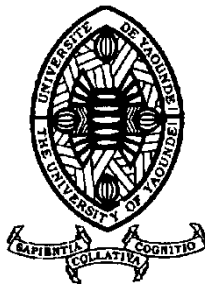


THE UNIVERSITY OF YAOUNDE I

POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL FOR
SOCIAL, HUMAN AND
EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES

DOCTORAL RESEARCH UNIT
FOR SOCIAL AND HUMAN
SCIENCES



UNIVERSITÉ DE YAOUNDÉ I

*CENTRE DE RECHERCHE ET DE
FORMATION DOCTORALE EN
SCIENCES HUMAINES, SOCIALES
ET EDUCATIVES*

*UNITÉ DE RECHERCHE ET DE LA
FORMATION DOCTORALE EN
SCIENCES HUMAINES ET
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GENDER IN PLANTATION AGRICULTURE IN THE FORMER BRITISH SOUTHERN CAMEROONS

1916-2002

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To

my Daughter Wanyu Peace Kolem

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ABSTRACT

This study entitled Gender in Plantation Agriculture in the Former British Southern Cameroons focuses on the history and the process of employing male and female labourers in the plantation agricultural sector. The central argument in this study is that, there was unnecessary discrimination in the employment of labour, remuneration, task assignment, recreational facilities and a constant female labour resistance to male labour in plantation politics. The sub arguments in this study are that, there was the employment of more male labourers than female labourers with low remunerations for female labourers, more lucrative tasks and positions were assigned to male labourers, more male labourers enjoyed the recreational facilities than female labourers and the fact that there was female labour resistance to male labourers and a general resistance of plantation labourers to management exploitation collectively and informally. Varied sources were employed to accomplish this task. Primary and secondary sources were used. Primary sources included oral and face to face interviews with personalities of the plantation sector where there was the use of eye witness account. There was also the exploitation of materials from public and private Archives. Data and letters were analysed, used and interpreted for better comprehension. Secondary sources included published and unpublished sources while still, material was gotten from information and communication technology sources. Theories used included Ricardo's theory on agricultural location and Smith's subjective theory of value. Our study adopted the qualitative and quantitative research methods and the narrative and thematic approaches were used to analyse the data collected for this research work. Our findings from the study suggest that, there was male chauvinism in the plantations and a majority of female labourers earned lower wages making them unable to meet up with their daily expenses. Both men and women were employed as labourers but there was a tendency for women to undertake mostly less lucrative and traditionally feminine work in the plantations with almost all the supervisory positions ascribed to men, making these female labourers to be considered as second class in the plantations economic politics, seen in the fact that the efforts of these female labourers were unnecessarily undermined as they were given menial jobs like picking, gathering weeding and sweeping, unlike the male labourers who were given jobs like factory managers and general overseers. Most female labourers were widows and single so they occupied mostly the single-roomed camp houses which led to their vulnerability. There was a constant and persistent male opposition to this new class of labourers and a general resistance to exploitation in the plantations championed by female labourers which portrayed the leadership qualities of the female folk in the plantations.

Key Words: Plantation agriculture, Labour employment, Southern Cameroons, Employment of workers, Task work, Remunerations, Resistance to plantation work, Recreation facilities.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette étude, intitulée le genre dans l'agriculture de plantations dans l'ancien "British Southern Cameroons" se focalise sur l'histoire et le processus d'emploi des ouvriers hommes et femmes dans le secteur agricole des plantations. La problématique centrale est qu'il y avait une discrimination non fondée dans le recrutement des ouvriers. Cette discrimination allait même au-delà de la rémunération, la distribution des tâches, les structures d'accueil d'où une réelle compétition pour recruter les ouvriers. Pour mener à bien cette étude, de nombreuses sources primaires et secondaires ont été exploitées. Parmi les sources primaires, on compte les interviews menées auprès de personnalités du secteur des plantations. Il y avait aussi l'exploitation des documents venant des archives publiques et privées. Les données et les lettres ont été analysées, utilisées et interprétées pour une meilleure compréhension. Les sources secondaires comptent les documents publiés et non publiés. En plus, les Nouvelles Technologies d'information et de la communication ont été exploitées. La méthodologie utilisée est narrative et s'appuie sur la diachronique et la synchronique. Les théories mobilisées sont celles de Ricardo sur la localisation agricole et celle de Smith sur la théorie subjective de la valeur. La confrontation des sources et tout un travail de réflexion ont abouti aux résultats suivants : Recrutement discriminatoire de la main d'œuvre, entretien moyen des plantations, affectation des ouvrières dans les tâches moins lucratives. Ainsi, il y avait le chauvinisme masculin dans les plantations. En effet, une majorité d'ouvrières gagnaient des salaires plus bas et n'arrivaient pas à subvenir à leurs besoins journaliers. Les hommes et les femmes étaient recrutés comme main d'œuvre avec une tendance de femmes ayant les tâches les moins lucratives et traditionnellement féminines dans les plantations ; la presque totalité de postes de responsabilité étant réservés aux hommes. Ainsi, ces ouvrières étaient considérées comme une main d'œuvre de seconde classe dans la politique économique au sein de ces plantations. C'est comme si le travail des ouvrières était négligeable puis qu'on leur donnait des tâches minables telles que la cueillette, la collecte, le désherbage et le balayage, au contraire des hommes à qui on donnait des postes comme directeurs d'usine ou superviseurs généraux. La plupart d'ouvrières était des veuves qui vivaient seules. Elles occupaient seulement les chambres dans les camps, ce qui les rendait vulnérables. Il y avait une opposition constante et permanente entre les ouvriers contre cette nouvelle classe d'employés qui montrait les qualités de leader de la femme dans les plantations et dans la société d'une part et d'autre part une résistance générale menée par les ouvrières et les ouvriers contre l'administration des grandes plantations.

Mots Clés: *Plantation, main d'œuvre, "Southern Cameroons", Emploi, tâches, Rémunération, Opposition.*

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

A E C:	Allied Economic Conference
ANY:	National Archives Yaounde
C C E:	Central Fund for Economic Cooperation
C.D.C:	Cameroon Development Corporation
CDCWU:	Cameroon Development Corporation Workers Union
COMDEV:	Common Wealth Development Corporation
CPWU:	Cameroon Plantation Workers Union
E C N:	Electricity Corporation of Nigeria
ETC:	Etcetera
F E D:	European Development Fund
GDP:	Gross Domestic Product
I C F T U:	International Corporation of Free Trade Union
I D A:	International Development Assistant
I D A:	International Development Association
I M F:	International Monetary Fund
Kgs:	Kilograms
L O N:	League of Nations
NAB:	National Archives Buea
PAIAS:	Pan African Institute for African Studies
RAB:	Regional Archives Bamenda
S A P:	Structural Adjustment Programme
SDG2:	Sustainable Development Goal 2
T W U:	Tiko Workers Union
W B:	World Bank
W C T U C:	West Cameroon Trade Union Congress
WW 11:	World War 11
WW I:	World War 1

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Historical Context of the Research

Plantation agriculture began in Cameroon in the 1890s after the German annexation of the territory in 1884. The colonial master for the territory Cameroon immediately opened large plantation concessions and by 1913, there were 195 plantations and 614 Cameroonians employed to work in these plantations¹. The British Colonial Administration began in Cameroon on the 1st of April 1916². The territory had been colonized by the Germans in 1884 by the Germano-Duala Treaty of Saturday the 12th of July and the hoisting of the German flag of Monday the 14th of July 1884³. Gender considerations and division of roles in the economic sector and particularly in the agricultural sector were a long established institution in the Pre-colonial Cameroonian society. The labour distribution in the territory was based on gender; as Goheen puts it, “Men own the fields, women own the crops”⁴. With a patrilineal descent in most communities, and a patriarchal society, Women continued to support a male hierarchy within the context of the modern state and economy by providing the labour necessary to reproduce the household.

Women hoed, planted and harvested while men ensured a privileged position in the local power hierarchy where these men were identified as public and women as private. Men could occasionally support the home economically if they went out for hunting or tapping but generally, women were responsible for feeding and the up-keep of the home and a majority even sold the crops before clothing their husbands. It was therefore the pride of a woman to take care of her husband’s basic needs⁵. This was corroborated by another informant who admitted that, “women did all the chores and fed the family”⁶. Most authors on pre-colonial economic issues hold that, African men were idle while the women worked in their two fold roles as nurturers of their families and providers. This could be further explained by the fact that women even in post-colonial era spent most of their time on the farms and on domestic task. Agricultural task performed by women included, tilling, planting, weeding, and

¹ P.B. Essomba, *Le Cameroun : Les rivalités d'intérêts franco-allemandes de 1919 à 1932*, Strasbourg, Presses universitaires de Strasbourg, 2004, p.11.

² V. J. Ngoh, *Cameroon 1884- Present (2018) The History of a People*, Limbe, Design House, 2019, p. 145.

³ V. J. Ngoh, *History of Cameroon since 1800*, Limbe, press book, 1996, pp. 60-63.

⁴ M. Goheen, *Men Own the Fields, Women Own the Crops: Gender and Power in the Cameroon Grassfield*, Wisconsin, the University of Wisconsin Press, 1996, pp.1-6.

⁵ Interview with Angelica, Sika, 87 Years Old, Farmer, Tavisia Village, June 17th 2019.

⁶ Interview with Thomas Azangwi, 68 Years Old, Audit Clark, Bota, July 20th 2015.

harvesting which are still ongoing⁷. (See Appendix 2) To Kaberry, as corroborated by Linda, A.L., “These women took pride in their own skills and competence as farmers in their responsibilities of feeding and care of the household and in their knowledge that they were in some respects, the backbone of the country”⁸. These women from the Grassfields area of the Cameroons grew food crops like maize as opposed to Women from the Coastal area of the Cameroons who grew mostly tuber crops with an average family farm of above an acre. Women increasingly found themselves moving out of the role of house wives and child bearers to partners in economic development. This became even more noticeable since independence as consideration was given to female plantation workers, which was opposed to what obtained in the past where the woman was relegated to the background, and given no place in the labour market especially in the field of plantation agriculture which was generally foreign and viewed as a male issue.

Considering the men, prior to the British era in the Cameroons, their agricultural activities and labour time varied significantly with age and status and rarely included sustain task over a given period of time. A small but growing number of young men farmed food crops for sale but not for household consumption. They were responsible for clearing the land and tree crop, concentrating on pruning⁹. These men were occupied with activities which brought them status and wealth, like trading, handicraft and political organization. In agriculture, men used to only prepare the land and occupied themselves with planting and maintaining raffia¹⁰.

The discourse about gender and male, female roles and the division of labour appeared much the same during the colonial and post-colonial era in the Cameroons. Their prerogative in the control over land was claimed by virtue of their rights to the control and inheritance of real property such as building and tree crops. Men were more important than women because of their protective task while women still had the economic obligation of provisioning the household¹¹.

The boundary between men and women in the labour process became more institutionalized given that the incorporation of men in the agricultural sector progressed differently from that of women in the Cameroons. The production and marketing of cocoyam was done by women

⁷ NAB, File: NW/QC/a1976/1/Bk, Report of Tour of Agricultural Projects in the North West Province of Cameroon, October, 1976, pp.1-19.

⁸ P. Kaberry, *Women of the Grassfield: A Study of the Economic Position of Women in Bamenda, British Cameroon*, London, Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1952, p.150.

⁹ Goheen, *Men Own the Fields*, p.85.

¹⁰ A.V. Denberg, *Women in Bamenda*, Leiden, African Study Centre, 1996, p.25.

¹¹ Goheen, *Men Own the Fields*, p.72.

and they sold them for some reasonable money. Division of roles was very evident because men in the Essoh- Attah Chiefdom were involved in long distance trade from the hinterland to the Coast of Cameroon while some did the short distance trade between the forested Mbo and Banyang countries and the Bamileke grassfields as middlemen. Their stock included oil palm, fish, meat from the forest and groundnuts, fiber bags and clay pots from the grassfields¹². The dichotomy and change of economic role became visible with the arrival of the Germans in the territory who concentrated and preferred the employment of the male folk as plantation labourers. Back in Europe women earned 13.0 % on average less per hour than men. Highly feminized jobs were systematically undervalued and generally, women had more work hours per week than men though they spent most of this time on unpaid work¹³. The pay gap between men and women in Europe stood at 43% in the 1990s¹⁴. The situation was not very different from what obtained in Africa and the Cameroons in particular. Women therefore concentrated on their subsistence farming but still maintaining their duty as house keepers and custodians of the economic demands of the family, while men got involved in plantation economy which was more capitalist inclined.

The colonial era was the after math of the Portuguese who arrived the territory around the Wouri Estuary in 1472 (15th Century) and called it *Rio Dos Cameroes* meaning, River of Prawns. The Portuguese were soon followed by the Dutch, Spaniards, and Swedish but with the primordial aim of establishing trade in the territory¹⁵.

The 19th Century saw the coming of the British, the French and the Germans who did not only concentrate on trade, exploration and missionary work, but entered the race for the annexation of the territory¹⁶. The British decided to move slowly and cautiously towards annexation. They were convinced that the threats posed by the French were not serious enough to offset their plans in the region. They did not at any time consider the possibility of Germany annexing Cameroon, because German traders in the area cooperated very well with British traders and publicly supported the campaign for British annexation. Besides, it was common knowledge among the imperial powers that the German Chancellor, Otto Von Bismarck was least interested in acquiring colonies.

¹² E. S. D., Fomin, *A Handbook on Essoh-Attah Chiefdom*, Bamenda, Patron Publishing House, 1994, p.31.

¹³ [http:// www.ec.europa.eu/eurostat](http://www.ec.europa.eu/eurostat)

¹⁴ <https://en.m.wikipedia.org>.

¹⁵ Ngoh, *History of Cameroon*, pp.45-47.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.51-58.

The times had changed since Bismarck declared his opposition to colonies in 1871. The British as it turned out were right in assessing the level of French threats, but wrong about German colonial interest¹⁷. This race that began in the early 1880s reached its peak when the combination of political amalgamation or unification and modern industrial growth resulted in the emergence of Germany¹⁸. This great nation under a great Chancellor Otto Von Bismarck suddenly changed his attitude and took the diplomats of Europe by surprise in declaring German protectorate in Cameroon¹⁹. The territory was thus colonized on Saturday the 12th of July 1884 by the Germano-Duala Treaty and the German flag rose on Monday the 14th of July 1884²⁰.

With the occupation of the territory by Europeans, new labour policies were introduced which greatly affected the stereotyped ideology, patterns and roles of the traditional gender society²¹. These officials introduced new administrative policies, practices and modern forms of labour and agricultural techniques that needed a shift from the traditional patterns to adapt to the mores that were going to involve both men and women in the agricultural process²². Upon taking over the territory, the colonial administration embarked on projects that necessitated maximum exploitation of the territory and a more profitable income and export trade. The labour process was more or less a labour intensive activity and mostly the male folk were engaged in such labour.

Along with their appearance, the African and Cameroonian attitude towards this new form of labour was the hardest to understand for the Germans. From what they were able to discern, it was diametrically opposed to their own, causing both parties a lot of problems. Our investigations revealed that these problems arose because of the treatment that the plantation workers received from the colonialists. They were maltreated, flogged, paid very low wages and they had to work for very long hours with no rest²³ (See Appendix 3). These colonialists were unable to accept the women as the more active partners in the African patterns of labour

¹⁷ V.G. Fanzo, *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges*, Vol.2, *The Colonial and Post-Colonial Periods*, London and Basingstoke, Macmillan Press Ltd, 1989, p.14.

¹⁸ Oliver R. and A. Atmore, *Africa since 1800: Fourth Edition*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p.106.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Ngoh, *History of Cameroon*, pp.62-64.

²¹ P.B. Essomba, "Voies de Communication et Espace Culturels au Cameroun sous Domination Allemande (1884-1916)", ph.D. Thesis in History, University of Yaounde 1, 2005, p.287.

²² E. Ardener, "Land, Agriculture and Subsistence in Victoria Division" in Edwin, Ardener, Shirley and W.A., Warmington(eds.), *Plantation and Village in the Cameroons, Some Economic and Social Studies*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1960, p.309.

²³ NAB, File no Qd/a/1915/9, Complaints of Bamenda Labourers against Managers, Ekona-Re, pp1-3. , also see File no Qd/a/1918/1, Plantation Yearly in the Cameroons Province, 1918, p.3.

distribution. They quickly saw the labour force in Cameroonian men partly because of their body build and equally because of African chauvinist and protective attitude where these men opposed the recruitment of their women as labourers. Female labourers soon however became part of the labour process given that there was an increasing need for Cameroon raw materials to be used in Europe.

Agriculture was the predominant occupation of human society because every able-bodied person got involved in the cultivation of patches on which to grow crops sufficient to satisfy his domestic needs. Cameroonians at that time and even now still lived in a subsistence economy where traditional farming methods were the main arena of survival for the population. As the society widened and advanced in complexity and economy, it was increasingly necessary to engage in a profitable form of agriculture that could sustain the new economic demands. Plantation agriculture at this point in time became inevitable as many plantations were set up in the territory; first under the Germans and later under the British and the French²⁴.

Essomba concluded that, though Europeans and particularly the French were well grounded in the system of exploitation, (*Mise en Valeur*) an agricultural revolution was going to be inevitable given that routes of communication soon developed which necessitated a rapid growth in the agricultural process²⁵. National law and practices facilitated collusion between male and female power. At the same time, the structures and institutions of the post-colonial era afforded some women opportunities outside their traditional role as food crop producers to a role where just like men; they were opportune to take part in large-scale Agro-Industrial production especially during the British rule in Cameroon.

Review of Sources

The recruitment of female and male labourers in Plantation agriculture and the development of a capitalist economy remains a vital topic in economic history whose role in development has been hailed by a good number of writers and researchers in this domain. This accounts for the availability of an immense literature on the subject though no gap in historical studies of any length has ever been closed considering the unlimited dimensions covered in history. The general works on male and female plantation workers will be important to this study in that some of the hypothesis and paradigms will be tested in the study. In this regard, we must first of all acquaint ourselves with some existing literature treated by some authors following a

²⁴ Simon Epale, *Plantation and Development in West Cameroon, 1885-1975: A Study in Agrarian Capitalism*, New-York, Vantage Press, 1985, P.23.

²⁵ Essomba, “Voies de Communication et Espace Culturels au Cameroun” p. 287.

chronological approach. We shall review scholarly works in World, Africa, and related works in Cameroon and in the Cameroons in particular following the thematic and theoretical approaches so as to respect the canons of methodology.

There are a lot of primary sources ranging from oral sources to archival material, letters, and eye witness account that are available to help the researcher accomplish the task on the investigation of gender considerations in plantation agriculture in the Cameroons. Studies have been made on gender considerations in agriculture and labour but especially in plantation agriculture that will be of great help to this work. Related themes in the agro-industrial sector like, the development of agriculture in pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial times have been examined. Aspects of plantation agricultural land and geographical suitability of the physical land scape for agriculture have been examined by a good number of authors. These will permit the researcher to understand the historical and geographical background to the study and the attitude of the people towards gender considerations in plantation labour.

Labour employment and remuneration in plantation agriculture have equally been investigated by many scholars of this domain. Task labour and job description of plantation workers have also been the concern of many writers on plantation economy while still, aspects of recreational facilities in plantation life have been an area of interest to most scholars.

There are equally some studies on women and gender in the Agro-Industrial sector of the world and particularly Cameroon. A lot of studies have been examined on the political socio-cultural and economic development of the British Southern Cameroons²⁶.

Issues related to labour resistances in the plantation economy have been generally examined by scholars of this field and the impact of plantation economy forms some major themes that have been looked at by many writers. Studies have also been carried out on plantation life in the Southern Cameroons that will help the researcher to understand the attitude of labourers in general which will facilitate analysis on specific issues on gender division of roles in the plantation sector.

A lot of theories on plantation agriculture, labour and gender related issues have been examined by many scholars of the plantation economy sector. For this work to meet the standards of an academic piece, such sources were reviewed vis-a-vis the scope, orientation, conception and interest of this study with an aim of employing their ideas, concepts, arguments and themes

²⁶ A.V. Denberg, *Women in Bamenda*, 1996, p.25.

where necessary and filling the gap in areas found wanting as far as the objectives of this work is concerned.

A good number of credible actors of the plantation sector were interviewed on the various themes handled in this piece. Field workers, labourers, administrative staff and technicians in the agricultural production process were interviewed and their views verified as a review of sources for this research work. They generally held the opinion that, female plantation workers were not given much value in the plantations. To these informants, these new classes of labourers were sub-servients and so were greatly resented by especially the male folk in the plantations²⁷. They noted that this attitude was particularly due to the traditional position of women in pre-colonial societies who were regarded more like custodians of the family and subsistence farmers. They concluded that, plantation agriculture was alien, and therefore considered a male issue because the traditional African man was not ready to involve the so much cherished female folk in to this new form of labour.

They therefore protected their women and preferred male plantation labourers, just like did the European planters²⁸. Some informants were rather of the opinion that plantation agriculture was not suitable for women because they were weak and docile²⁹. The different views held by the different stake holders in the plantation economy greatly helped in this research work. These oral sources will however be incomplete given that statistical data will be difficult to get orally, given way for the need of other reviews.

Archival sources were equally reviewed for this academic piece. A lot of literature came from the various archives in Buea, Yaounde, Bota, Ndu and a hand full of private archives which greatly added to the development of the various themes and issues raised in this research work. Most of these archival findings helped to add first-hand information and evidence of the recruitment of men and women in the plantations, their remunerations, job description and their recreational facilities.

