and cleaning were also demonstrated (KNA, 1950).

The explanation above depicts that as much the Pokot pastoralists kept livestock for prestige and as a show of wealth, colonial policy of developing meat industry in Kenya was gradually prevailing. It is logical and obvious that hides and skins could only be available when animals were slaughtered for meat.

5.12 The Branding Policy:

During the year 1957, cattle census was still a continued adventure among the Suk pastoralists. The exercise was akin to the strategy of improving branding of livestock, especially on the cattle. This is line with the West Suk District, 1957 Annual Report (KNA, 1957). The report indicates that, all the cattle in the district were rebranded with a single symbol brand that was hoped to stick better than the 5-letter symbol that had been initially used in the preceding years. However, it remains a paradox that the strategy did not obtain the correct livestock census. This could be confirmed from the same report that, in 1957 census conducted revealed that there were 108, 957 herds of cattle, and sheep and goats combined were 91, 452. This was different from the figures obtained from the preceding years which had it that 1955/1956 figures were 131, 650 cattle and sheep and goats combined were 108, 672 (KNA, 1957).

6. Conclusion and Recommendations:

Based on the findings of the study, the main conclusion drawn is that, in general, the colonial

policies somewhat impeded the development of pastoralism among the Pokot community. Recommendations are made that: the policymakers should formulate workable policies that can sustainably encourage livestock production in all the seasons to reduce nomadic pastoralist mobility; in the event that pastoralists move with their children, there should be enough mobile schools to help the children learn; and, pastoralists should be provided with enhanced marketing strategies to reduce economic loss of livestock during drought. The researcher posits that a further study be conducted to investigate policy gaps in regard to implementation of policies that govern livestock keeping and pastoralism among the Pokot community.

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