Many authors, who have written elaborately on the plantation agricultural process in the Cameroons, treat themes which have to do with the situation of agriculture in the pre-colonial times. These authors concentrate of the various roles ascribed to the different genders in the Cameroonian society. Adrivan in his *Women in Bamenda* focuses on women in the North West

²⁷ Interviews with plantation workers and other related informants of the capitalist economy, Age range from 41 to 92, Field Workers, Labourers, Administrators, Technicians, Businessmen and Quarter Heads, Plantation Sites, June 2014-July 2022.

²⁸ *Idem*.

²⁹ Interview with Emmanuel Egoh, 55 years old, Engineer in the Rubber Factory, Tiko, July 31st 2015.

Region as partners to economic development where he brings out their input in the agricultural sector. Women cultivated the land and planted various food crops that later became a main source of income. They had power and were the family members with money. He states that “wealthy women continued to take responsibility for their household”. The post-colonial Cameroonian woman was therefore not only a worker but an income generator which went a long way to sustain the family³⁰. Kaberry agrees with Adrivan when she investigates on the economic status of women of the Bamenda Grassfields, her conclusions reveal the hard-working nature of these women³¹.

Though neglected in the public because of African traditional Values, she was capable of carrying on with major responsibilities of being the bread winner of the family. This background would help in the appreciation of the potentials of the woman as a labourer in the plantation sector in the Cameroons. As a bread winner practising subsistence farming, these women had acquired valuable skills that could be used in the plantation sector. Though unskilled, their numerous years of working in the farms and being the custodians of the family had earned these women a lot of experience that could be rewarded as plantation workers. Labour, being rewarded by wages will be a spring board to examine how the men and women in these plantations were rewarded and how they used their wages.

Fomin and Ndobegang opine that, slave trade routes were veritable highways of social interactions among peoples of different ethnic polities. To them, the routes which linked different markets points facilitated social interactions and the diffusion of civilisation. They contain that, “The routes from the Cameroon Western grassfields through Nweh (Bangwa), Banyang and Ejagham countries to Calabar is known to have helped in the spread of arts and cultural civilisation in the sub-region. Blacksmithing civilisation of the Bamum, characterised by the making of gongs and other royal musical instruments is purported to have been spread by the slave trade routes”³². Ngoh adds his voice to accentuate that, new slave routes developed during the colonial period³³. One agrees with these authors because, these routes ushered in a wider economy as men and women agriculturalist were sure of a site to sell their farm products. They were readily going to embrace plantation agriculture as a paradigm of system. Though this piece provides background material on how men and women had distinct roles and were

³⁰ Denberg, *Women in Bamenda*, p.96.

³¹ Kaberry, *Women in the Grassfield*, pp.1-65.

³² E.S.D. Fomin and Ndobegang, M.M., “African Slavery Artifacts and European Colonialism in the Cameroon Grassfields from 1600 to 1950”, in *Journal of the European Legacy*, Vol.11, N°.6, 2006, pp. 635-646.

³³ E. S.D. Fomin and V.J. Ngoh, “Slave Settlements in the Banyang Country, 1800-1950”, Buea: University of Buea Publications, 1998, p.49.

well developed in subsistence agriculture, it fails to extent to the realities of plantation agriculture giving a natural urge to research more on the vital issues of this new form of agriculture.

Linda, A.L in her “*Female Missionary Activities and Change in the Bamenda Grassfields*” presents the new mores that were introduced in the Cameroonian society by female missionaries. Economically, new agricultural methods came in to play and this was going to act as a pace setter in female plantation work in the Cameroons. She said “Sisters encouraged women to join the corn mill society”.³⁴ This work will help provide the basic facts on the role of female missionaries in revamping and encouraging the economic activities of precolonial Cameroonian women. Miriam Goheen in her “*Men Own the Fields, Women Own the Crops*” subscribes to Adrivan’s opinion by examining the relationship between gender and power which had been significantly altered in the context of the post-colonial state. To her, “Women were using their voices to protest a shift in the balance of power between male and female”³⁵. From Goheen’s view, the place of the woman was in the farm which was subsistence while that of the man was in the field which involved large scale production. The researcher however differs with Goheen by taking a stand to investigate on male and female plantation field workers in the Cameroons. To the researcher, “both men and women own the fields though there is disparity in job description”. Equal opportunities should therefore be given to both genders to excel in their choices and space in the production process.

Henry Kam opines that, it was necessary for women to stand up and fight for their own power and influence so as to make their voices heard in the political, social and especially economic domain. He states that, “the centrality of women in the opposition of male domination and subjugation in colonial Africa was a fall out of decolonisation which quickened after World War II”. Within this epoch, women launched a virulent attack on men and their institutions. The intension was to achieve economic freedom and political control. An effective mechanism of operation, using traditional bodily symbols, was put in place and the result was a neutralisation of the overbearing and imposing influence of men and their institutions respectively³⁶. This historical piece will help to give an in-depth to the attitude of male and

³⁴ Linda, A. L., *Female Missionary Activities and Change in the Bamenda Grassfields, 1904-2006: A Historical Survey*, ph.D Thesis, University of Yaounde I, 2011, P.217.

³⁵ Goheen, *Men Own the Fields*, p.17.

³⁶ H. K. Kah, “Feminist Activism, Economic *Carte Blanche*, Political Control, Symbol and Symbolism: A Historical Interpretation of the *Kelu* Women Revolution in Bu-Cameroon, 1957-59” in *Afrika Zamani*, No. 17, 2009, pp.81-100.

labour plantation labourers giving their cultural background and will further help to expatiate on women push full and willing attitude to work in the agro plantation sector.

Many authors treat issues on plantation employment, task labour and remunerations in the plantation economy. Aka Emmanuel in his *The British Southern Cameroon, 1922-1961: A Study in Colonialism and Underdevelopment* focuses on the need to develop Southern Cameroonians through plantation agriculture. He states that, plantation agriculture after the Second World War was “To ensure their development in the interest of the people”. To Aka, the main aim of creating the C.D.C in January 1947 was to help Southern Cameroonians to develop economically. The researcher agrees with Aka’s point of view given that the creation of plantations was aimed at achieving development, a virtue rare in the history of the Cameroons³⁷. In the same light, Gwanfobe maintains that, the British left much to be desired in the economy of the Cameroons. In plantation agriculture, he provides statistics of the labour force in the plantations by 1916³⁸.

These statistical developments are corroborated by Botela in his “The Contribution of the Cameroon Development Corporation in the Socio-Economic Development of West Cameroon, 1961-72”³⁹. Mosima states that “one of the most vital influences on the economic advancement of Cameroon since World War 1 was the role played by the plantations which the Germans had established. These plantations flourished greatly and became the economic and financial bulwark of the territory”⁴⁰. All these works will lay the foundation for this study as it will provide the necessary background to plantation agriculture in the Southern Cameroon.

W.A., Warmington in his *The Background to Plantation Employment* investigates the history of plantation labour from colonial period to post-colonial period. He states that, “Plantation workers fairly entered a complex industrial organisation offering a considerable variety of different types of work in many different localities”. These findings reveal the disparities that existed in work description and the different sectors of plantation agriculture. His idea is corroborated by Epale who contains the necessity for division of roles in plantation agriculture. Though this work falls short of gender related statistics in labour employment, it will however

³⁷ E Aka, *The British Southern Cameroon, 1922-1961, A Study in Colonialism and Under Development*, Platteville, Nkemnji Global Tech, 2002, p.76.

³⁸ M.B. Gwanfobe, “An Economic History of the British Cameroons, 1916-1960: A Study of the Economic Evolution of the British Cameroons”, Post Graduate Diploma Dissertation in History, University of Yaounde, 1975, pp.45-49.

³⁹ E.B. Enow, “The Contribution of the Cameroon Development Corporation (C.D.C) to the Socio-Economic Development of West Cameroon, 1961-72”, M. A Dissertation in History, University of Buea, 1999, pp.50-55.

⁴⁰ F.M. Fritz, “The Social and Economic Impact of the Cameroon Plantation”, *Annals de la Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines*, Yaounde, 1979, p.219.

help the researcher to elaborate on the various sectors involved in plantation work, consequently, giving an inside to labour disparity⁴¹.

Chiara Saraceno buttresses Adrivan's view by investigating in her "*Women's Paid and Unpaid Work in Times of Economic Crises*" in *Unequal Burden Economic Crisis, Persistent Poverty and Women's work*, that adult women have a lot of responsibilities. She reveals that "family well-being and standards of living were maintained and/or improved by adult women and this became a buffer against economic crisis as well as a crucial resource for upholding the family's standard of living"⁴². Unfortunately, these women though employed in the house were not given an opportunity to excel in other sectors of an economic system. The researcher therefore adds her voice to that of Saraceno by admitting that, such household skills and managerial tendencies could better be transformed and used in a labour process that will be remunerated. This work will therefore expose the usefulness of women in managerial positions given that they can devote more time in an economic activity. They feel justified in being partially replaced in their capacity as family workers only if their time is occupied by paid work.

Forka Leypey examines the patterns of food consumption in Cameroon with an in-depth analysis of the different food crops that were grown in Cameroon. He falls short of indicating the advent of cash crop production and plantation economy in the territory. This work will however give the researcher the knowledge on the patterns of food items in the territory in a bit to understand why the indigenes had to embrace plantation agriculture with the coming of Europeans⁴³.

Shabhita Jain and Rhoda Reddock in their *Women Plantation Workers* examine the plight of female plantation workers in the New World with a conclusion that there was "a lot of sexual and economic exploitation of these women"⁴⁴. Their work differs from the present study in that while the researcher concentrates on gender considerations in plantation labour in the Cameroons, they look at the situation in the New World. They however link up with the African context by expanding on the fact that, the relationship of gender to the division of labour was

⁴¹ W. A., Warmington, "The Background to Plantation Employment", in Edwin, Ardener, Shirley Ardener, and W.A., Warmington(ed.), *Plantation and Village in the Cameroons, Some Economic and Social Studies*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1960, p.3.

⁴² Chiara, Saraceno, "*Women Paid and Unpaid Work in Times of Economic Crisis*", in Beneria, Lourdes, and Shelley, Feldman(ed.), *Unequal Burden, Economic Crisis, Persistent Poverty and Women's Work*, United Kingdom, West view Press, 1992, p.222.

⁴³ Forka Leypey, "Patterns of Food Consumption in Cameroon: Contrasting Oral History and Genetic Evidence from 1850-1985", Ph.D. Thesis in History, University of Yaounde I, 2015, p.67.

⁴⁴ J. Shabhita and R. Reddock, *Women Plantation Workers*, New York, Oxford International Publishers, 1998, p.3.

a long-established institution. They corroborate Tyson's view that women remain subordinate to men as far as plantation work is concerned. Their work will however give an insight to disparity in terms of job description in the Cameroons.

Gwan Emmanuel has written one of the most exhaustive works on labour migrations in Cameroon. He examines labour policies in Cameroon cutting across the period of the Germans, the British and the French. He states that "The early phase of plantation labour migration, comprising waves of short duration was dynamic and concentrated on the yet accessible territory peripheral to the plantation zone" Such changes in labour recruitment in Cameroon give us a *raison d'être* to investigate on the rationale for change⁴⁵. Killingray equally opines that "Labour was required to produce foodstuffs and essential raw materials"⁴⁶, while still, Delancey elaborates on labour recruitment in the coffee production in Bamenda and the bananas in the "South West"⁴⁷. To Freund, "Trade unionism was a striking feature of the immediate post-independence years, however that much of the intensifying literature on African labour, quickly moved to focus on one institution, the labour union, which appeared to have the capacity not only to control, discipline and develop labour but potentially to be the greatest single political focus in African countries"⁴⁸. These works will permit us to attempt a similar exercise but with focus on the gender tendencies of labour recruitment in the Cameroons.

Lois Tyson in her *Critical Theories Today* expatiates on traditional gender roles that "privileges men by casting them as rational, strong, protective and decisive while women are projected as emotional, weak, nurturing and submissive"⁴⁹. To her, patriarchy in the African society greatly shaped women's integration in the industrial economy. Pre-colonial societies gave preference to male labour because, they were considered strong and protective. This work will help the researcher to better understand the background of a predominantly male dominated labour in plantation labour in the Cameroons.

⁴⁵ E.Gwan, "Labour Migration in the Cameroon Republic", *Review de Géographie du Cameroun*, vol, N°.1, 19, p.12.

⁴⁶ D. Killingray "Labour Exploitation for Military Campaigns in British Colonial Africa, 1870-1943" in *Journal of Contemporary History*, Sage, London Newbery Park and New Delhi, vol.34, 1989, pp.485-486.

⁴⁷ M.W. Delancey, "The Expansion of Coffee Production in Bamenda and Bananas in the South West", in Geshiere Peter and Konings Piet, (eds.), *Conference on the Political Economy of Cameroon Historical perspectives*, Leiden, 1987, pp.303-337.

⁴⁸ B. Freund, "Labour and Labour History in Africa: A Review of the Literature" in *African Studies Review*, vol.27, no.2, 1984, p.7.

⁴⁹ L. Tyson, *Critical Theories Today: A User-Friendly Guide*, New York, Garland, 1999, p.83.

Julie, Mattael focuses on the loss of the status of women in the colonial enterprise. She explains that the European colonizers had neglected the female agricultural labour force in preference to male. She further states that the introduction of money relations made the work of men to be seen as superior while that of women was considered inferior which led to the disappearance of the rights and privileges of women⁵⁰. This work will therefore help the researcher to know the origins of marginalization of women in plantation agriculture. It will go further to assist in the examination of the problems that female and male plantation workers faced in the Cameroons.

Nkoli and Fonsah's writings on "Women in the Banana Industry: A Study of plantation in Tiko, Cameroon" in *Issues in Gender and Development Volume 1*, examine women in the Banana industry where labour statistics are given with an explanation that skilled supervisors and management staff positions in the plantation were held by men. They made a revelation that in a male dominated society, men would not be willing to work under female authority. They conclude that "Most of the skilled supervisory and management staff positions were held by men. Several explanations were offered by the managers for such situations. These included cultural factors as well as the fact that women had fewer educational qualifications for supervisory positions than men." They conclude their findings by emphasizing that positions with zero or insignificant number of women were strictly perceived as men's work. A close look at their work reveals a lot of gender related issues and discrimination in terms of managerial aspects which will help orientate the focus of this study with the aim of examining problems related to management in plantation labour in the Cameroons.

Fanso in his *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges: Vol. 11, The Colonial and Post-Colonial Periods*, gives an in-depth of the origins and development of Cameroon history from pre-colonial to colonial and post-colonial times. He further buttresses the history of Cameroon by adding to a lot of historiography and historical issues on especially Cameroon history. Julius Ngoh equally investigates in his works on the political, economic and social history of Cameroon as a mandated territory and as a nation on its own. All these works will help the researcher to get historical facts on the study area⁵¹.

Edwin Ardener and Shirley Ardener, in *plantation and Village in the Cameroons, some economic and social studies*, have investigated and written on plantation life examining key issues like the nature of work in the Cameroons with a close look at sources of labour supply

⁵⁰ J. Mattael, *Histoire Economique des Femmes*, New York, Presses Universitaire, 1983, p.34.

⁵¹ Ngoh, *History of Cameroon*, pp. 267.

in Cameroons plantations. They vividly describe the conditions of plantations labourers in the late 1950s, and analyse the plight of those workers as an indispensable element of plantation life in Cameroon⁵². Their work will therefore help the researcher to elaborate on the type of work done by men and women and the peculiarity of such work in the Cameroons. To them, “the motive for leaving home to obtain outside work was primarily the money which could be earned”. They investigate that, most men left home and migrated from the Bamenda, Wum and Nkambe Division of the Cameroons to the coast to look for employment opportunities. E.M., Chilver and P.M., Kaberry agree with Edwin and Shirley by exposing the migratory train which was mostly to the coast. Such migration which involved mostly men will provide statistics on female and male labour supply in the Cameroons, given that most men left the Bamenda province for the coast⁵³.

Epale explains the value of plantation labour in the Cameroon’s economy. He clearly elaborates the necessity for a huge labour force that was needed in the plantations in Cameroon. He further explains that the German planters had labour problems in terms of recruitment and effectiveness at work⁵⁴. Epale’s analysis will situate the origin and beginning of male and female recruitment in plantation labour in the Cameroons.

Delancey in her, “Women at the Cameroon Development Corporation: How Their Money Works”, analyses one of the important sources of internal development which is capital from wage-employed women on plantation agriculture. She presents a data with conclusions that, contrary to former believes that development in Africa is hindered because internal savings for investment do not exist; attempts to save by individuals women may be much greater and more common than has been⁵⁵.

David looks at a historical investigation of refugees in Cameroon and concludes that, a lot of these people escaping from wars and problem thorn zones found refuge in Cameroon. This work is limited because it makes no reference of the fact that pull factors like the development of plantations also gave way to the influx of people in to Cameroon. His work will however act as a cartelist to further research on the different tribal groups who migrated and settled in the Cameroons as a result of the presence of plantations⁵⁶.

⁵² Ardener et al., *Plantation and Village in the Cameroons*, p.23.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p.239.

⁵⁴ Epale, *Plantation and Development in West Cameroon*, p.23.

⁵⁵ V. Delancey, “Women at the Cameroon Development Corporation: How their Money Works”, in *Rural Africana*, no2 (Fall 1978), p.9.

⁵⁶ David Nchinda Keming, “The United Nations High Commission for Refugee in Cameroon: A Historical Investigation from 1982 to 2011”, ph. D. Thesis in History, University of Yaounde 1, 2016, pp.4-11.

Nchangvi and Neba provide a lot of geographical evidence and analysis on the physical environment of the study area. These analyses will help to situate the geographical delimitation of study area and equally, provide geographical evidence as one of the reasons for plantation agriculture seen in the availability of good soils and climate⁵⁷.

“Wage employment opportunities in Cameroon for women with little or no formal school were not abundant in the past..., it would seem likely then that some of the women who have been working for the length of time that they have, would have been more efficient if receiving reasonable wages, to have accumulated some assets, made some investments, or set aside some savings for various purposes”⁵⁸. Again, Delancey does a thorough investigation on the relationship between female wage employment and fertility in Cameroon. This will help in the elaboration of the potentials of female labourers in the Cameroons⁵⁹.

Women and men working in plantations can therefore use their wages for economic development. Such useful data and aspects of women wages will guide the researcher to investigate the case of plantation labour in the Cameroon as a whole so that useful conclusions can be made on how to improve on women wages in the capitalist world; and how such wages can be used for socio economic development.

Konings writes elaborately on female and male labour processes in plantation agriculture in Cameroon and in other parts of the world. In his *Gender and class in the Tea Estate of Cameroon*, he elaborates on the type of labour employed in plucking tea, with a comprehensive analysis of male and female Pluckers. He cites the Ndu Tea Estate as a case study explaining that labour was subject to female subordination. He further elaborates that women were naturally more suited to performing certain tasks and at cheaper rates. He ascertains the fact that female plantation workers are generally less conscious of their exploitation in the labour process⁶⁰. Gender disparities in terms of type of work done, therefore form part of Konings analysis which will give impetus to the researcher to further investigate such practices in the Cameroons. The researcher in view of such will find out the reasons for such female subordination and its effects on the developmental process in the Cameroons.

⁵⁷ S.K Nchangvi, et al., *21st Century Applied Physical Geography and Map work*, Yaounde, Grassroots Publishers, 2018, pp1-24.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p.13.

⁵⁹ V. Delancey, “The Relationship between Female Wage Employment and Fertility in Africa: An example from Cameroon,” A Ph.D. Thesis in Economics, University of South Carolina, 1980, pp.198-201.

⁶⁰ P. Konings, *Gender and Class in the Tea Estates of Cameroon*, Leiden, African Study Centre, 1993, pp. 99 - 100.

Delancey again investigates on female employees of the Cameroon Development Corporation and concludes that, “the women employed at the C.D.C at the beginning of plantation agriculture in Cameroon originated from many areas of Cameroon with more than 90 percent originating from the various locations in the “North West and South West Provinces” of Cameroon”⁶¹.

Konings, again in his article titled, “Chieftaincy, Labour Control and Capitalist Development in Cameroon”, writes on Chieftaincy and the control of the labour supply at the Ndu Tea Estate. After a critical analysis of the concept, he concludes that male opposition to female labour in the Ndu Tea Estate did not disappear, altogether especially after the agreement between Chief Williams Nformi and the Cameroon Development Corporation officials⁶². “Women were subordinated to patriarchal controls”. These contradictions in women’s positions may not be as puzzling as they first seem, however, control over women’s vital productive and reproductive labour constituted the basis of men’s prestige, power and wealth in the society. Goheen (1993:243) agrees with Konings that chiefs in Africa frequently tried to safeguard male control over women’s productive labour in their local communities, arguing that it was an essential part of African tradition⁶³.

Konings does not expatiate on the reasons for such opposition to female labour and falls short of the evolving patterns and changes in economic policies which is that of involving men and women for a better reproductive output. This will therefore give an opening for the researcher to investigate and find out the reasons for such opposition to female labour in plantation labour in the Cameroons and the potentials found in both sexes. Koning’s book on Labour Resistance is of great importance to this work as it brings out some concepts on plantation agriculture. The concepts and the theories would be used to evaluate the situation of plantation life in the Cameroons with respect to gender in the labour process⁶⁴.

Rodney investigates the colonial and post- colonial periods in African history with the view of bringing out the “phenomenon of neo- colonialism in order to formulate the strategies and tactics of African emancipation and development”. To Rudin, slave trade routes became the highway for plantation workers to use as they travelled to the newly opened German plantations

⁶¹ V. Delancey, “the Relationship between Female Wage Employment and Fertility in Africa: An Example from Cameroon”, p. 201.

⁶² P. Konings, “Chieftaincy, Labour Control and Capitalist Development in Cameroon”, in Adriaan Van Rouveroy, Van Nieuvaal and Donald Ray (ed.), *Journal of Legal pluralism and Unofficial law*, Oxford, New York, Foundation for the Journal of Legal Pluralism, 1996, pp.335 - 338.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, P. 329.

⁶⁴ P. Konings, *Labour Resistance in Cameroon*, Leiden, African Study Centre, 1993, pp.200-203.

as labourers⁶⁵. Though he condemns colonial labour because to him, it was meant to feed the metropolitan sector, he however provides pertinent conclusions by postulating that, the drive for super profits dictated the development of plantations⁶⁶. This work will give an inside to the attitude of plantation owners which will help to foster the analysis on the different concepts of plantation agriculture like the subjective theory of value.

Anthony Ndi's historical muse gives an incentive flash back to events in pre- independent Cameroon and chains up with developments that led to the birth and death of a federal and unitary state⁶⁷. N.N. Mbile equally tells the Cameroon political story from the point of view of an eye witness by bringing out a vivid description of events that culminated in the birth of Cameroon⁶⁸. The political development of Cameroon is again revisited by Ebune who describes the growth of political parties in Southern Cameroon⁶⁹. Le Vine equally examines the Cameroon Federal Republic⁷⁰, while still; Anthony meticulously brings out the truths about the British legacies in the Cameroons⁷¹. All these works will provide a profound historical background to our study on gender considerations in plantation agriculture in the former British Cameroons.

Karin vividly describes the life style of Cameroonian women in her *German Women in Cameroon*. She invests so much interest in the development and life style of the Cameroonian woman during the German era⁷². These women though victims of colonial labour policies, maintained their cultural heritage. This was opposed to the situation of men who were constantly hand-picked as agents of Prestation during the German era, a situation corroborated by Rudin who postulates that these German labour policies were later reflected in the French labour policies and this caused a lot of indigenes to migrate to the British Southern Cameroon

⁶⁵ H. Rudin, *Germans in Cameroon, 1884-1914: A Case Study in Modern Imperialism*, New Haven Yale University Press, 1968, pp. 272-273.

⁶⁶ W. Rodney, *How Europe under Developed Africa*, London, Bogie L'Ouverture Publication, 1972, pp.277-321.

⁶⁷ A. Ndi, *Southern West Cameroon Revisited; 1950-1972, Unveiling Inescapable Traps, Vol. 1*, Cameroon, Paul's Press Bamenda, 2013, pp.1-371.

⁶⁸ N.N Mbile, *Cameroon Political Story: Memories of an Authentic Eye Witness*, Cameroon, Presbyterian Printing Press, 1999, pp.1-3.

⁶⁹ J.B. Ebune, *The Growth of Political Parties in Southern Cameroon: 1916-1960*, Yaounde, CEPER, 1992, PP.1-230.

⁷⁰ V.T. Le Vine, *The Cameroon Federal Republic*, London, Cornell University Press, 1971, pp.1-185.

⁷¹ A. Ndi, *The Golden Age of Southern (West) Cameroon: 1946-1972; Impact of Christianity*, Cameroon, Maple Fair Services, 2005, pp16-17.

⁷² K.U Schestokat, *German Women in Cameroon: Travelogues from Colonial Times*, New York, Peter Lang Publishing, 2003, pp.1-188.

for better working conditions⁷³. Rudin's analyses will act as a motivating factor to the researcher to investigate the gender situation of labour recruitment in the Cameroons.

Tchombe reflects on the situation of the Cameroonian woman in terms of education. To her, "The existing arrangements for the Cameroonian woman do not totally correspond with the actual structure of the emerging society including its economic aspects"⁷⁴. Education would give the Cameroonian woman a chance to prove her rights to equality thus leading her to make full contributions to the nation's development. She should therefore be educated so as to meet up with the challenges of plantation politics. This reflection falls short of statistical presentation of the ratio of educated women *vis a vis* men in Cameroon to help in understanding the reasons for disparity in assigning labour to male and female in the plantation sector.

Fomin and Ngitir, expatriates on "Rituals in Traditional Boundary Settlements in the Cameroon Grassfields"⁷⁵. They give a vivid description of the physical and spiritual processes involved in boundary demarcation, revealing that such a study can lead to a better understanding of the geographical history of Africa in general and Cameroon in particular. With such a discourse, the researcher will be able to gather material on certain customs and traditions in the Grassfields that will help to better understand the societal role of men *vis a vis* women in Cameroon's traditional set-ups.

Bederman provides statistical development on the recruitment of labour in the Cameroon Development Corporation (C.D.C). To him, "one of the major difficulties experienced by growers in all plantation regions was the lack of an adequate labour pool", a situation which led to the massive migration of a huge labour force to the Cameroons⁷⁶. Such statistical evidence is however limited only to the C.D.C which will act as an impetus for the researcher to investigate on statistical data on plantation agriculture on other plantations in the British Southern Cameroon.

Temgoua investigates on Cameroon during the German era where he vividly examines German economic activities and especially the development of plantation agriculture. He gives the

⁷³ R.H. Rudin, *Germans in Cameroon, 1884-1916: A Study in Modern Imperialism*, New York, Green Wood Press Publishers, 1938, p.321.

⁷⁴ Tchombe Therese Mungah, "Psychological and Social Foundations for the Education of the Cameroonian Woman" in UNESCO AFRICA, UNESCO Regional Office Dakar, 1994, pp33-37.

⁷⁵ E.S.D. Fomin and V.S. Ngitir, "Rituals in Traditional Boundary Settlements in the Cameroon Grassfields" in *Boundaries and History in Africa: Issues in Conventional Boundaries and Ideological Frontiers*, Yaounde, The Department of History, 2011, pp32-43.

⁷⁶ S. Bederman, *The Cameroon Development Corporation, Partners in National Growth*, Botsa, The Cameroon Development Corporation, 1968, p.25.

statistics on the evolution of plantation agriculture in Cameroon and states that “the German plantations had developed at an alarming rate that by 1913 prior to the Great War, there were 58 German plantations and 17.827 labourers⁷⁷. While he elaborates on German economic policies, he falls short of providing gender statistics in labour employment. His work will however act as a pace setter in the development of plantation agriculture in the Cameroons for such plantation labour was begun by the Germans. The researcher will therefore extend the study on plantation politics by investigating the gender statistics as far as labour employment and remunerations was concerned.

Adig Mathias elaborates on the Dynamics of Colonial Labour in the Bamenda Grassfields. He concludes that, colonial labour brought a lot of changes in the Bamenda area and those changes had far reaching repercussions on the people and the environment. His work will be of great historical and economic development of this study because it gives and acts as a lime light to some labour policies in the Cameroon. He however limits his findings on colonial labour policies. These studies will therefore extent the horizon of labour policies in plantation agriculture in the Cameroons by investigating the recruitment of labourers in the oil palm, tea and rubber plantations of the Cameroons from a gender perspective⁷⁸.

Damian, Akara investigates on female labour in the Tole Tea Estate and their significant contribution to the production process. He states that, “women were involved in many strategic areas of production such as weeding”⁷⁹. He concludes that, though the Tole tea gave preference to female labour, these women were not well treated and this resulted to many problems ranging from managerial to personality problems. Ntobo agrees with Damian on the plight of female labourers with particular focus on the Ndu Tea Estate. She states that “Male domination in terms of position became a reality in the labour process as women could not own very high positions”⁸⁰. Women were therefore generally marginalised and given mean positions in the estate. These works will however form the bases and spring for the study on gender considerations in plantation labour in the Cameroons.

Akara again examines the effect of plantation agriculture on the socio-economic wellbeing of the indigenes. To him, “plantation agriculture contributed to the socio-economic welfare of the

⁷⁷ Temgoua A. P, *Le Cameroun à L'Epoque des Allemands: 1984-1916*, Paris, Harmattan, p.161.

⁷⁸ Adig M.A. “The Dynamics of Colonial Labour in the Bamenda Grassfields, 1889-1961”, Ph.D. Thesis in History, University of Yaounde 1, 2014, pp. 98-102.

⁷⁹ Akara, “Plantation Agriculture in the Former British Southern Cameroons: Female Labour on the Tole Tea Estate, 1958-2002”, M. A Dissertation in History, University of Buea, 2006, p.5.

⁸⁰ B. N. Ngwayi, “Female Labour in the Ndu Tea Estate, 1957-2002”, DIPES II Dissertation in History, University of Yaounde 1, 2011, p.115.

populations in the vicinities in which they operated”. This assertion holds true because, a lot of camps and other recreational facilities were provided by the plantations. This work will therefore help to further give an in-depth of the social and economic implications of plantation life. Another investigation is done on the effects of economic crisis on the plantations. This will go a long way to help in the discourse to show how this crisis that affected the entire nation affected the recruitment of labour, remunerations and even the general output of the plantations⁸¹.

Though the above observations and critical analysis remain an inside to this study, the study however extends the debate by delving into the reasons and history of gender in plantation labour in the Cameroons and the impact of assigned task in the labour process in plantation labour. It will further go to examine how men and women placed in their socio-cultural context arrived at creating spaces for development and growth.

Statement of the Research Problem

The problematic in this study is the under representation of women in the agricultural politics and the decision making process of plantation farming organization in Cameroon. Globally in Cameroon, women are not significantly recognized for their contribution to plantation agriculture even though they give in much in terms of task and job description. They played a key role in the natural rural work by contributing to farm work as labourers, paid farm workers, unpaid domestic workers and also sustain rural communities through farm work and community participation. Despite being developed in many areas, Cameroonian plantation agriculture is still that of the middle-aged males⁸².

It further investigates the role and importance of men and women as labourers in plantation agriculture. It identifies the disparities and the reasons for differences in gender assigned task in plantation agriculture in the former British Southern Cameroons with a thorough investigation of why specific duties were assigned to either men or women aimed at finding out the impact of such gender division of roles on the developmental process of the territory Cameroon. It looks at how male/female task performance helped in the production process in

⁸¹ Akara, “Plantation Labourers and the Resilience of Agro-Industrial Complexes in Central Africa amidst the Storm of a Scourging Economic Crisis: The Case of a Throbbing Sacrifice in the Cameroon Development Corporation through a Historical Autopsy, 1985-2002”, in *Annals of Global History* Volume 3, Issue 1, 2021, pp. 1-10.

⁸² B. N. Ngwayi, “Female Labour in the Ndu Tea Estate, 1957-2002” 2011, p.115.

plantation agriculture in the Cameroons. In this regard, the research will be attempting answers to the following questions:

1. Women in Cameroon make up approximately half of the national work force but why do they exercise significantly less power in the plantation sector than men in terms of employment?
2. Why were Male plantation workers earning a higher wage than female plantation workers?
3. Why was there a tendency for women to be given less lucrative jobs and positions in plantation agriculture?
4. Why did more men than women enjoy recreational facilities in the plantations?
5. Why did female labourers constantly experience male chauvinism in the plantation sector?

Hypothesis

The hypothesis of this study is anchored on the fact that, there was unnecessary discrimination in the employment of labour, remuneration, task assignment and recreational facilities which led to female labour resistance to male labour in plantation politics. The advent of plantation agriculture in Cameroon saw the entry in to the capitalist world of a new form of agriculture but this new agricultural technique gave preference to the male folk and this led to gender disparities that all culminated to female labour resistance to male chauvinism.

Objectives and significance of the Study

Gender considerations in plantation labour have been motivated by the fact that, men and women can work as partners in the economic process as this will increase yield in the labour process. There is particular task labour suited for men and others for women. This study will therefore help both men and women to be aware of the various opportunities placed at their disposal in the production process.

Another significance of the study lies in the fact that, the study will bring out the history of disparities in job description in the labour process in the Cameroons with a view of examining the impact of division of roles on the production process and the development of the Cameroons and the world at large⁸³.

⁸³ P. Konings, *Gender and Class*, pp. 89 – 100.

The importance of the study on gender considerations during the British Rule can equally be justified by the fact that, the gap in gender disparities in plantation agriculture which was a long established disparity from colonial Cameroon will be bridged as the study will closely examine gender related issues with an aim of reconciling men and women working in the labour process in terms of division of labour in plantation agriculture.

Moreover, the study on Gender considerations in the labour process during the British Rule will ease and add reading on gender related issues with an aim of investigating the impact of men and women cooperating and working as partners in the production process which ties very much with the worldwide economic progress that postulates cooperation as a means of achieving greater success.

Scope and Delimitation

The study on gender in plantation agriculture in the former British Southern Cameroon is centered on the distinctive role of men and women in the production process in plantation agriculture. The geographical limitation of the study area is the former British Southern Cameroons today known as the North West and South West Regions of the Republic of Cameroon. The Cameroons otherwise known as the British Southern Cameroons was given to Britain by the League of Nations through Article 22 of the covenant as a mandated territory. The area which was one-fifth of the former German Kamerun was governed from the Eastern Region of Nigeria and was divided in to four divisions in 1922; Victoria, Mamfe, Kumba and Bamenda. After 1948, Southern Cameroon was carved in to two provinces; a Cameroon province comprising the former divisions of Victoria, Kumba and Mamfe and the Bamenda province with Bamenda, Nkambe and Wum as separate divisions. Today, the area is called the North West Region made up of seven divisions; Bui, Ndonga Mantung, Menchum, Mezam, Momo, Ngoketunjia, and Boyo divisions and the South West Region made up of Fako, Lebialem, Manyu, Meme and Ndian divisions.

The study time ranges from 1916-2002, framing almost a century of plantation labour in the Cameroons. In economic history, 1916 saw a paradigm shift from subsistence farming to a capitalist plantation farming that was very rapidly being embraced by most world capitalist economies. The taking over of the territory by the British and the French especially from the harsh German role gave fresh hope to the indigenes who formed the working group of the plantations to look forward to better working conditions in terms of job description, task labour and especially remunerations.

Historically, the year 1916 is significant to the study because it marked the end of German rule in Cameroon and the beginning of a new rule under the British and the French. The First World War ended in Cameroon on the 20th of February 1916 with the Allied defeat of the Germans and the fall of Mora. The British and the French (Allied Powers) who had jointly defeated and ousted the Germans from Cameroon entered a joint administration which ended up in a failure due to financial issue, authority issue, territorial issue, differences in colonial policies and other minor reasons. Partitioning became the next option and by the Milner/Simon Agreement of 10th July 1919 between the British colonial secretary Alfred Milner and the French minister of colonies Henri Simon, the territory was partitioned and confirmed by the League of Nations in 1922.

Britain was to rule the territory as a Mandated Territory of the Mandate Commission of the League of Nations and later as a Trust Territory of the United Nations Organisation⁸⁴. In the history of Cameroon, 1916 therefore marked a transitional year signified by a change in administration from a colonial master to a mandated power.

In international history, 1916 was a time when a new sensibility of modernism was becoming defined. At the Allied Economic Conference (AEC), the British and the French had projected a postwar cartel to control raw materials. 1916 equally marked the emergence of democratic ideas signified by the taking over power by Woodrow Wilson, a democrat.

The study ends in 2002 when some plantations in the Cameroons like the Tole Tea Estate and the Ndu Tea Estates were privatized as a result of one of the conditions from the World Bank (IBRD) for Cameroon to meet up with the Structural Adjustment Program⁸⁵. These estates were amongst some of the highest employing male and female plantation labourers in the Cameroons.

Economically, 2002 was a year when most male and female plantation workers were laid off their labour task and this affected their domestic life especially in the plantation villages and towns as these household Cameroonians could barely afford a meal as a result of unemployment, hardship and misery.

Historically, 2002 was important because the Cameroon government was expected to reach the completion point of the Structural Adjustment Program (S A P) under the control of the International Monetary Fund (I M F) and the World Bank after reaching the decision point in

⁸⁴ Ngoh, *History of Cameroon*, pp. 267.

⁸⁵ Konings, *Gender and Class*, pp.45-50.

2000. One of the conditions from the IMF and the World Bank for countries like Cameroon which was affected by the worldwide economic slump and economic crisis and was placed and considered as one of the heavily indebted poor countries (Cameroon's export was adversely affected by a decrease in the prices of cocoa, coffee and oil in the world market) was to privatize its state corporations so as to reach the completion point. A response to the economic crisis in many third world countries including Cameroon was the introduction of structural adjustment policies as a condition for obtaining loans from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. These policies included; deflation, devaluation, decontrol and the privatization of state-owned companies with the aim of reducing the balance of payment deficit by increasing export and reducing imports while at the same time, restructuring the economy so as to move it to a new growth path. This therefore involved a reduction of government intervention in the economy.

Geographically the area of study is limited to the British protectorate of the Cameroons that was taken over by Britain first as a Mandated Territory of the League of Nations and later as a Trust Territory of the United Nations Organisation. It consisted of a strip of land bisected by the Benue River along the Eastern border of Nigeria. On the Western side, the territory was bordered by French Cameroon.

Theoretical Framework and Conceptual Issues

The study of gender considerations in plantation agriculture in the Cameroons would naturally require the explanation of the related terms and how they have been used for a better understanding of the subject matter. These operational definitions will be captured as a basis for articulating the theoretical framework of our subject and area under study. In this framework, many scholars have taken interest in developing concepts in line with the subject matter that provides an explanatory force for the topic. The objective of this section is therefore to define the theories dealing with plantation agriculture, gender and the former British Southern Cameroons while having an in-depth of the nuances associated with the words, get an overview of the components, acquire a feel for the foundational concepts, explore definitions and conceptualize the changing global context of gender and plantation agriculture.

This study is anchored on Ricardo's theory on agricultural location which states that, "plantation agriculture depends on the physical qualities of land and urban demands" This deals with both the location and allocation processes of land uses by farmers and the organisation of

the farming processes⁸⁶. Industrial or capitalist plantations are very large capitalist plantations often covering some hundreds to thousands of hectares planting a variety of cash crops in large scale and are in most cases owned and run by the government through a management board as parastatals or owned by individuals on private bases. In Cameroon, the C.D.C runs most of the industrial plantations in the territory. Plantations were introduced in the tropical lands by the colonialists with the objective of providing raw material for European industries. The Industrial Revolution which was a shift from production with hands to production with machines soon ushered in the need for raw material for the growing industries; this precipitated the need to open up large plantations in Africa and Cameroon in particular to feed these industries. The first plantations were however established in Brazil and the West Indies in the 16th Century. They then rapidly spread and in the 17th and 18th Centuries were introduced by Europeans in other parts of the Americas and then extended to Tropical Africa (West, Central and East). In the early 19th Century, they were introduced in Tropical Asia and the East Indies (Malaysia, Java, Sumatra and Indonesia)⁸⁷.

In the Tropics, commercial agriculture remained dominated by these large plantations even long after colonization ended. Major characteristics of commercial plantations were the fact that, the plantations were large, well-marked out, having industrial tree crops which took several years to mature, they practiced monoculture, the high use of fertilizers, crops were well spaced out with equal distance apart and organised in rows and the fact that the plantations had factories to process and transform products to semi-finished and finished products. A good example was the Tole and Ndu Tea Estates, the Tiko rubber factory and the oil mills in Idenau⁸⁸.

Historically, the term plantation was originally used to designate a plot of ground set with plants. During the period of the British colonization of the West Indies and North America, (1492), it came to denote a group of settlers as well as the political unit constructed by such a group⁸⁹. Although plantations were usually located in tropical areas, this was the only way in which they were tropical. The ownership and investment traditionally came from countries in the North. Local labour was utilized but local ownership was until recently extremely rare. The

⁸⁶ <https://doi.org/1068/a211381>, Agricultural Location Theories.

⁸⁷ Neba, *Advanced Integrated Human Geography*, pp.436-440.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p.438-439.

⁸⁹ E.E Gaynor and A. Esler, *World History Connections to Today*, New Jersey, Prentice Hall, 1997, p.394.

plantations fulfilled a desire on the part of non- tropical peoples for objects which could only be provided by tropical land⁹⁰.

Sugar was the principal crop in the West Indies in the 16th and 17th Centuries. Tea was dominant in Japan and China. Cocoa was introduced in to Europe in the early part of the 17th Century from Mexico while banana, rubber and cotton came in the 19th Centuries⁹¹.

Major theories on labour used in this study include; the labour theory of value by Smith which suggests that, labour time expended causes economic goods to be valuable and the subjective theory of value where the value people get from goods causes them to be willing to expand labour⁹². The labour intensive plantation declined abruptly in the United States with the abolition of the Slave Trade. In tropical Africa, thousands of square miles were cleared for the cultivation of cash crops like cocoa, rubber, bananas and oil palm. Such plantations usually depended on foreign capital and agricultural training turned to exploit the labour force of the native population⁹³.

In most African economies, labour force and task were shared between men and women. This was however different from the Eurocentric view of plantation labour where mainly the male folk participated in plantation labour. This was an important implication for development. During the transformation from an agrarian subsistence economy, in Africa and Cameroon in particular, the participation of women, in the labour force was minimal given that it was an imported theory from Europe. This however later picked up after a critical level of development, and especially with the increasing profitability of plantation agriculture⁹⁴. The need for more labourers became inevitable and this ushered in the employment of female labourers in the capitalist economy.

Plantation agriculture otherwise known as large- scale farming in Sub-Saharan Africa dates back to the colonial period with the introduction of plantations, States farms and large European farms, which produced for export markets or commerce. Large-scale commercial farming also known as high external input agriculture was costly and involved high level of technological inputs, the mechanization of some operations and making use of hired labour⁹⁵.

⁹⁰ R. Reddock and Shobhita, "Plantation Women: An Introduction", in S. Jain and R. Reddock, (eds.), *Women Plantation Workers*, New York, Berg, 1998, pp.1-3.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p.3.

⁹² <https://www.investopedia.com>.

⁹³ Encyclopedia Britannica, *Ultimate Reference Suite*, Chicago, Encyclopedia Britannica, 2014.

⁹⁴ <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3986509>.

⁹⁵ C. A. Akob, and J. M. Ane, *Farming Systems and Practices in Cameroon: Development, Problems and Prospective*, Cameroon, Agwecams Printers, 2007, p. 5.

German companies and individuals in the 19th Century established plantations on the rich lands of the Tiko plains and at the base and on the lower slopes of the Cameroon Mountain near the sea. Subsequently, plantations were started inland as far as Kumba and by 1914; about 264000 acres of the Southern Cameroons had been formed in to estates⁹⁶.

The word plantation agriculture is examined variedly in the different discipline. As a historical study; the word limits its self to the origins of gender and plantation labour employment in the production process with focus on the economic and the social aspects of plantation life in the former British Cameroons. However, plantation agriculture has some general definitions and concepts worth noting.

The Merriam Webs ten's Dictionary and Thesaurus define a plantation as an agricultural estate usually worked by resident labour⁹⁷.

According to Jones (1968), a plantation is an economic unit producing agricultural commodities (field crops or horticultural products but not livestock) for sale and employing a relatively large number of unskilled labourers whose activities are closely supervised. It usually employs a year-round labour crew of some size and they usually specialize in the production of only one or two marketable products. They differ from other kinds of farms in the way in which, factors of production, primary management and labour are combined⁹⁸.

What this definition has in common with a number of other definitions is the fact that it identifies the establishment of management control over a large labour force as a basic element in plantation production. Beckford (1972) and Wolf (1982) agree with Joneses point of view but other scholars like Thompson (1975) go to the extent of comparing rigid managerial control in plantation agriculture and production with military regimentation and therefore usually refer to plantation production as "military" agriculture⁹⁹.

To Gourou, the word plantation portrays a picture of a country side planted with a particular crop in a large quantity. The main characteristic feature of a plantation is the industrial treatment subjected to the crop¹⁰⁰.

⁹⁶ Richardson J.H., "Introduction", in Edwin, Ardener, Shirley Ardener, and W.A., Warmington(ed.), *Plantation and Village in the Cameroons, Some Economic and Social Studies*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1960, P.21.

⁹⁷ Merriam Websten's Dictionary and Thesaurus.

⁹⁸ Jones W.O., *Plantations*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1968, pp.154-159.

⁹⁹ Thompson E.T., *Plantation Societies, Race Relations, and the South: The Regimentation of Populations*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1975, p.64.

¹⁰⁰ P. Gourou, *The Tropical World*, London, Longman, 1966, p.147.

A number of plantations scholars such as Beckford, Wolf, Gourou, Edward Hahn, Leo Waibel, Erich Obremba, Derwent Whittlesey and Courou p., turn to agree on certain characteristics of plantation agriculture. Accordingly, the plantations appear as a highly capitalized system of agricultural production under which land, labour and the crop produced are organized on lines similar to that of a modern industrial plant¹⁰¹. That is the reason why a palm plantation for instance ends up selling oil and not oil palm.

Different theories exist on plantation agriculture; these schools of thought will provide useful starting-points for explaining the continuing interest of some post-colonial states like Cameroon in plantation production. In Cameroon, the agro-industrial sector has been one of the main pillars of the agricultural policy. Courade conveniently demonstrated that, the Cameroonian post-colonial state had continued to allocate a substantial proportion of the agricultural budget to the expansion of the agro-industrial sector in particular especially the plantation-based enterprises¹⁰². An understanding of these theories will help in the research to draw pertinent conclusions as regard plantation agriculture in the former Cameroons.

The modernization school had always advocated the diffusion of western capital know-how, technology as a prerequisite for development and capital accumulation in the under-developed countries. It claims that plantations were economically efficient units of production benefiting from considerable economies of scale and technical progress and should be looked upon as significant agents of development and capital accumulation. Taking a stand on the Cameroonian situation, this theory argues that, the Cameroonian state support of the agro-industrial expansion was a clear expression of the political elite's selfless and detached commitment to the necessary modernization of agricultural production for it was more likely to increase output¹⁰³.

There is also the dependency theory which argues that, the promotion of capitalist plantation in the periphery would inevitably lead to growing underdevelopment. This enclave-nature of plantation causes a number of underdevelopment biases in the domestic economy and society and creates a chronic dependency syndrome characterized by low motivation and a strong

¹⁰¹ E.Y. Fossung, "The Role of Plantation Agriculture in Regional Development: The Case of the Cameroon Development Corporation", in Cornelius Mbifung, (ed.) *Readings in Geography*, Cameroon, Unique Printers, 2001, p.371.

¹⁰² G. Courade, "*Des Complexe qui Coutent Cher: La Priorité Agro-Industrielle dans L'agriculture Camerounaise*", *Politique Africain* 14, 1984, pp.75-91.

¹⁰³ Konings, *Labour Resistance in Cameroon*, pp. 2-8. See also, N. Long, *An Introduction to the sociology of Rural Development*, London, Tavistock Publications Ltd., 1977, pp.3-6. And W.O. Jones, "*Plantations*", *Sills*, 1968, pp.55-58.

authoritarian tradition. The dependency theorists on the contrary, argue that the Cameroonian post-colonial state encouragement of agro-industrial expansion reflects the political elite's class interest. They allege that the ruling class closely collaborates with foreign capital in stimulating agro-industrial expansion as it has its own stake in such a project that inevitable leads to deepening dependency and underdevelopment¹⁰⁴.

Another theory and school of thought that has made significant contribution to the role of plantation production is the theory of the articulation of modes of production as propagated by scholars Leclau, Terray and Wolpe. They argue that the pre-capitalist modes of production have at least been partially preserved since colonial role. This theory assumes that the Cameroonian state intervention in agro-industrial expansion was only required in the initial stage¹⁰⁵.

Generally speaking, there are two main schools of thought as far as plantation agriculture is concerned. Firstly, we have those who regard plantation agriculture as playing principally a positive role in development. This group argues that plantation agriculture is able to convert unproductive jungles in to jungles of economic crops such as oil palm, rubber, cocoa and bananas. Advanced technology, capital, labour and efficient management are brought to areas which were economically less productive. Thousands of people are employed in the production process thereby creating jobs and improving on the standards of living of those concerned. This school of thought would argue that one effective way of bringing about development in the developing tropical countries is to establish plantations that would supply the world needs of tropical products such as banana, tea, rubber, palm oil and rubber¹⁰⁶.

The second school of thought regards plantation agriculture as an instrument of underdevelopment. This view of plantation agriculture is upheld principally by the dependency theorists. They argue that plantation agriculture works more in the interest of international capitalism rather than that of the region in which they are geographically located. It is argued that plantations which are often foreign owed repatriate profits from the local area. Often, the land from the native is seized with little or no compensation. Majority of those employed by these plantation owners are often under paid and live under sub-human conditions. The fact

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p.8.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p.9.

¹⁰⁶ Fossung, "The Role of Plantation Agriculture in Regional Development", pp.372-373.

that plantation crops often depend on the international market mean that price fluctuations in the world market often adversely affect the region concerned¹⁰⁷.

The research on gender considerations in the former British Southern Cameroons intends to use the two schools of thoughts as regards plantation agriculture. This is because the research's work will consider theories of the two schools of thought appropriate to the discourse. The approach of regarding plantation agriculture as playing a positive role in regional development is of vital importance because it is associated to the modernization approach to development which influences the type of development strategies in the developing countries both in the colonial and post-colonial era. In many of these countries, Cameroon inclusive, plantation establishments were often set up by private individuals and multinational concerns.

The second approach is equally of vital importance because there are aspects of the theory featuring in the development of plantation agriculture in the Cameroons. These include; land seizure, low wages and a generally sub-human condition.

Theories on gender in African societies are equally of prime importance in this study. This study will therefore close the gaps on gender issues and disparities in African and Cameroonian communities. One of the important gender theories is essentialism which exposes the fact that women are different from men by essence and that men and women are attributed different social roles based on their biological antagonism. Constructionism equally argues that there are differences in gender roles based on social constructs. The hierarchical differences between men and women is imposed by well constructed social norms and cultural values. Materialism on its part postulates the inequality of men and women in the product of the capitalist economy. All these theories somehow downplay the uniqueness and importance of women. This brings to the limelight the reason why this study intends to make visible the role of the woman in plantation agriculture.

Description of the Study

The study on Gender Considerations in Plantation labour during the British Rule is about the history of the disparities and discrimination involved in assigning task labour to male and female labourers in the plantation agricultural process in the Cameroons. The worldwide economic progress seen in globalization gives a lot of opportunities for gender cooperation

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 373.

which will lead to growth and development especially in plantation agriculture given that, agriculture is the backbone of every economy.

The study is about the history of the various sectors involved in the labour process with a close examination of gender division of roles in these sectors which include the administration, factory, technical, health and the workers in the plantation fields. The study investigates why particular jobs were ascribed to male or female in the labour process.

Furthermore, gender consideration in plantation labour processes in the Cameroons is about the role, importance and impact of men and women in the production process and in the development of plantation agriculture in Cameroon¹⁰⁸. Though plantation agriculture was viewed as a male issue, male irresponsibility in carrying out their duty caused the woman whose traditional position was seen in child bearing to join the men in the production process in order to meet up with the increasing economic demands.

Research Methodology

The realization of this study was based on the historical method of investigating and analysing past events. The narrative, thematic and chronological approaches were used in this analysis. The work was therefore realized with the use of primary, secondary and tertiary sources.

Information derived from primary sources was gotten from oral interviews which were mostly personal. The problems related to bias and lies telling as far as oral sources were concerned were solved by interviewing many people and in different places and the information compared before using. All these led to qualitative analysis of historical facts. Oral interviews were conducted with actors working in the economy, gender and labour sectors of Cameroon. Specific interviews were equally made with actors and labourers in the field. Material from public and private archives was used. These archives included the National Archive Yaounde (ANY), National Archive Buea (NAB) and the North West Regional Archives (NWRA). Private archives included the Ndu Tea Estate archive, Tole Tea Estate Archives, C.D.C Bota archives and private archives of individual managers and labourers in Cameroon.

Secondary sources included published and unpublished works which contained information on plantation agriculture in the former Southern Cameroons. Libraries like that of the Higher Teachers Training College Yaounde (ENS), the History Departmental library of the University of Yaounde I, the library of the University of Yaounde II, the University of Buea, the C.D.C

¹⁰⁸ Konings, *Gender and Class*, p.102.

library Bota, the library of the Ministry of Scientific Research, the British council library, that of the University of Bamenda, and that of the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the family were used. The various Annual Reports and Accounts of the various plantations, the economic situation in the Cameroons during the British Mandate and Trusteeship periods and the League of Nations and United Nations Reports on gender issues were equally consulted.

Such information and interviews was accomplished through the use of questionnaires during field work. These questions were formulated and oriented towards the conditions for employment, type of work done by women and men, their remunerations, their recreational facilities, their difficulties, conditions of work and questions on statistical data on gender related issues in the former British Cameroons.

Problems Encountered

Many problems were encountered in the realization of this work. Individual managers were reluctant to allow access to documentation detailed enough to permit for an in-depth analysis. It is certain that the collection of data was a problem as some were illegible and others were in a state of decomposition and were piled up in rooms that needed time to sort out. Furthermore, photocopying of the documents was forbidden in most cases.

To overcome these difficulties, the researcher needed to be patient and consistently plead with the managers of various institutions for access to documentation. Interviews were also conducted on these areas and finally files from the current services were required to make up for those that were illegible.

Non respect of appointment by managers was equally a very big problem as this was very disappointing to the researcher. However repeated visit to the plantation sites, stations and institutions was fruitful as the managers could never be absent all the time.

Most documents were considered confidential and required clearance which delayed the research since certain statistics were not found in the annual reports and accounts. Insufficient material also posed a problem given that gender study is a new field of research. This difficulty was solved through negotiations with some management staff through whom some useful information was obtained.

Trips to the field and the various research centres were costly and risky because of the distance. Such trips especially during field work required motivation for those on the field. It was very certain that some of the trips were unfruitful as one did not always meet the often-busy officials.

There was the geo-political situation of the study area seen in the crisis in the North West and South West Regions characterised by insecurity that gave a halt to the study because of inaccessibility and the dangers associated with the study area. This problem was solved by allowing time to play its role and for the work to take its natural course when the situation was put to calm.

The process of data collection, photocopying, draft and the final production of the work equally required time and finances. This problem was solved with hard work, money from personal savings and assistance from relatives and friends.

Organisation of the Study

The study is made up of five chapters with a general introduction and a general conclusion. The introduction sets the problematic and the research questions of the work. Each chapter starts with an introduction and ends with a conclusion which gives a logical transition from one chapter to the other.

Chapter one focuses and gives an in-depth of historical context of plantation agriculture in Cameroon with a detailed analysis of geographical location of study area¹⁰⁹, particularly on the soils, relief, climate and botany of the plantation crops which include oil palm, rubber and tea. Land as a factor of production and particularly as a determining factor of plantation agriculture is also closely examined as such land was the theatre on which male and female labourers performed their agricultural activities. The cultural background to plantation agriculture is equally examined with a detailed analysis of pre-colonial agricultural and gender roles in the British Southern Cameroons. Patriarchal believes and gender roles in the Cameroonian society are equally examined at this level while still, there is a close examination of other labourers who came from other places to work in the plantations in the Cameroons. The historical perspective of plantation life in Cameroon is equally examined with an analysis of the origin and settlement of female and male labourers in the Cameroons, migratory trend of female and male plantation workers, specific aspects on the history of gender and land ownership and a historical analysis of the management of plantations in Cameroon by first the Germans and later, the British in the British Southern Cameroons.

Chapter two investigates gender labour employment and remuneration politics in plantation agriculture and gives a close elaboration of gender and task labour considerations, the organisation of work in the plantations in the Cameroons, hours and other conditions of work

¹⁰⁹ Neba, *Modern Geography of the Republic of Cameroon*, p.1.

in the plantations, female and male labour task policies, and the remuneration of male and female plantation workers. There is a discourse on general aspects of remuneration and the impact of gender division of roles in the plantations. Aspects of gender and administrative labour politics are equally closely examined and there is an analysis of the various categories of plantation workers ranging from administrative workers, technical staff and field workers in the plantations. This chapter ends with an analysis of male and female labour disparities statistics and the impact and implications of gender division of roles in the oil palm, rubber and tea estates of the British Southern Cameroons.

Chapter three dwells on the manifestations of gender disparities in assigning task in plantation agriculture. The discourse concentrates on the practicalities of disparities in the tea estates¹¹⁰, rubber and oil palm plantations. There is a thorough investigation of job description in these estates especially as concerns disparities in employment requirements. Gender considerations in the production process of tea, oil palm and rubber equally forms a subject of discourse in this chapter of the work with a critical analysis of the role of female and male labourers in the production process in the plantations. The different types of task assigned to male and female labourers in the different plantations and production processes are critically examined with pertinent conclusions made to bear on the development of plantation agriculture in the territory and the marketing of plantation products.

Chapter four focuses on gender and recreational facilities in plantation labour in the Cameroons. The development of plantation agriculture and the recruitment of male and female labourers to work in the plantations inevitably led to the development of a lot of economic and social facilities that helped the labourers. The central theme in this chapter is the development and impact of these recreational facilities on the social and economic life of female and male labourers in the plantation and also in the economic development of the British Southern Cameroons. Vital aspects of recreational facilities like the evolution of camp quarters, worker's opinion on housing, the labourers' diet and club life in the camps have been closely examined. Aspects of games in plantation agriculture equally form part of the issues of concerned in this chapter where plantation life and football, plantation women and social club activities, plantation life and dancing and plantation life and in-door games have been vividly elaborated. Aspects of social amenities like health care, education and religious inclination of male and female plantation workers have equally been closely examined.

¹¹⁰ Konings, *Gender and Class*, p.79.

Chapter five epitomises the difficulties and impact of gender plantation labour in Cameroon. There is a vivid description of the causes and course of workers strikes in the plantations with the case study of strikes in the rubber, and tea estates of the Cameroons. Informal and collective modes of labour resistances in the plantation economy in the Cameroons have been examined with particular keen interest on the role of female labourers in these resistances. The effects of strike actions on the workers and on the development of plantation agriculture have equally been analysed. Aspects of plantation life and trade unionism equally form an important aspect of this chapter with keen interest on especially difficulties faced by plantation workers ranging from general problems of plantation workers, specific problems of female labourers and Social and economic problems of female and male labourers. There is an analysis of specific gender reaction to managerial strategies in the plantations¹¹¹. The chapter ends with the impact of plantation labour in the development of the former British Southern Cameroons in particular and the development of Cameroon in general where aspects like the development of an urban land scape, economic and social developments are examined.

The discourse ends with a general conclusion which summarises the themes, theories, concepts findings and perspectives of the research.

¹¹¹ Konings, *Labour Resistances in Cameroon*, p.94.

CHAPTER ONE

AN OVERVIEW TO PLANTATION AGRICULTURE IN THE CAMEROONS

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the geographical location of the study area with an in-depth description of the origin and settlement of the people of the Southern Cameroons. The chapter sets the pace of the research work and gives a vivid description of the physical environment of study area concentrating on attributes like weather and climate, vegetation and soils, relief and topography. It also examines the human milieu of study area focusing on the culture and believes of the people¹¹². It looks at pre-colonial agriculture and gender roles in Cameroon reviewing economic laws of the society, women and labour policies, men and labour policies, patriarchal believes and administrative labour policies. Land as an important factor of production in Cameroon is furthermore closely investigated and statistics are provided regarding the arrival of the Germans with their new form of farming (plantation agriculture) and employment statistics.

German plantation sites are equally investigated with research on the organisation of work in these plantations, wage and earnings statistics for both men and women plantation workers and the general conditions of work. Generally, this chapter sets the pace for the foundations of the research work with a thorough investigation of the political situation of the territory in terms of origin, social, economic and cultural way of life and dimensions of the people of the study area. It is related to the next chapter in that it acts as a spring board introducing issues that are related to gender and labour disparities in plantation agriculture which will further be elaborated.

Geographical Backgrounds to Study Area

The nature, course and the tempo of the economic development of a country and particularly gender considerations in plantation agriculture are very often conditioned or determined by the geographical location of that area, and by the size, quality and ethnic composition of its population. The subject matter of this study cannot therefore, be properly treated without reference to the physical and human milieu in which the drama of plantation development in the Cameroons unfolded itself.

¹¹² Ngoh, *History of Cameroon*, pp.45-47.

The area which was named the former British Southern Cameroons in this study should be understood to comprise the region formerly known as West Cameroon in the defunct Federal Republic of Cameroon. It was also called the Cameroon Province of Nigeria and simply, the Cameroons¹¹³. The geographical backgrounds will include the location of the study area. This will provide evidence and reasons for involving both male and female in plantation life. The suitability of the environment for agriculture and the botany and origin of plantation crops will equally form the discourse in this part of the work. The types of plantation crops equally will determine the labour force needed and the quality of such labour as it will determine plantation output.

Geographical Location of Study Locale

The former British Southern Cameroons is a part of the Republic of Cameroon. The Republic of Cameroon is shaped like an elongated triangle with its apex terminating in Lake Chad. Cameroon is a Sub-Saharan country located in the West and extends in to the Central region of Africa. Cameroon is known as Africa in miniature or small Africa because Cameroon has most of Africa's diverse geographical landscapes. Cameroon exhibits a vast geographical and cultural diversity that spans from the coast, desert, mountains, rainforest, and savannah terrains to its rich wild life terrains. The British Southern Cameroons which is particularly the study area of this research piece is noted for its rich volcanic and alluvia soils, especially the coastal area suitable for plantation agriculture while particular areas in the Western grass fields like Ndu give a good climate suitable for the cultivation of tea¹¹⁴.

Unlike most other cultivated crops, tea, rubber and oil palm will only thrive on soils that are quite distinctly acid. In the wet tropics, the high rain fall and temperature facilitates the soil by leaching of chemical basic materials present in the rocks from which the soils weathered. Consequently, soils in the wet tropics are generally acid in their reaction. It follows also that, soils sufficiently acid to support these crops are invariably of low fertility as fertility is reckoned in regions of temperate agriculture. This state of affairs is susceptible to amelioration by the use of fertilizers and green manure and in general, economic yield of these crops are not obtainable over considerable period of time on soils without their help. Good plantation soils must be well drained and of sufficient depth to give the expanding root system of the plants

¹¹³ Epale, *Plantation and Development in West Cameroon*, pp.7-8.

¹¹⁴ <https://www.kengskitchen.com>, Cameroon, Africa in miniature.

adequate room for development, both in volume and range. The depth and texture of a soil is therefore more important than its natural nutrients and contains¹¹⁵ (See Appendix 4).

Map 1: The Location of Cameroon in Africa



Source: Modified from Atlas of Africa, Edition J. A, 2010, p.4.

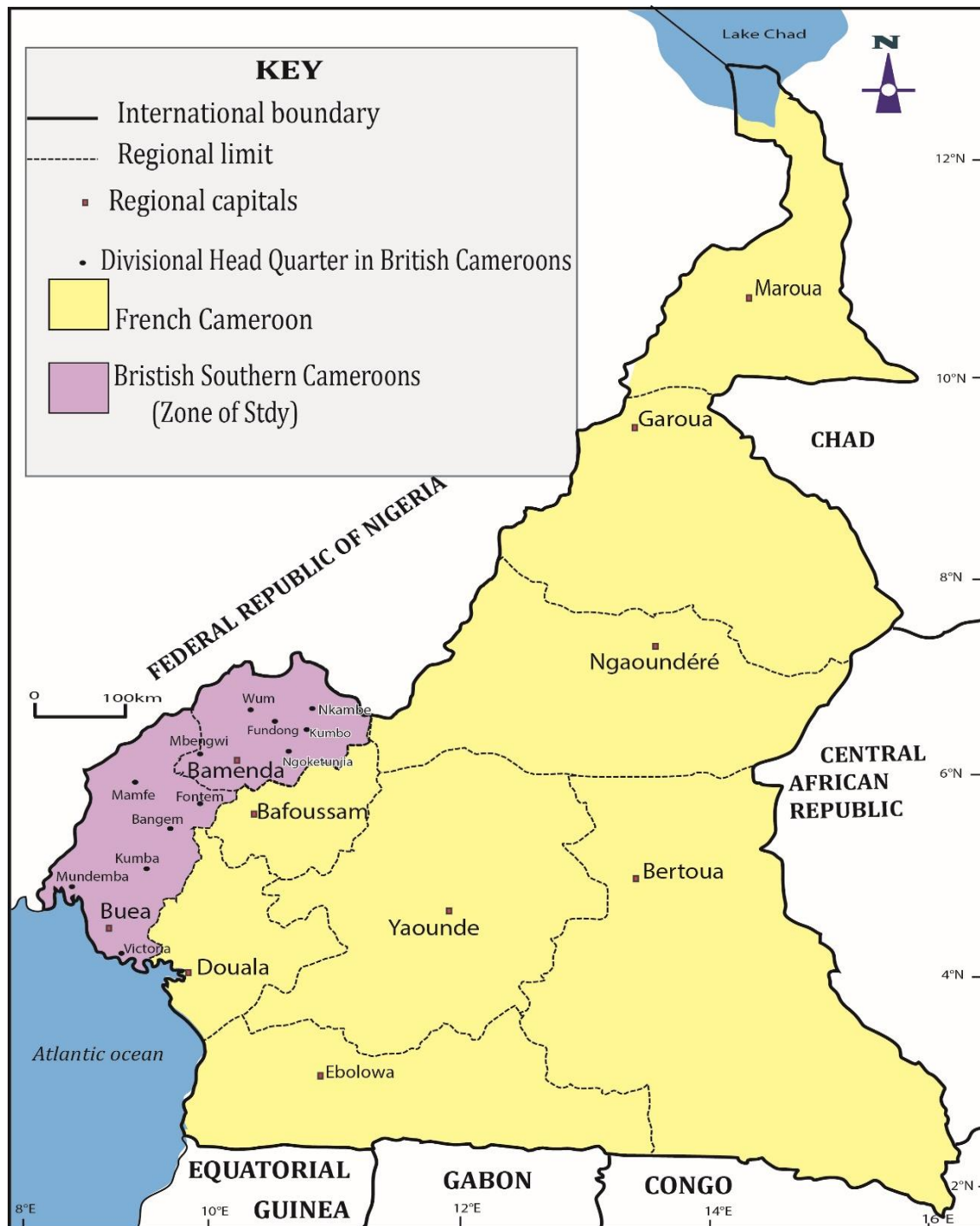
Cameroon is located in Central Africa at the North Eastern end of the Gulf of Guinea¹¹⁶. The territory contains a bit of a majority of the natural and physical resources of Africa as a continent. It is therefore popularly referred to as Africa in miniature.

¹¹⁵ NAB, File Qc/91957/2, Report for the Suitability of Crop Cultivation by Eden D.S.C, 1957, pp.1-5.

¹¹⁶ <https://www.kengskitchen.com>, Cameroon, Africa in miniature.

The territory Cameroon shares similar gender issues with other African countries and the rest of the world. This is investigated in new gender studies from Cameroon and the Caribbean¹¹⁷.

Map 2: The Map of Cameroon in 2010 Showing Zone of Study



Source: Atlas of Cameroon, 2010, p.15. Modified by Researcher, April 2022.

¹¹⁷ Joyce .E. et al., *New Gender Studies from Cameroon and the Caribbean*, Buea, African Book Collective, 2004, pp.160-164.

The territory Cameroon is located in Central Africa, at the North Eastern end of the Gulf of Guinea. She lies between latitudes 2° and 13° North of the Equator and between longitude 8° and 16° East of the Greenwich Meridian¹¹⁸. The territory is bounded by Nigeria to the West with a 1000km-long frontier, Chad and Central African Republic to the East along a curved and irregular frontier of 700km, the Republic of Congo, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea to the South. It has a 350 km-long coastline on the Atlantic Ocean. The country is bounded by two important natural resources; the Lake Chad to the North and the Atlantic Ocean to the South West¹¹⁹. The territory has the shape of a carelessly drawn triangle with a base of about 800km that extends from the Atlantic Ocean to the frontiers with the Central African Republic and a hypotenuse of about 1500km that extends from the Gulf of Guinea to Lake Chad¹²⁰.

Considering the size of the territory, Cameroon has a surface area of 475,650km². This comprises 466,050 km² of land mass and 9.600km² of maritime area. The territory is roughly triangular with a base of about 700km and a height of 1,200km¹²¹. Like most West African States, Cameroon is divided in to belts, determined by climate and vegetation, from the humid forest region along the Coast, which may be drenched in 25000mm of rain over eight or nine months of the year (Debundscha in Fako with some 102000mm a year has the second highest rainfall in the world) to the desert margins, 1600km away in the North. These zones link Cameroon geographically with neighbouring countries and there are very few natural boundaries dividing it from its neighbours.

This factor is of considerable importance in tracing Cameroon's past. To some degree, present-day cultural and linguistic differences are marked by these geographical zones and that is why we have the Grassfields people, the Coastal Bantu, the people of the South-East forest, and the Savannah people¹²². The geographical zones which cross state frontiers link Cameroon people with the nationals of neighbouring countries. The stretch of the savannah and orchard bush in the North extends from Northern Cameroon in to Northern Nigeria and the Sudan. The Coastal mangrove swamps of the South extend to the Niger Delta in South Eastern Nigeria, while the Coastal Equatorial forest of the East stretches in to Gabon. In the Centre, the highland plateau crosses the whole of Cameroon and links it with similar regions and related peoples in North Eastern Nigeria. These geographical features are similar and share the same characteristics with

¹¹⁸ Nchangvi, et al., *21st Century Applied Physical Geography and Mapwork*, p. 189.

¹¹⁹ Neba, *Modern Geography of the Republic of Cameroon*, p.1.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p.1.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p.2.

¹²² T. E. Mbuagbaw, *A History of the Cameroon*: New Edition, Hongkon, Long Man Group, 1987, pp. 1-5.

other parts of Africa cultivating cash crops like tea, oil palm and rubber. Of note are places like Ceylon, South India and East Africa which particularly concentrate on tea production¹²³. (See Appendix 4)

Map 3: The Presentation of the British Southern Cameroons in 1949



Source: Ngoh, *Cameroon 1884-Present*, p.147, Modified by Researcher, June 28th 2022.

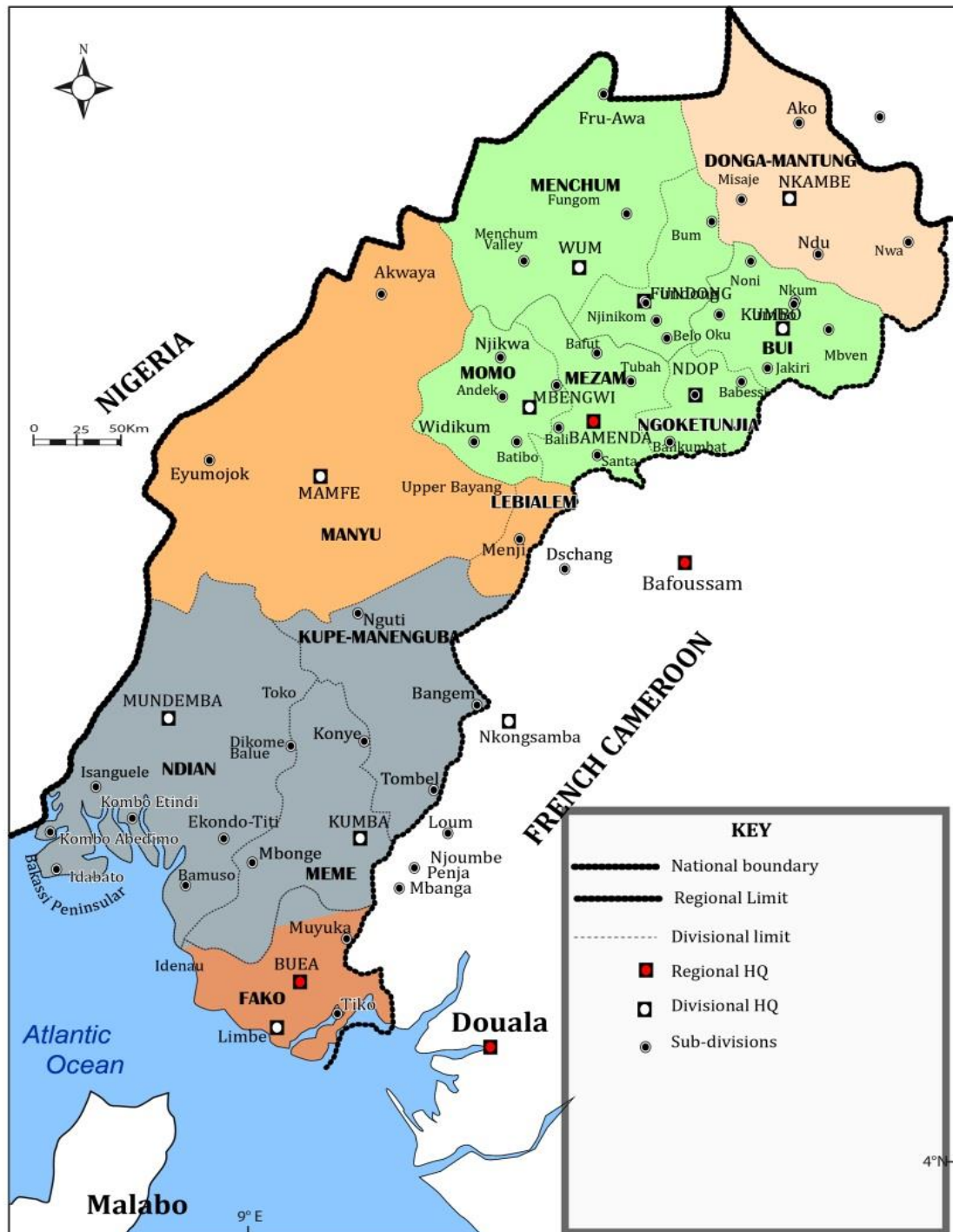
By 1922, the British Southern Cameroon was divided into four Divisions namely, Kumba, Mamfe, Bamenda and Victoria Divisions respectively¹²⁴. The Bamenda Division was later made a province in 1948. Kumba, Mamfe and Victoria Divisions were administered together as the Cameroon Province thus the British Southern Cameroons after 1948 was divided into the Bamenda Province (Bamenda, Wum and Nkambe Divisions) made up of the former Bamenda Division and the Cameroon Province made up of Kumba, Mamfe and Victoria

¹²³ NAB, File Qc/91957/2, Report for the Suitability of Crop Cultivation by Eden D.S.C, 1957, p.4.

¹²⁴ Ngoh, *Cameroon 1884-Present*, p.147.

Divisions¹²⁵. There were therefore six Divisions in the British Southern Cameroons by 1949. Of note was the fact that labourers migrated from these Divisions to work in the plantations along the coastal area of the Southern Cameroons.

Map 4: The Present Day Map of Study Area since 1990



Source: Neba, *Modern Geography of the Republic of Cameroon*, p.120.

¹²⁵ Ngoh, *Cameroon 1884-Present*, p.47.

The British colonial administration began in Cameroon on the 1st of April 1916 when London took over the civil administration in her spheres of former German Cameroon¹²⁶. On July 20th 2022, the British Mandatory in Cameroon officially commenced¹²⁷. In 2002, the British Southern Cameroons was divided into two regions; the North West Region and the South West Region made up of 13 Divisions, with plantation agriculture being prominent in Fako, and Donga-Mantung Divisions¹²⁸.

The location of study area helps to situate the plantation sites. For the South West Region we had the Idenau plantation that concentrated on oil palm production, the Tiko plantation on rubber production and the Tole estate which had as main crop tea. Of note was the fact that these plantations employed both male and female labourers to take part in the production process of the various cash crops. This region is located at the point where the long Coast of West Africa turns sharply Southwards towards the Congo and Cape of good hope, and lies between 4° and roughly 7° North latitude, and between 8° and 11° East longitude.

It is shaped like a quadrangle and stretches inland for about 400 kilometers from the Bight of Biafra, and has an average width of 100 kilometers. Its sea coast extends from Rio del Rey, just where the West African coastline turns from East to South, forming the Bight of Biafra, to the estuary of the River Mungo, a distance of some 200 kilometers. The total surface area of the region is 43,000 square kilometres.

The region's Western frontier, which was also part of the Western boundary of German Cameroon with Nigeria and lay down in 1893, runs from the Rio del Rey to the Rapids of the Cross River. From there, this frontier runs in a North Easterly direction passing the River Katsina Ala, flows out of the territory into Nigeria. At this point, the frontier turns south for a short distance and then takes a North Easterly direction until it meets the River Donga, a tributary of the Benue, drawing its upper water from the Mambila Plateau. The frontier at this point follows a North-Easterly direction until it meets with the Northern frontier in the Donga-Mantung Division¹²⁹.

The second region is the present day North West Region. The main plantation of study was the Ndu tea estate which concentrated on the production of tea, and employed both male and female labourers to work in the plantation. This region lies between latitudes 5° 15' North and 7° 10'

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 145.

¹²⁷ Fanso, *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges*, p.236.

¹²⁸ Hannah Monono et al, *Citizenship Education Made Simple*, Dove Education Press Ltd, Buea, 2018, p.102.

¹²⁹ Epale, *Plantation and Development in West Cameroon*, p.8.

North, and stretches from longitude 9° 17' East to 11° 25' East. It is bounded to the South West by the South West Region, to the West and North by the Federal Republic of Nigeria and to the East and South by the Western Region. Shaped like a poorly drawn circle the region comprises 7 administrative units with a total surface area of 17.910 square kilometers. This region falls within the geographical region known as the Central Cameroon Highlands which is a volcanic zone of ancient forest clearance that runs across the Republic from East to West¹³⁰.

Suitable Factors for Plantation Agriculture (Soils, Climate and Human resources)

Soils

The location of plantations in the Cameroons was influenced by geographical factors like relief, soils and climate. Most of the banana, rubber, tea and palm plantations were located around the Coastal Lowlands of Cameroon. A lot of people migrated in to this area to work in these plantations that were opened because they wanted to gain employment. Men and women especially from the Western Grassfields therefore found settlement along the Coast to work in the plantations¹³¹. This claim is corroborated by Neba who says since colonial times from 1844 to 1960, Cameroon witnessed a lot of economic development especially along the coastal region in terms of agriculture where there was the creation of rubber, oil palm, banana and tea estates¹³².

This area is interrupted by the extension of the Cameroon Mountain in to the ocean with a surface area of about 150 kilometres and an average attitude of 90 metres. It is important to note that most of the major rivers of Cameroon flow through this Coastal lowland area before entering the sea. The rocky Coastlines between Bimbia and Idenau where most of the palm plantations and oil mill is found, presents very suitable soils for plantation agriculture¹³³. It is of prime importance to study the soils and climate of Cameroon as this will help to accentuate the crop type and the need for plantation agriculture in the territory¹³⁴.

Throughout history, different soil qualities have exerted different degrees of influence on population concentration thus various soil qualities offer different media for human habitation. Regions of the world with fertile soils are often densely populated while regions with infertile soils are sparsely populated. Fertile soils have always attracted population concentration

¹³⁰ Journal of the Ministry of Information and Culture, Department of Information and Press, 1986, p.63.

¹³¹ E.M. Chilver and P. M. Kaberry, *Traditional Bamenda- The Pre- Colonial History and Ethnography of the Bamenda Grassfield*, West Cameroon Antiquities Commission. pp.1-12.

¹³² Neba, *Advanced Integrated Human Geography*, p.366.

¹³³ Neba, *Modern Geography of the Republic of Cameroon*, pp. 21-22.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p.22.

because they support agricultural activities that employ about 70% of the population. This is the case of the fertile alluvial soils of the Western Highlands and the Coastal area of Cameroon where most of the plantations are located¹³⁵. Since all forms of agricultural activities (arable and pastoral) depend on the essential element of minerals that the soil provides, reference must be made to soils when agricultural factors are analysed. Soils vary widely in their structure, texture, depth, leaching, mineral content, P H value, workability and fertility, water retention and consequently lead to wide variations in agricultural activities. The main influence comes as a result of the fact that they contain nutrients which can be exhausted. They therefore act as a nutrient pool for plants. Again, another importance is that soils act as an anchorage to plant thus protecting them from being blown by wind. The soil quality is a very important ingredient of agricultural production and is therefore an indispensable factor in agricultural productivity. Geology through soils therefore has considerable influence on agriculture in many places¹³⁶. The soils in Cameroon can be classified into three different types namely, zonal soils, azonal soils and intrazonal soils.

Zonal soils are soils formed under the influence of climate. They cover large areas and their distribution corresponds to the major climatic regions in the territory. There are three main types of zonal soils namely, ferrallitic soils (they are deep because of heavy rainfall, have a reddish-brown colour and contain a lot of clay and become sticky when wet and hard to till. They are poor in nutrients and therefore not fertile), ferruginous soils (these are found mostly in the Adamawa plateau and the northern part of the Western high lands and have the same characteristics like the ferrallitic soils) and tropical black earth (these are black-coloured soils containing a high percentage of humus. They are very fertile and can produce a high percentage of yields. They are found around the Diamare or Chad plains)¹³⁷.

Azonal soils on the other hand are young soils which do not have well developed horizons. They are further divided into volcanic, alluvial and mountain area soils. Generally speaking, these soils are fertile and good for plantation agriculture because the soils are made up of fine and loose materials broken down and deposited by rivers usually on a lowland area. These soils are found around the study area, that is, the present day northwest and southwest regions of Cameroon and along the coastal area of the territory¹³⁸.

¹³⁵ Neba, *Advanced Integrated Human Geography*, pp. 24-25.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.389.

¹³⁷ Neba, *Modern Geography of the Republic of Cameroon*, p.80.

¹³⁸ Nchangvi et al., *21st Century Applied Physical Geography and Map work*, pp.208-209.

Intrazonal soils are soils which are formed under the influence of local factors such as the presence of excess water, soils or calcareous rocks. They occur in patches within the zonal soil type. The common type in Cameroon is the hydromorphic soils found in water logged or flooded areas¹³⁹.

Relief is also another important factor which influences agriculture. This is because it determines the types of soils, the nature of farming and also significantly modifies climatic parameters. The influence of relief on agricultural productivity patterns is through the element of elevation, gradient and aspect¹⁴⁰.

Fako Division dominated by the volcanic Mount Cameroon, had a high rainfall and fertile soils. It was separated from the neighbouring Coastal regions of Calabar as well as Douala by the Rio del Rey and Wouri estuaries and mangrove swamps. Here, we have the large plantations, originally established by the Germans, and producing cash crops like Banana, oil palm and rubber. The main ports were at Victoria (present day Limbe) and Tiko which stopped operation after some time. The Coastal region was linked by water transport and there was some interchange of population. These mountain slopes of Fako Division were the site of a large plantation industry established by the Germans after 1885. These estates were maintained in operation up to the Second World War, primarily under their original owners. They were then confiscated by government and in 1947 were leased to the Cameroon Development Corporation whose profit, under the terms of the charter was to be used for the development of the Cameroons and they remain one of the major sources of government revenue¹⁴¹.

Climate

This is a very important and fundamental factor not only because it conditions plant growth and the fact that crop growth responds differently to the amount of the available climatic element(temperature, sunshine, precipitation or water or moisture and winds); but also because of the important role it plays in soil formation. Climatic factors therefore exert a great influence on agricultural types and their distribution. It determines the general world distribution of agricultural types and affects agriculture through elements like temperature and the length of the growing season¹⁴².

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p.210.

¹⁴⁰ Neba , *Advanced Integrated Human Geography*, p.387.

¹⁴¹ T. E. Mbuagbaw, *A History of the Cameroon* pp. 1-5.

¹⁴² *Ibid.* pp.383-385.

Although the area of study lies in the tropics, the lower temperature of the highlands makes the climate of the area extremely equable and could additionally also have encouraged the settlement of people from the temperate region of the world who first came in contact with it, had not the rugged and difficult nature of the country made the interior highly inaccessible¹⁴³.

There are two main climatic types in Cameroon with sub-types. These are the equatorial climate and the tropical continental climate. The main type of climatic type in the study area is the equatorial climate with the specific of the Cameroon type. It is further divided in to the maritime Cameroon type or the equatorial monsoon climate and the mountain Cameroon type. It is characterised by heavy rainfall, very long rainy season, high average temperature which gives a favourable climatic condition for the development of plantation agriculture¹⁴⁴.

Apart from the climate and soils of Cameroon that directly affect plantation agriculture, other geographical features worth noting about the territory are the relief, drainage and vegetation. Cameroon has five main relief units namely; the coastal lowlands, the northern lowlands, the western highlands, the Adamawa plateau and the Southern Cameroon low plateau. Drainage refers to the organisation and distribution of water in an area. This embodies the streams and rivers flowing in an area and lakes. A watershed is the point where a river takes its rise or where it begins. It is the source of a river. There are four main watersheds in Cameroon namely; the Adamawa plateau, the western highlands, the Mandara Mountains and the southern low plateau. The vegetation of Cameroon can be classified in to two main types; the tropical forest in the southern part of the country and the tropical or Savannah in the northern part¹⁴⁵. Another geographical uniqueness of Cameroon is the fact that it lies in an important demographic crossroads; it divides the Niger and the Congo River basins but shares physical characteristics of both, and it is the ethnic shatter zone where cultures of both regions meet and mingle¹⁴⁶.

Human Resources

Two broad cultures are distinguished under the region of study; the grassland culture and the forest culture. The values, mores, et cetera, of these cultures are important in determining and evaluating the contribution which each made in the economic development of the territory especially in the area of labour supply in the plantations. The region under study was never a

¹⁴³ Epale, *Plantation and Development in West Cameroon* P.12.

¹⁴⁴ Neba, *Modern Geography of the Republic of Cameroon*, pp.1-80.

¹⁴⁵ Nchangvi, et al., *21st Century Applied Physical Geography and Map work*, p.204.

¹⁴⁶ Le Vine, *The Cameroon Federal Republic*, p.1.

densely populated area. It was only after the First World War in Cameroon which ended in the territory on the 17th of February 1916 that the population could be counted at around 500,000¹⁴⁷.

Throughout Africa, colonial administrators liked to draw neat and precise tribal maps. Such maps often bore little resemblance to complex African political realities. Groups of people sharing no common linguistic, cultural or historical affinities were often lumped together as a tribe purely as a matter of administrative convenience. The economic changes brought by colonialism involving especially new patterns of labour migrations owing to the advent of plantation agriculture made the tribal map of the administrator even less reliable. When the British introduced their policy of Indirect Rule, during the inter-war years, new tribes and tribal histories were often created by Cameroonians especially of the Cameroons who sort advancement in the new order. In Fako, Meme and parts of Manyu Divisions, all the peoples (except the Korup and the Efik) speak the Bantu language of the North Western group¹⁴⁸. Tribal names and affiliations are by no means always traditional but have often generally evolved to meet the dynamics of the new economic order. Environment and economic organisation therefore played an important role to determine the recruitment of male and female plantation workers in the Cameroons.

Table 1: Native Population of the Cameroons by 1916

German Administrative District		Present Day Equivalent	Population
1	Victoria and Rio del Rey	Fako and Ndian	25720
2	Ossidinge	Manyu	34000
3	Buea	Bakweri Area Council	8635
4	Johann-Albrechtshohe	Meme	65000
5	Bamenda	Mezam, Menchum, Donga Mantung, Momo, Fundong, Ngoketunjia	373155
Total			506510

Source: Robert R. Kuczinski, *The Cameroon and Togoland: A Demographic Study*, London, 1939, P.25.

The table reveal a relatively low population density at the start of British rule in the Cameroons. A lot of labourers however migrated from the Bamenda area to come and work in the plantations along the coastal area of the territory.

¹⁴⁷ Epale, *Plantation and Development in West Cameroon* P.13.

¹⁴⁸ T. E. Mbuagbaw, *A History of the Cameroon*, p.6.

According to tradition, people who settled the Western grassfields of the Cameroons were the Tikars who came originally from an area in the North West of the present towns of Tibati and Banyo; and may ultimately have come from a location further north. Because of the pressure from the Chamba, the Tikar moved towards the South and settled in the West plain watered by River Mbam and its tributaries, and due to internal rift, the Tikars set off another wave of migration which this time split off in small groups, travelling westward and southward and eventually entering various parts of the Bamenda highlands. On the other hand, the Coastal area was inhabited by the Bantu with most of these inhabitants migrating from East Africa and the Congo Basin¹⁴⁹. Plantation workers came from both the Coastal and the Western grassfields but our investigation revealed that mostly the male labourers were employed from the beginning¹⁵⁰.

Origin of Oil Palm, Tea and Rubber

The oil palm cultivation was started by the Germans in Cameroon and by the end of the First World War in 1918; these planters had established palm plantations in Moliwe, Likomba, Ekona, Mpundu, Bimbina and Mbonge and with mills at Bota, Moliwe, Mpundu and Mbonge. Palm oil gradually came to be a very important item in export from the Cameroons to Germany where it was used for making soap and candles. There were two proposals to use it in the making of margarine. In the beginning, it came from the interior where trees grew wild but later, the planters turned to the growing of palm trees. Chiefs in the Cameroons were therefore required to plant 25 palms for each old hut and 50 for each new one. Continuous efforts were therefore made to make the local farmers have palm plantations¹⁵¹.

By 1916, when the British took over the Cameroons, there were 58 plantations in the Cameroons covering an area of about 75000 square miles and employing 18000 Africans who were involved in the production of cocoa, rubber, oil palm, banana, and many others¹⁵². Other plantation crops like tea were added and by the time of the C.D.C take over in 1947; minor plantation crops included pepper and coconuts. These plantation crops were going to be labour intensive involving the use of both male and female labourers but with disparity in job description and remunerations. It will be vital to look at the origin and botany of these plantation crops.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 14-17.

¹⁵⁰ N A B, File Qd/a1910/2, Work Men in Plantation List by Division of Origin, 1923, p.4.

¹⁵¹ T. E. Mbuagbaw, *A History of the Cameroon*, p.70.

¹⁵² Annual Report for the CDC for the Year 1954, Published by her Majesty Stationary office, London, 1955, pp. 215-224.

The plantation crops involved in our study are oil palm, tea and rubber. There were roughly 300 species of palm trees in the tropical, sub-tropical and warm temperate climatic regions of Africa. Most of them were distinguished by their large compound ever green leaves, specially arranged at the top of an un-branched stem. Palms were among the best known and most extensively cultivated plant families. Some well-known palm trees were the dates palm, the coconut palm, the rattan and the oil palm. The oil palm which is one of our crops of concern was cultivated in the British Southern Cameroons¹⁵³. An average of 18000 and 20000 tons of high quality semi-finished rubber was produced annually from the British Southern Cameroons¹⁵⁴.

Table 2: Statistics on Major Plantation Crops of the Study and the Labour Force in 1983

Cultivated Crops	Enterprise	Year and Start of Crop Cultivation in the Cameroons	Location	Cultivated Area	Output	Male labour Force	Female Labour Force	Total Labour Force
Oil Palm	CDC	1946/47	South West	16047	24790	3522	978	4500
	PAMOL	1920s	South West	9035	22728	2043	657	2700
Tea	CDC	1948	South West and North West	1382	1800	2000	1400	3400
Rubber	CDC	1946/47	South West	19438	11726	5982	1018	7000

Source: Konings, Labour Resistance, p.20.

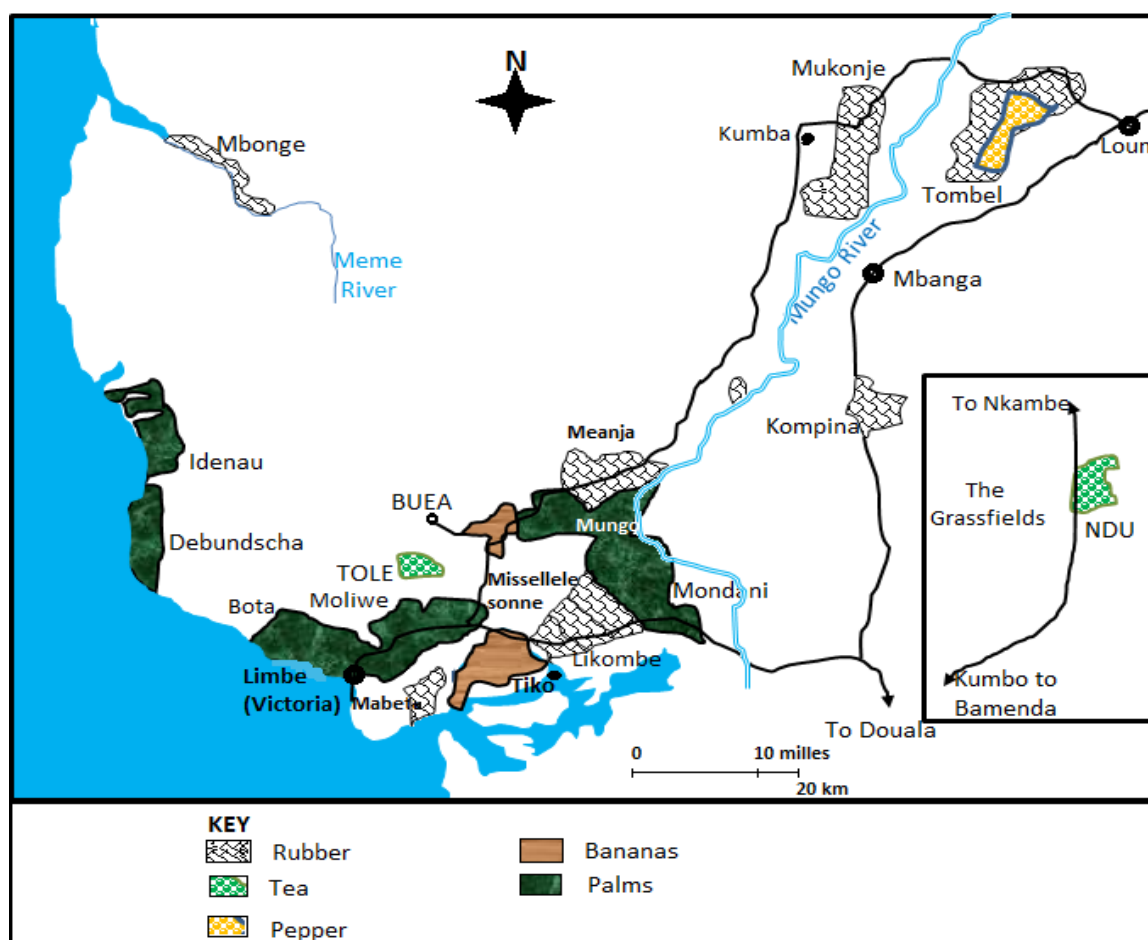
Oil palm cultivated area was 16047 in 1946 when the C.D.C took over the plantation and the output was 24790 with a male labour force of 3522 labourers and 978 female labour force. The

¹⁵³ Franklin Ngoni Njie, Inside C.D.C, N° 003 of April 2015, Bota, C.D.C Publication, 2015, p.20.

¹⁵⁴ C.D.C Annual Publication, Bota, C.D.C Publications, 2014, p. 3.

statistics of tea stood at 1382 cultivated area in 1948 with an output of 1800 and a male labour force of 2000 labourers and female labour force of 1400 labourers. The statistics of rubber plantations revealed that, the cultivated area in 1947 was 19438 with an output of 11726, 5982 male labourers and 1018 female labourers¹⁵⁵. By 1983, the oil palm, tea and rubber plantations in the Cameroons had increased drastically in terms of output. These plantations employed both male and female labourers from the beginning but with a male domination in labour. Important of note was the fact that the tea estates in the Cameroons were the highest plantations that employed a reasonable number of women as labourers. This was because of the intensity and care needed to pluck tea and women were considered to be more careful than men¹⁵⁶.

Map 5: Location of the Tea, Oil Palm and Rubber Plantations in the Cameroons



Source: Konings, Labour Resistance in Cameroon, p.57. Modified by Researcher during Field Work, 2014, 2015, 2022.

¹⁵⁵ Konings, Labour Resistance, p.20.

¹⁵⁶ Interview with Elisabeth Likumba, 68years old, Female Plucker in the Tole Tea Estate from 1982, June 28th 2015.

There were many plantation sites in the Cameroons but the four main plantations under study included the Tole and Ndu which planted tea, the Idenau with oil palm and the Tiko plantation with rubber. These plantations employed both male and female labourers as workers in order to maximise profits¹⁵⁷.

Right down to the eve of the First World War, a greater proportion of the palm oil and kernels exported from the Cameroons was the result of the efforts of Cameroonians who gathered palm fruits from the wild trees and processed it. However, due to the increasing demand for palm products, efforts were made and intensified to grow oil palms of a selected variety on plantations where scientific methods of processing would be possible. Planters therefore began to turn gradually to the cultivation of the oil palm and towards the end of the war, palm plantations covering nearly 1000 hectares had been developed and the processing of palm fruits by mechanical means was now fully developed¹⁵⁸.

It is important to note that, unlike cocoa which was introduced by the Germans, the palm tree had been naturally growing in the territory. Oil palm is believed to have originated from Africa, specifically West Africa where it remained a domestic plant until the end of the 18th Century when it entered world trade. It grows as wild, semi-wild and cultivated in a fairly narrow coastal belt in West Africa¹⁵⁹. In 1842, an agreement was concluded with the native kings to cease traffic in slaves and trade in palm oil and ivory. Until the outbreak of the First World War, palm produce was a native activity. Palm trees and high breed for plantation purposes were soon to be introduced in the territory¹⁶⁰.

At the outbreak of the Second World War, (1939), the German planters were interned and some of the plantations abandoned with only Bota, Mpundu and Moliwe plantations under habitation¹⁶¹. Eyong Zacharia admits that yield in some of the plantations that had been established during the time of the Germans was extremely low. This situation was taken care of through rehabilitation. Most of the old palm trees were cut down and the area allowed for some time before new species were brought for planting¹⁶². The German planters obtained planting material from Benin Republic (former Dahomey), and from the Belgian Congo (Now

¹⁵⁷ Konings, *Labour Resistance*, p.57.

¹⁵⁸ Epale, *Plantation and Development in West Cameroon* p.35.

¹⁵⁹ Joseph, k. Mukibi, *Agriculture in Uganda; Volume II*, Fountain Publishers, Uganda, 2001, p.119.

¹⁶⁰ Gwanfogbe, "An Economic History of the British Cameroons: 1916-1960," DEA in History, University of Yaounde, 1975, p.33.

¹⁶¹ C.D.C Commemorative publication, Golden Jubilee Anniversary, C.D.C Head Quarters, Bota, 1997, p.16.

¹⁶² Interview with Zacharia Eyong 59 Years Old, Started work in 1985 as a technician and later a mill mender, Idenau oil mill factory, July 29th 2015.

Zaire). The planting materials were dura (tick shell, large kernel and tin mesocarp). The concept of the hybrid then tenera, which is a cross between the Dora x pisifera (tick mesocarp, little kernel and shell) was only conceived after the Second World War.

Idenau estate was the first estate in the world to be planted with the hybrid tenera in 1952. The Idenau plantation was a small estate situated to the North of the Bibundi village. It is on the seacoast southwest of the Cameroon Mountain and about sixty kilometers West of Victoria. Details of the estate were recorded in a deed of sale dated 7th September 1898 made between the Imperial Government of Cameroon and Ferdinand Scipio and in another deed of sale dated 28 August 1912¹⁶³. New varieties of palm fruits were first planted in the Idenau plantation at the start of plantation work in the new estate. These new seeds boasted production from 7.5 tons to 17 tons. Oil palm estates were mainly found in Fako Division with other areas like Idenau, Ndian, Debundscha and Illoani harbouring some of the plantations. These areas produced a lot of oil palm due to the suitability of the climate, abundant rainfall and good soils.

The average monthly rainfall especially in Debundscha is 2000mm which is ideal for the growth of oil palm¹⁶⁴. The three main oil palm mills in the Cameroons were the pamol plantations mill located in the Ndian Division with headquarters at Lobe, the Idenau mill and the Mondoni mill with an output of 20 tons each and another mill was envisaged for Illoani¹⁶⁵. Major oil palm plantations were found in Bota, Debundscha, Idenau, Illoani, Mondoni, Mungo and a new project was being developed at Boa¹⁶⁶. The labour statistics showed that about 20 % of the female workers worked in the field, 2% of them in the supervisory service, 20% in the oil processing unit, 5% in the workshop and 12% in the administrative service¹⁶⁷. Generally, labour supply in the oil palm plantation was male dominated with an insignificant percentage of the female labourers represented in all the sectors of oil palm production in the palm plantations of the British Southern Cameroons.

¹⁶³ Epale, *Plantation and Development in West Cameroon* p.28.

¹⁶⁴ Annual Report for the C.D.C for the Year 1954, Published by her Majesty Stationary office, London, 1955, P.17.

¹⁶⁵ Interview with Benjamin Nketi, 47 Years old, maintenance coordinator, CDC Bota Limbe, July 29th 2015.

¹⁶⁶ C.D.C Annual Publication, C.D.C Annual Publication, Bota, C.D.C Publications, 2014, p. 6.

¹⁶⁷ Statistical development by researcher during field work in July –August 2015 and in December 2021

Table 3: Statistics on New Palms Planted in the 1950s

Estate	Mature	Immature	Total
BOTA	46	327	373
DEBUNDSCHA	340	761	1101
IDENAU	307	160	967
BENOE	-	183	483
MONDONI	-	469	469
MUNGO	-	464	464
ILLOANI	340	895	1235
LOBE	338	706	1044
CONTRACTORS	11438	-	11438
TOTAL	13309	4265	17574

Source: C.D.C Commemorative Publication, Golden Jubilee, 1997, p.5.

Statistics revealed from the table above that there were about nine oil palm estates in the Cameroon with a total of 13309 mature plants and 4265 immature plants. Mature palm trees were therefore abound giving way for the need of more labourers in these plantations. Of all the major plantations crops in the Cameroons, only the oil palm is native to West Africa. It was used for both oil and wine. Long before Europeans arrived in Africa, an edible palm oil is known to have been exported to Europe as early as the 1580s.

Actually, the oil palm was a new comer to the ranks of plantation crops for it was only since 1910 that the plant was systematically cultivated and exploited. The best yields were obtained from oil palm in areas with high rain fall and evenly distributed where hours of sunshine were high and where soils were fertile. The oil palm tree could best be appreciated in light of world demand for edible vegetable oils and fats. Palm oil products were a basic ingredient in the manufacture of soap, margarine and cooking oils and kernel cake and also provided a high protein life stock feed¹⁶⁸. The major sources of vegetable oils are oil palm, groundnuts, coconuts, soya beans, sesame seeds, sunflower seeds, cotton seeds and olives. Of all the sources listed, the oil palm, by far, produced the greatest yield per hectare. The oil palm was therefore very important in the British Southern Cameroons as it had various economic uses¹⁶⁹. Men and women were employed to work in the various palm plantations especially owing to the fact

¹⁶⁸ C.D.C Commemorative Publication, Golden Jubilee, 1997, p. 11.

¹⁶⁹ Bederman, *The Cameroon Development Corporation*, p.38.

that it was a labour intensive exercise that needed a lot of man power to complete the production chain.

Plate 1: Female Planters in a Palm Nursery



Source: Researcher's Field Work, Palm Nursery in Idenau, June to July 2015.

Idenau estate was completely replanted because the first plantations were old and the plantation was also extended. The variety planted throughout the estate was tenera, and as a result, Idenau estate became the first commercial plantation in the world to be planted exclusively with this variety. Also, as a result, the oil to bunch ratio obtained at the Idenau mill was much greater than that obtained from any other C.D.C plantation. At the age of four to five months after germination, the seedlings were transplanted from the pre-nursery beds to a field nursery, planted at rectangular spacing of 60 by 80 cm. They were also transplanted in large polythene pots of 50 cm deep by 38 cm wide¹⁷⁰.

An interview with one of our informants revealed that both men and women were employed to work in the oil plantations but a majority of the women were employed to work in the nursery section. However, more men had opportunities to work in the oil plantations than women because it was believed that women were inconsistent but the few women who were employed did their work efficiently. Nevertheless, most of these women were employed in the nursery because it was generally believed that they were care givers and with such naturally endowed

¹⁷⁰ Mukiibi, *Agriculture in Uganda*, p.122.

qualities, they were going to take good care of the young oil palm plants that needed a lot of care at the early age so as to ensure good yield as the plant major. This was because the yield depended on how well the nursery was taken care of at the early stage¹⁷¹. Our investigations equally brought to the limelight the fact that, the nursery section of the oil palm production was one of the sections that demanded an intensive labour force and care yet, was the section that employed a majority of women but with labourers of this section lowly paid. Such unnecessary disparity in remuneration was exaggerated by one of our informant in these words, “We do clean and good work that men and they cannot be patient like us but the payment for us in this section is very small compared to other sectors of the plantation”¹⁷².

The oil palm belongs to the palmae family. It is single stemmed. The apical bud produces the long, feather shaped leaves, one by one, in a regular sequence. The leaves of the oil palm can reach a length of 7 metres with each leave producing 200 to 300 leaflets, subtended at various angles. The oil palm is monoecious. The inflorescences are borne in the leave axil and normally only one inflorescence is carried by each leave. A female inflorescence develop in to fruit bunches containing at maturity several thousands of fruits.

The fruit bunch is ovoid in shape and may reach 50cm in length and 35 cm in breath. The bunch consists of the outer and inner fruit, the latter somewhat flattened and less pigmented; a few parthenocarpic fruits that have developed even though fertilisation has not taken place; some small underdeveloped non-oil bearing infertile fruits. Bunch weight varies from a few kilograms to about 100 kilograms according to age and situation with a mean of 10 to 30 kilograms in adult plantation. Well set bunches carry from 500 to 4000 fruits, a mean of about 1500 being usual with a fruit to bunch ratio of 60 to 70 percent.

External appearance, the fruits vary considerable particularly when ripening. The exocarp of the external fruit turns to be more pigmented than that of the internal fruit. The commonest type of fruit is deep violet to black at the apex and colourless at the base before ripening, described as ordinary or *nigrescens*. A relatively uncommon type is green before ripening and is called green fruited¹⁷³.

¹⁷¹ Interview with Lydia Nkeze, 59 Years, Accounting Clerk, Idenau, July 29th 2015.

¹⁷² Interview with Esther Enanga, 55 years Old, Nursery Attendant, Idenau, July July 30th 2015.

¹⁷³ Mukiibi, *Agriculture in Uganda*, p.118.

Tea Production

Tea originated from Burma near the source of River Irrawaddy, from where it spread to East and South East Asia. Though the commercial cultivation of tea is hardly 200 years old, it has been used as a beverage for 2000 to 3000 years in South Eastern China. Commercial tea production in its modern form started in India between 1818 and 1834. It came from seed originating from China following the discovery of wild tea in Assam and Manipuri in India¹⁷⁴.

In Africa, tea was first grown in the Durban botanical garden in 1850 which gradually developed in to a local plantation industry. The oldest continuous tea industry in Africa is that of Malawi where tea was introduced in 1886. In East Africa, specimen plants were being raised in botanical gardens at Entebbe in Uganda, Limuru in Kenya and Amani in Tanzania at the turn of the century. Commercial production only started between 1920 to 30. Geographically, the crop is widely distributed throughout the tropics from 43° North and 28° South and at higher elevations¹⁷⁵.

It was in the Victoria (now Limbe) botanical garden in 1914 that the Germans planted a small experimental bed of tea seeds. Their export were, however curtailed in 1916 by their final defeat in Cameroon by the British and French forces following which their properties were confiscated and handed for administration to the custodian of enemy property. In 1928, using seeds from the seed bed in Victoria, an experimental planting was made at Tole near Buea on the South Eastern slopes of Mount Cameroon. At an elevation of 425M, Tole lies four degree North of the Equator and experiences an annual rainfall of 3050 mm, at temperature range of 19-28 degree c and high humidity that gives the conditions for tea cultivation. This first planting comprised 26.7 hectares and grew extremely well. No further work was done on this small plot of tea and the bushes were allowed to grow but, some 26 years later, it was destined to play an important role as a source of seed for planting at Tole and Ndu¹⁷⁶.

One of our informants admitted that both male and women were employed to work in these plantations but with generally a male dominating labour force from the beginning of the plantations. Female labourers were however employed in their numbers in the later years but a majority of this new class of workers were mostly given jobs with very low wages¹⁷⁷. In all about 26 hectares at Tole were planted with hybrid tea of two distinct variety-one Assam light

¹⁷⁴ Onwueme, I.C, and Sinha.T. D. , *Field Crop Production in Africa*, CTA, Ede, the Netherlands, 1991,p.237.

¹⁷⁵ Mukiibi, *Agriculture in Uganda*, p.438.

¹⁷⁶ C.D.C Commemorative publication, p.18.

¹⁷⁷ Interview with Florence Aba, 73 years, Former Tea Plucker, Tole, June 28th 2015.

leave type and the other the dark leave Manipuri tea. As 26 hectares did not constitute an economic tea estate, little or nothing was done with the original plant except allow them to grow in to trees. Of great importance, however is the fact that the 1928 planting provided the nucleus of all the tea growing in the Cameroons because most of those original trees were used to obtain seeds¹⁷⁸.

Expert advice sought in 1953 recommended further tea development at Tole and that year, 6.9 hectares of the original German planting was rehabilitated for seed production. In 1954, the decision was taken to develop Tole as a commercial estate. This commenced the same year with the planting of 11 hectares using Tole seeds and with it, Tole emerged as a tea estate in the true sense and a modern era of tea in Cameroon commenced¹⁷⁹. The C.D.C was therefore an agro-industrial company created as a public establishment to acquire, develop and operate extensive plantations of tropical crops. The head quarter was located at Bota in Limbe. It had a share capital of 15.626 billion Francs CFA including 3.8 billion Francs CFA representing the assets of the tea sector that was privatised in 2002¹⁸⁰.

During the 1950s, two tea estates were founded in Anglophone Cameroon. These estates differed in various respects. They differed in type of ownership and especially pertinent to this research work in the type of labour employed which is the central activity in tea production. The Ndu Tea Estate created on the first of January 1957 shortly after the Tole Estate of 1954 started to employ a predominantly male labour force with female labour employed only on contract bases¹⁸¹. The C.D.C took over the Ndu Tea Estate on January 1st 1977 from a Lipton subsidiary, Estate and Agency Company Limited (Ltd) located in the North West Region of Cameroon.

This take over marked the dorne of a new era in the economic life of the Ndu Estate because, unlike the other company that had signed a contract with the Fon of Ndu on the resentment of women in the tea estate, the C.D.C started to employ a predominantly female labour force from 1977. Of note was the fact that these female labourers were mostly employed as pluckers in the field. Of all the female labourers employed in the Ndu Tea Estate, those of the field plucking tea were in the majority. Management probably may have seen the output of Tole tea pluckers

¹⁷⁸Bederman, *The Cameroon Development Corporation*, p.50.

¹⁷⁹ Annual Report for the C.D.C for the Year 1954, Published by her Majesty Stationary office, London, 1955, pp. 54-68.

¹⁸⁰ J. Teke, ‘‘Role of North West Region Out-Migrants to the Cameroon Development Corporation and Pamol Plantations of the South West Region of Cameroon in the Development of their Areas of Origin’’, A Ph.D. Thesis in Geography, University of Yaounde 1, 2010, p.77.

¹⁸¹ Konings, *Gender and Class*, p.11.

who were predominantly female labourers to be able to embark on the employment of female pluckers in the Ndu Tea Estate. These female pluckers contributed enormously to the economic growth of the estate in particular and of the Ndu community in general.

Plate 2: Partial Aerial View of the First Tea Estate in the Cameroons



Source: Photo Negative, Researcher's Field Work, June 14th 2015.

Before the Second World War, a tea seed bed was started in the Victoria Botanical Gardens. In 1928 a small experimental planting was started at Tole but the experiment was abandoned and the tea soon grew in to trees but later provided the bases for the growing of tea in the territory¹⁸². The Tole tea was produced till 1948 when it halted and the production only revamped in 1954. The first tea estate, the Tole estate was going to increase its productivity especially with the prospects of an increase in the demand for tea in the world market¹⁸³. The Tole estate is situated in the present day South West Region. After the German colonial rule in Cameroon, from 1884-1916, this region was transformed in to a plantation area. It was first owned by the C.D.C, an agro-industrial parastatal, founded in 1947 after the Second World War After 2002, it was owned by a South African Company, Brobon Finex, and is known as the Cameroon Tea Estate¹⁸⁴.

¹⁸² Bederman, *The Cameroon Development Corporation*, P.50.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, p.52.

¹⁸⁴ Akara, "Plantation Agriculture in the Former British Southern Cameroons", pp.25-32.

Tea is a diploid with 15 chromosome pairs. It is predominantly cross pollinated. It belongs to the family *camelliaceae* formally, *Theaceae*. The family has 20 genera and 200 species, comprising trees and shrubs of tropical and sub-tropical regions. Tea in its natural condition is a straggling semi evergreen woody shrub which grows wild to a height of 9.1 to 15.2m. When cultivated, tea is a bush, kept low by regular plucking and pruning. The tea plant has a strong tap root with lateral roots. The lateral routes give rise to a surface mat of feeding roots which lack root hairs when matured. Endotrophic mycorrhiza is normally associated with mature roots. The roots store starch as food reserve for use in adverse conditions.

New leaves and branches develop from axillary buds of mature leaves. The leaves are generally glabrous with sparsely distributed hairs on the under surface. They are usually 5 to 30 centimetres long oval, pointed and leathery. They have a shiny dark green upper surface and finely tooth edges. Stomata are confined to the lower surface of the leaf. The buds are internodes and are more profusely hairy than the leaves. The characteristic fragrance and aroma of the leaves is due to the presence of numerous oil glands.

The white or pinkish flowers are fragrant globular in shape with yellow centres. These are borne singly or in clusters in the axil of scale leaves. The flower is hermaphrodite, with a short pedicel. Their calyx has 5-7 sepals with the same number of petals. The stamens are numerous, hypogynous with yellow twin-celled anthers. The ovary is superior, hairy with a single style split into 3-5 arms. Each flower produces a capsule which usually contains three seeds. The seeds (about 1.3 cm in diameter) are brown spherical and have a tough seed coat. The tea seed retains its viability for a short time after maturity. Germination is epigeal and the cotyledons are abscised after 5-6 months. Great variation exists in the crop but two botanical varieties are recognised; *camellia sinensis* and *var sinensis*¹⁸⁵.

The tea plant was generally very important especially in the British Southern Cameroons because of its importance in world economy in general and in the Cameroonian society in particular. One of our informants at the Tole Tea Estate contained in these words. "I take tea in the morning, afternoon and evening. Tea is our food here at Tole". This was corroborated by another tea plucker at the Ndu Tea Estate who said "I drink Ndu Tea even when there is no sugar"¹⁸⁶. Tea was economically very important because, it was considered the third most important traditional export crop after coffee and cotton. At the peak, it contributed a lot of

¹⁸⁵ . Mukiibi, *Agriculture in Uganda*, p.437.

¹⁸⁶ Matilda Nabola, 81 Years Old, Worked as a Plucker in the 1990s, Tole, August 25th 2015, Angeline Mumah, 50 Years Old, Plucker in the Ndu Tea Estate, Ndu, July 7th 2014.

money to the government coffers in most African countries that got engaged in tea cultivation like Uganda, Kenya and Cameroon¹⁸⁷.

Plate 3: Partial Aerial View of the Ndu Tea Estate Taken from West1, August 2014



Source: Photo Negative, Researcher's Field Work, August 13th 2014.

The second estate, the Ndu Tea Estate was created on the 1st of January 1957 by the Estate and Agency Company Limited (EAC LTD), a Lipton subsidiary, and a British Indian multinational enterprise¹⁸⁸. (See Appendix 6) It was a joint company administered by British and Indian business men. The company had its head office in London, (99/101 Regent Street, London, WI England). In its administrative structure, the company had a Board of Directors. Mr. Kappur, the founder was the company chairperson. The soils had been tested and proven suitable for the cultivation of tea. Tea just like cocoa was a minor but old established plantation crop. Apart from the Ndu Tea Estate, this company had eleven other estates, mines and hotels in different parts of the world. The British were the highest shareholders¹⁸⁹. They leased 4,000 acres for 99 years by agreement with both central and local authorities, after compensating those affected¹⁹⁰ (See Appendix 7).

¹⁸⁷ Mukiibi, *Agriculture in Uganda*, p.440.

¹⁸⁸ NAB, File Qc/g/1957/2, Report on the Suitability on the Cultivation of Tea of Lands in the Bamenda Area, Southern Cameroon, 1957, pp.1-/BK, Economic Developments in the North West Province, 1982.

¹⁸⁹ Tata, "The Socio economic History of the Ndu Tea Estate", pp. 43-44.

¹⁹⁰ NAB, File Qc/9/1963/3. No L G 2328, Tea Development in Bamenda, 2nd of May 1963, p.16.

At the time of the establishment of the Ndu Tea Estate, it was the only large scale plantation in the North West (Province) and one of the exceptional enterprises offering wage employment opportunities in the area¹⁹¹. The Indians took over the leadership of the Board of Directors in 1972 but due to a catalogue of problems, ranging from poor working conditions to poor management, they could not continue with the property. The estate was at the brink of closure so the government of Cameroon stepped in to salvage the situation. In January 1977, the government handed this property to the Cameroon Development Corporation who managed it up to October 17th 2002, when it again changed hands through the policy of privatisation and on the 18th of October 2002, fell in to private hands¹⁹². Bederman concludes that, “at Ndu, all main roads are unpaved”. During the rainy season which is usually the peak period, the roads are often impassable¹⁹³. In order to ensure a ready market for the produced tea, a good number of letters were written to the resident representative, requesting for the study of the tea market¹⁹⁴(See Appendix 8).

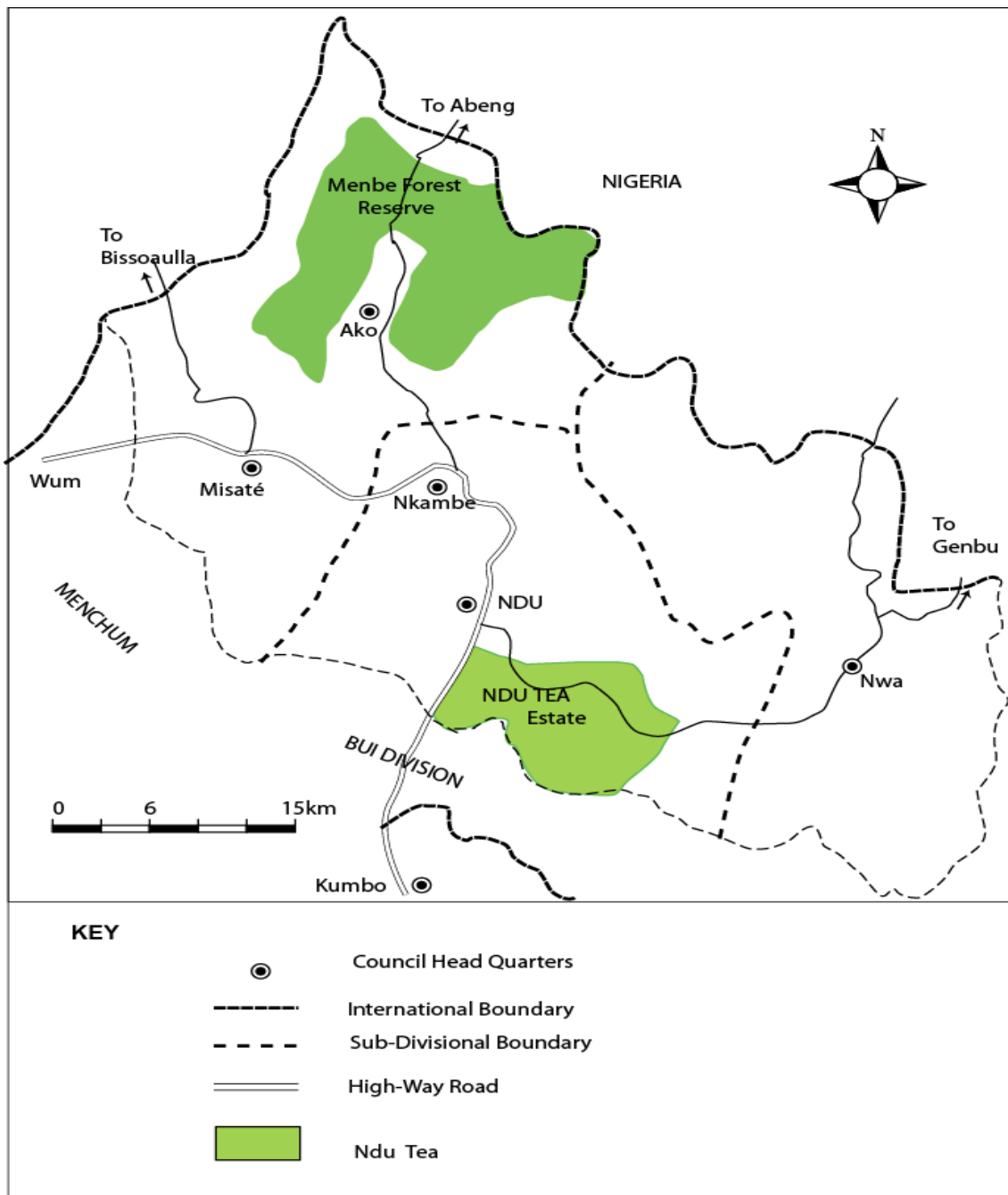
¹⁹¹ CUIPI/aw/83, Ndu Tea Estate Records of Minutes of Staff Representatives Preparatory Meetings, 1981-91.

¹⁹² Konings, *Gender and Class*, p.11, Zachee, *Concised Notes on Quality Tea*, p.1.

¹⁹³ Bederman, *The CDC: Partner in National Growth*, p.53.

¹⁹⁴ NAB, File Qc/9/1971/1, Ndu Tea Estate, 1971, pp.1-6.

Map 6: The Location of the Ndu Tea Estate



Source: Konings Piet, *Labour Resistance in Cameroon*, Leiden, African Study Centre, 1993, p.57.

The two tea estates in the British Southern Cameroons were found at Tole which was created in 1954 and at Ndu which was created in 1957 and taken over by the C.D.C on the 1st of January 1977. By 2002; these plantations had been privatised and owned by private bodies¹⁹⁵.

¹⁹⁵ Konings, *Labour Resistance in Cameroon*, p.57.

Rubber

The origin of the rubber plant is the tropical rain forest of Brazil in South America. Its history is associated with numerous species of trees, climbing plants and undergrowth which produce milk (latex) and belongs to the family of plants called *Euphorbiaceae*, under which falls the fig tree. The technological revolution in 1939 opened great possibilities. New functions and a new dimension of speed were thrust upon the natural rubber industry.

Considering the origin of the rubber plant in Cameroon, this discourse dates back to the German era in the territory. Rubber from the beginning was far and away the most important export commodity from the German protectorate. A year before annexation, two Swedish traders who had visited the territory were of the opinion that the Cameroons could produce rubber, since Cameroonians of the interior tapped latex from the vine of certain plants that grew abundantly in vast forest in the country. According to the half yearly report of 1923, "There is a considerable acreage of para rubber, and this will be a very valuable asset, as soon as a proper factory is erected. Arrangements are now in hand for making a Para rubber nursery so that all vacancies may be planted up during the next rain season, on all sections"¹⁹⁶(See Appendix 8).

This report reveals that, the rubber plant was one of the priorities of Europeans in the territory at the eve of setting up plantation agriculture in the territory. This is corroborated by Mbuagbaw who contains that, during the German times, rubber was always the most important article of export. The rubber came from latex obtained from extensive wild groves in all parts of the interior, but local methods of extraction were said not to be productive and over extraction killed off most of the rubber vines. None the less, Cameroon exported large quantities of so-called wild rubber until the world crisis in 1911. There was a world crisis in rubber which arose because of the successful plantations in Sumatra and other places in the Far East, which almost killed the Cameroon rubber trade¹⁹⁷. This however was far from happening giving the importance of the crop.

However, when wild rubber had assumed importance as an export commodity, it was discovered that the method of extracting latex used by the natives injured the plant and exterminated them. Since the rubber bearing trees were destroyed, rubber gatherers had to cover a greater distance in to the interior to reach areas where uninjured wild rubber trees were available. This ruthless exploitation of the latex-yielding trees, therefore, had the effect of

¹⁹⁶ N A B, File N° 79/16 Qd/a1916/23, Half Yearly Report, 1923, p.3.

¹⁹⁷ T. E. Mbuagbaw, *A History of the Cameroon*, pp. 70-71.

increasing the price at which raw rubber was obtained. As the distance lengthened, it became difficult for white traders to supervise the natives who were collecting latex and in consequence, tappers resorted to the adulteration of rubber with sand, et cetera, so as to inflate its weight. In any case, the local monopolies did not welcome the intrusion of white traders in to their rubber forest¹⁹⁸.

In order to solve this problem, the German government in 1901 sent Dr. Rudolf Schlechter, a rubber expert, to look in to the possibility of producing rubber in Cameroon on large plantations. The *kickxia* elastic was chosen out of the many varieties as the type that offered the best prospects for large-scale exploitation. The *kickxia* seeds were therefore produced in large scale for the production of rubber to start immediately on a large scale. While attempts were being intensified to produce rubber near the coast, explorers discovered regions in the Bimbia-Ngoko area where an immense quantity of wild rubber had grown. This site could therefore be suitable for large scale rubber production. Before the result of the *kickxia* type could be shown, the *hevea brasiliensis* seeds were discovered to be a better rubber plant. These seeds were therefore distributed for the rubber plantations. Rubber therefore was exported out of the territory in tons¹⁹⁹.

Hevea is a hydrocarbon, not a carbohydrate; it has almost the same type of chemical composition as petroleum. Before the development of synthetic, rubber from petroleum product *hevea* was the source of all rubber. As early as 1834, the possibility of growing *hevea* in the Far East (Malasia, Idonesia and Tyland) which is now the predominant home of *hevea* had been suggested. About 85 years ago, the Germans introduced commercial management and production of *hevea* in Cameroon. By 1947, at the inception of the C.D.C, they had planted 6044 hectares of which 4583 hectares were already matured while 1461 hectares were still immature²⁰⁰.

Some rubber was produced in the Cameroons during the inter war period and during World War Two. The rubber estate inherited by the C.D.C in 1946 was mostly old and the trees were generally of the low yielding seedling type. In many parts of the estate, plantings were irregular, and the stand per hectare was abnormally low. One of the problems stemmed from the fact that during World War Two, most of the trees were excessively tapped in order to help in the war efforts. The corporation management assess the situation and decided that it could continue to

¹⁹⁸ Epale, *Plantation and Development in West Cameroon* p.36.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp.36-37.

²⁰⁰ C.D.C Commemorative publication, p.114.

be a useful commodity for production because, the ecological conditions for its growth were quite favourable²⁰¹. The life span of a rubber tree is about 32 years before it is felled and replanted. This includes about 5 to 6 years of nursery / immature phase, the rest being years of exploitation of its latex reserves²⁰². A lot of research was done by the Germans, the British and French on the importance of rubber; it was of economic importance because it was used especially in the production of war equipment and other economic accessories²⁰³.

Available records, which date as far back to 1947. Show continuous and steady increase in both hectares and production of rubber in the C.D.C. These reveal yields and hectares range from 1,606 tons (5,969 Ha) in 1951 to 19,279 tons (20,560 Ha) in 1996. The Cameroon Development Corporation presently operates and manages 12 rubber estates with six rubber factories²⁰⁴.

The Cameroon Development Corporation, therefore, was in a strong position to compete with synthetics, due to its replanting schemes which were carried out in recent years. The present cost of production on C.D.C plantation is about 77 francs per kilograms, and it is hoped it will be reduced to 65 CFA Frs in the future. The problem is to keep production cost and wages competitive.

One interesting development in recent years has been the introduction in to the market of crumb or pelletized rubber. The manufacturing process is based on the acid coagulation of the latex without any preliminary dilution in coagulating tanks. The coagulum is peeled in to a continuous thin strip and cut by a band/saw in to sheets which are then minced, drifted and pressed in to bricks before being baled and wrapped in to polythene cup lump and scrap can also be granulated in the same fashion. The corporation planned to commence production of crumb rubber in 1967 using cup lumps and scrap in the first instance, and a start has been made on the installation of a pilot plant with an initial capacity of 100-130 tons per month. There seemed to be little doubt that crumb rubber would become more popular with manufacturers in the future and may even supersede the conventional type of sheet and crepe. This development could be of immense significance for natural rubber producers producing several tons in cost for both producers and consumer²⁰⁵.

²⁰¹ Bederman, *The C.D.C: Partner in National Growth*, p.45.

²⁰² C.D.C Commemorative publication, p.114.

²⁰³ N.A.B, File:No,QC/G/1966/9/, Rubber Research 1966, p.5.

²⁰⁴ C.D.C Commemorative publication, p.114.

²⁰⁵ Bederman, *The CDC: Partner in National Growth*, p.49.

Table 4: Rubber Production Statistics in the Cameroons, C.D.C, 1947-66

Year	Planted Hectares			Production in Metric Tons	Revenue Derived (Millions of CFA,F
	Mature	Immature	Total		
1947				1335	71
1948				1356	88
1949				940	66
1950				1345	292
1951	4579	1460	6039	1632	373
1952	4731	1615	6346	1584	244
1953	4545	2028	6573	1829	200
1954	3985	2517	6502	1621	189
1955	3939	2793	6732	1549	274
1956	4163	2760	6923	1742	278
1957	4450	2782	6232	1886	268
1958	4347	2753	7100	2279	303
1959	4700	2913	7613	2623	453
1960	5306	3059	8365	3268	587
1961	5568	4125	9693	3832	513
1962	5998	4676	10674	4240	529
1963	5872	5758	11630	5081	602
1964	5900	6157	12057	4860	598
1965	7064	5126	12190	6378	602
1966	7402	4661	12063	6714	771

Source: Bederman, *The C.D.C: Partner in National Growth*, p.49.

Since 1947, the development of rubber on the C.D.C plantations has increased steadily. In the first year, the corporation produced 1335 metric tons of marketable rubber. The all-time high was achieved in 1966 when 6714 metric tons were produced²⁰⁶. Newly planted areas abound, mostly on former banana lands²⁰⁷. One major problem with rubber is that the cost of new plantings (or of replanting) is high. In addition, high yielding bud grafted trees take 6 to 7 years

²⁰⁶ Bederman, *The C.D.C: Partner in National Growth*, p.49.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid*

to mature and the capital investment in bringing a planting to the initial tapping stage cost approximately 200 FRS C F A per hectare. In 1966, over 12000 hectares of C.D.C land were in rubber. Almost the whole of the Eastern half of the Tiko plain is now planted in *Hevea braziliensis*. Our investigation revealed that the peak of rubber production in the Cameroons came in 1966 partly because of the increase in the labour force especially the employment of female labourers to work in the rubber plantations given the high demand for rubber in the world market. These women were however employed to work mostly in the rubber factories²⁰⁸.

Land as a Factor for Plantation Agriculture

Land was the most important factor and element needed for plantation agriculture. Without the land, there could be no plantation and consequently the men and women to provide the labour force. An agricultural land scape is a culturally harmonised land scape. The cultures of various areas were transcribed to the land to form definite patterns which reflected the environmental conditions of that culture. Farming patterns differed and every farming locality in the world had its own appearance. In some areas, mounds were used. In others, ridges and in some beds and terraces. This was due to the factors that made up an agricultural land scape such as farm size, field patterns, field boundaries, building material and farm house styles²⁰⁹.

All these made the agricultural landscape to differ remarkably from place to place to the extent that different names were used in describing it in different parts of the world. In Britain, we had farmsteads, in the tropical countries, it was called plantations and in Holland, it was described as polders. Aspects of the agricultural land scape were the features that made one farming area to have a different character from another. Farm size influenced the quantity of land to be used for an agricultural activity. This was the land area which may be occupied by a farm which could be large or small. In the case of plantations in the study area, the rubber, oil palm and tea estates occupied large farm areas because of the vastness of the plantations and the nature of the plantation crops²¹⁰. Land was required for the plantations in the Cameroons. The concessions, the factories, trading sites, railways, et cetera were all part of the processes involved in plantation agriculture and all these aspects needed land for plantation agriculture to be complete. The local population, although small, practiced some amount of agriculture and carried out such activities as hunting and tapping, wood collection and many other agricultural activities, all of which required extensive lands and forest. It was therefore inevitable that land

²⁰⁸ Egoh, 31st July 2015.

²⁰⁹ Neba, *Advanced Integrated Human Geography*, p. 379.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 383.

would pose a serious problem as soon as the Germans began to acquire large tracts for various development purposes. Of course, in the early days, obtaining a clear title to land from a Cameroonian was a simple matter, since land was sold next to nothing by Cameroonians.

It was not however easy to make local land owning families understand the significance to Europeans of the ownership of land as understood in the context of the local customs. It was only when a local person entered or (as understood by Europeans) trespassed upon the land he had sold or tried to cultivate it or found his goats and other animals impounded for roaming around the land which he still considered to be his, that it dawned on him that the white man had a different notion of land ownership.

Companies were eager to obtain land at all cost and took advantage of the people's illiteracy and goaded them in to signing or thumb-printing fraudulent land sale contracts²¹¹. In order to stop all these irregular land sales between Europeans and Cameroonians, a law was passed in 1893 stipulating that the prior consent of the government was necessary before any land was disposed of. Despite this, things improved little as little attention was paid to this legislation until reports of abuses in land acquisition were multiplying. A remedy was therefore provided by the government through the governor in a decree promulgated later which required that all agreements for land transfer between Cameroonians and non-Cameroonians were to be made public. Another decree was later issued declaring that all land of which there was no actual owner was to be crown land, and a land commission consisting of the local district commissioner and a representative each of the missionary, trading, and plantation interest sat from time to time to settle many land questions. It should be noted that a land register was equally drawn up in which all land transactions were entered.

It was not surprising that several problems arose from the way in which land was acquired by Europeans and from the way this land was put in to use. It should be noted that European and African idea of land tenure were quite different. In Africa, land was owned either by individuals (usually the male folk), groups, communities or villages and it was not necessary to have a clear title to the land. The land was often sold to Europeans by chiefs at rock bottom prices but it was not thought that all such land will be needed for the present or for use by future generations. It was difficult moreover to explain African concept of land ownership to a European. It was only when a Cameroonian sought firewood from land that he had sold, or tried to till it, or found his goats and other animals confiscated, that he learned that the white

²¹¹ Epale, *Plantation and Development in West Cameroon* p.53.

man had very different ideas from his on land ownership. At the time of the German occupation of Cameroon in 1884, they owned no land in the territory. They set about acquiring it by purchase or by conquest thus after the 1884 rebellion in Douala, the government forced the chiefs to cede land. Individual Europeans and companies started to buy land from local people often for next to nothing.

Plantations were soon established in Mboko and Bakweri near Mount Cameroon by the Woermann and Jantzen and Thormahlen companies. By 1896 almost all the land of the coastal Mbako and the lower Bakweri had been taken. The people were subsequently forced to move in to reserves on the peripheries of the plantations, resulting in severe social dislocation. In 1896, the Germans declared all unoccupied land to be crown land and commissions were appointed in each district to delimit such unoccupied land and recommend native reserves²¹². The Basel mission argued in defence of African interest and it was finally decided that the reserves should allow six hectares per adult male but once this was done, the remainder of the land was at the disposal of the government. Land continued to be sold to Europeans throughout the colonial period and the Germans administration finally declared that, Cameroonians owed only the land they were cultivating thus ignoring grazing and hunting lands and land left to fallow before being cultivated at some time in the future²¹³. Epale therefore maintains that, the original land was bought from the natives and the plantations were extended to almost every piece of land acquired²¹⁴.

It was at this time that the policy of creating native reserves around the plantations was introduced. In enclosing the whole of the native population of Victoria in reserves, the purpose was to give way to plantations whose owners were anxious to have their estates in rectangular and square blocks in order to be able to show them on the map as undivided units.

Uprooted from the homes of their forebears and settled willy-nilly on strange sites in order to make way for the plantations, and deprived of old-time hunting grounds, the Bakweri somewhat lost ethnic cohesion and group unity, and it was not long when the whites realised that the land acquisition system was dealing a fatal blow to the morale of the Bakweri people²¹⁵.

It is pertinent to note that, the issue of plantation land brought a lot of problems between the colonialists and the natives and this had been accentuated by the war conditions. This was

²¹² N A B, File N° 70/16, Qd/a1916/22, German Labour Laws, 1924, pp.1-5.

²¹³ T. E. Mbuagbaw, *A History of the Cameroon*, pp. 70-71.

²¹⁴ Epale, *Plantation and Development in West Cameroon*, p.25.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.54.

particularly because the plantations had been abandoned when the war broke out and even during the Great War. A lot of elements mostly from Monrovia and people from the Douala District were able to encroach and squat on many plantations. The Douala even went as far as planting cocoa on land on which they knew they were encroaching, while the Monroviaans cultivated rice on the land²¹⁶. When some normalcy had returned to the plantations, eviction notices were normally issued to these trespassers. However, the squatters complained that vacating the land with the cocoa or rice they had planted on it would throw them in to great difficulty.

These people together with some who were traders, through letters, then asked the Divisional Officer to intercede on their behalf and secure permission for them to continue to occupy the land on payment of rents²¹⁷ (See Appendix 9). At Tole, and Bimbia, the congestion had also raised doubt in the minds of the natives as to the correctness of the boundaries of the plantation land. Because of these problems, the district head and the village heads in the Victoria district submitted a petition requesting that the area of the reserves be increased. Their petition was, however referred back with a request for fuller details²¹⁸.

When it became clear to the Bakweri people that plans were about to be headed to acquire the land formally owed by German nationals, a committee known as the Bakweri Land Committee was formed with the object of claiming the land for the Bakweri people from whom it was originally expropriated, and in a letter No BLC/2/1 date 18th June 1946, chief Endeley of Buea informed the resident in Buea of the inception of this committee, which the chief declared, “shall continue to exist as long as the Bakweri people live”, and one of whose functions he stated to be taken “ charge of all the land in the Victoria Division which virtually belongs to the native”.

Shortly after words during a Victoria Divisional meeting held in Buea, the question of the Bakweri land was raised by the people but the Senior Divisional Officer advised that the matter was of such gravity that it warranted only the treatment of the highest authority. The Bakweri land committee addressed a letter to the secretary of the eastern province, praying amongst others that lands that were formally belonging to the Bakweri should be returned to those people and that as compensation for the many years of exploitation of these lands an amount

²¹⁶ NAB, File: Qd/a/1918/1. N0 11118, Plantations Yearly Report, Cameroons Province, January, 1918. p.7.

²¹⁷ NAB, File Qd/a.1916/3, Plantation Development Report on 1916, pp.1-6.

²¹⁸ Epale, *Plantation and Development in West Cameroon*, pp. 71-72.

equal to the financial accruals from the plantations in the previous five years should be paid to the Bakweri people²¹⁹.

Up till the time of the departure of the British from the Trust territory, neither the Bakweri land problem nor the resettlement scheme proposed by the government had been resolved. In this connection, the 1955 United Nations Report recommended as follows

Resettlement as such has not been popular with those whom it was supposed government would be required to assist. Every attempt has foundered not through the lack of goodwill or funds on the part of the administration charged with carrying out the task, but through the apathy of the Bakweri. At the same time, as resettlement schemes have been rejected, however, the Bakweri land committee has continued to petition for the return to the Bakweri people of the plantation lands in its area. The wish behind this apparently contradictory state of affairs is that some of the profit which is believed that C.D.C is making out of their neighbouring banana and other plantations may go not to the Southern Cameroon government but to the Bakweri people. The Bakweri in this context over looked the important that the prime responsibility with which the corporation has been the rehabilitation of the former German owned plantations in the Cameroons, Such a task of rehabilitation by no means yet complete, requires resources far beyond the local Bakweri villagers who have no conception of the capital or technical assistance required to do the job²²⁰.

Commercial plantation started operating in Cameroon since 1885 on the lower slopes of Mount (mt) Cameroon. Cash crop production was started by the Germans shortly after the territory was taken over on Saturday July 12th 1884 and the raising of the German flag on Monday July 14th 1884²²¹. They began with the cultivation of crops like kola, tobacco, cocoa, coffee, rubber, oil palm and a few beds of tea. The word plantation portrays a picture of a country side planted with a particular crop in a large quantity. The main characteristic feature of a plantation is the industrial treatment subjected to the crops²²². That is the reason why a plantation for example will sell tea and not tea leaves.

Plantation portrayed a very aggressive major form of European intervention in the tropics. It transformed vast areas and introduced techniques and new plants. However, instead of causing the settlement of many Europeans, plantations created human situations which strongly influenced the political and economic situations²²³. Plantations were characterised with orderliness even though there were some patches of bushes and forest around the plantations. The trees of crops were usually laid out in rows and the soil beneath the trees were hoed or cleared. In most plantations, there were usually offices, nursery, processing sheds, roads and workers camps²²⁴.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.148.

²²⁰ Annual Report for the C.D.C for the Year 1955, pp. 54-68.

²²¹ Fanson, *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges*, p. 15.

²²² P. Gourou, *The Tropical World*, London, Longman, 1966, p.147.

²²³ *Ibid.*

²²⁴ H. Robinson, *Economic Geography*, London, Macdonald and Evans, 1968, pp.89-90.

Cultural and Historical Backgrounds to Gender and Labour in the Cameroons

In order to have a vivid and sound description of Gender consideration in plantation agriculture; it will be necessary to look at the cultural background and labour policies in the Cameroons. This discourse will therefore focus on pre-colonial agricultural gender roles in the Cameroons, with an in-depth description of gender division of roles in the agricultural sector. It will focus on economic laws of the society, taking in to consideration patriarchal believes and other traditional laws that governed the pre-colonial Cameroonian society.

Pre-Colonial Agriculture and Gender Roles in the Cameroons

It will be pertinent to consider gender in pre-colonial agricultural settings in the Cameroons. The domestic economy of many communities in per-colonial Cameroon was overwhelmingly a subsistence economy. Agriculture was the dominant activity in many places and there was hardly any household or community which was not fully or partially engaged in agricultural activities²²⁵.

Cheikh Anta Diop illustrates how as early as 10,000BC, women in Africa pioneered organised cultivation thereby creating the pre-conditions for surplus wealth. African women were responsible for the greatest invention for the well-being of human kind namely food security. It was the practice of organised agriculture that led to population expansion and the emergence of different civilisations²²⁶. Women's role in the agricultural process and in the society as a whole made them to be highly honoured even though black women soon suffered from discrimination and dis-empowerment especially with the advent of a capitalist economy.

Men and women had distinct roles with regards to the farming systems. Gender differences in rural farming households varied widely across cultures but certain features were common. Women turned to concentrate their agricultural activities around the homestead, primarily because of their domestic and reproductive roles. They played a critical role in food production. There was a lot of division of roles because certain activities were regarded as male activities and others as female activities. The role and responsibility of men and women were differentiated to a large extent in the society.

The researcher concludes from the above analysis that as a result of patriarchy, and the influence of colonial role where the colonial power neglected the role of women in capitalist plantation economy, the women in the Cameroons especially in the Grassfields were relegated

²²⁵ Fanso, *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges*, p.74.

²²⁶ Kum Ngwoh V., *Pathway to the Culture of Peace*, Buea, CINEC, 2021, p.57.

though they were given a place in the political and religious domains. (Politically, they acted as queen mother and some as the goddess in some communities while religiously, they led major rituals in their communities). In other domains like the economic, the men took the upper hand and regarded women as docile. The men felt that it was time to protect the women from plantation economy and its difficulties but however, this concept was soon going to change with the new economic process that required a lot of labour and the need for collaboration between male and female labourers to maximize profits.

It was in view of such that the Ndu tea estate unlike the Tole tea estate began to employ exclusively male Labourers from inception and it was only with C.D.C take over in 1977 that women were brought to the lime light of economic activity in the Estate²²⁷. Makuchi therefore concludes that; “The identity of most African and Third World Women have been shaped by various inscription of differences in their daily lived experiences. Early feminists approached the differences in male and female issues and it had little regard for race, age class or ethnic differences”²²⁸.

The inhabitants of the Cameroons earned their lively hood from agricultural activities. The men were involved in the clearing of the farms while the women were involved in the cultivation of food crops like maize, cassava, plantains beans, potatoes and cocoyam, mainly for home consumption. This was one of the reasons that kept women out of the working force of the plantations and the beginning of plantation agriculture in the Cameroons, giving that plantation agriculture was regarded as a male issue, while the woman’s place was in the kitchen²²⁹.

These women who concentrated on subsistence farming often had about three farms for the case of a small household and more farms in cases with larger families. These farms were found in different areas so as to avoid the traditional rest days(*Country Sunday*) These were days officially selected by the village government for rest and if a chief died, another long period of absence from farm work was allowed to mourn for the chief’s departure. On such days, farm work was prohibited (Ngarka, p.24). This rest day which was one day in a week was observed differently in the different villages. It was therefore wise for a woman to have her farms in the different villages so that if rest day was occurring in a neighbourhood, she could go out for

²²⁷ Konings, *Gender and Class*, pp.11-12.

²²⁸ Makuchi, *Gender in African Women’s Writing*, p.108.

²²⁹ Tata, “The Socio-Economic History of Ndu Tea Estate”, p. 20.

farming in another village²³⁰. The women were therefore very hard working and occupied her week so that she could not miss out on one of the days.

Seated on low bamboo stools and planked made stools, in smoky kitchens, women often gathered together after a long day of hard work to share gossips and food and to swap strategies on how best to circumvent or endure hardship generated by may be poor harvest and a generally bad agricultural year. At the centre of the talk were allusions to their men folk, often the subject of joking derision. Men were frequently referred to as incompetent, even worthless, unable to care for themselves and too irresponsible to take care of their children. Women chuckle slap their knees and declared, “Men are like children, what good are they? Who feeds the household? They are useless and only live to drink *mimboo* and converse”²³¹. Njila agrees with Goheen when she admitted that her mother spent all her time working in the farm, while her father who was a palm wine taper was very irresponsible and only came home to eat and drink²³².

The woman in the Cameroons was therefore naturally endowed with the capacity to do farm work. The identification of these women as farmers who were responsible for the reproduction of everyday life and the linking of these women with family and food as a gender maker meant that women were responsible for the reproduction of the household. Though responsible as these women could better manage the family, they were never given equal opportunities to excel in the Agro-Industrial sector when the time came. They were considered docile and weak and were not given important positions in the plantation economy because they were considered subservient. This situation brought to the lime light the disparities that existed in job description in the plantations²³³.

Besides, while women cultivated and harvested maize, groundnut and beans for the Grassfields women and cassava, yams and cocoyam for the coastal women, men tended the crops from destruction by birds and animals. They erected temporal resting huts in the farms with thatched grass, bamboo or planks. After harvest, the men also controlled the money from its sale. It was at times a herculean task for women to procure some food crops for household consumption

²³⁰ Ngarka, *The Wimbun People of Donga Mantung*, p.24.

²³¹ Goheen, *Men Own the Fields*, p. 71.

²³² Interview with Florence Njila, 48 Years Old, Secretary in the Ndu Tea Office, Ndu Tea Estate Office, August 17th 2014.

²³³ Monde, August 13th 2014.

because men always wanted to sell almost everything and solve their problems²³⁴. However, the role of women in the pre-colonial Cameroonian society cannot be underestimated because, these women were not only the economic backbone of their families and communities, but were also the housekeeper and care takers of the families. It should equally be noted that, these pre-colonial Cameroonian women most of the times had no authority on the money once it was in the hands of their husbands.

They looked up to their men as their heroes and some even sold the food crops to buy clothes for their husbands. One of our informant admitted that she had to sell maize and beans to be able to buy the “toga” for her husband. To her, all the other men belonging to the “*Mfuh*” (the traditional and regulatory society in the Western grassfields) society were having the “toga” but for her husband who did not have. She therefore in other to cause her husband to have fame in the society like other men, sold most of her maize to be able to acquire the traditional cloth for her husband²³⁵.

This same experience was shared by another informant who admitted that she constantly bought cloths for her husband especially with the arrival of the whites and the new cloths that were en vogue at the time. Even though she later became a plucker in the Tole tea estate, she maintained that before having this job, she had bought a lot of cloths for her husband’s mainly from selling the food crops that she harvested from her farm²³⁶. The pre-colonial women was therefore very hard working and was the symbol of prosperity and development for her family and her community. Most of these women took pride even during their weekly meetings which were held mostly on Sundays or on Market days because of the fact that they were often very busy within the week, to talk about their achievement especially in cases where their girl children had grown to the extent of owning her own farm. It was therefore the pride of a pre-colonial woman from the Cameroons to invite her friends for a hand of fellowship on her daughter’s newly acquired farm²³⁷.

Coastal women were equally very powerful and hardworking and did all they could to care for their homes and maintain the integrity of their families²³⁸. These hard working Cameroonian

²³⁴ H. K. Kah, “Gender and Livestock Farming in Laimbweland, Cameroon, 1980s-2011”, In *Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa* (Volume 15, N°.1 2013) ISMN; 1520-5509, Clarion University of Pennsylvania, Clarion, Pennsylvanie, 2013, pp.61-62.

²³⁵ Interview with Esther Ntalla, 90 Years Old, House Wife, Ndu Village, August 10th 2014.

²³⁶ Interview with Loveline Etengene, 83 Years, Former Plucker in the Tole Estate, Tole Tea Estate, August 10th 2015.

²³⁷ NWRA, File: NW/sa/d/2000/1/BK, Gender Fundamental and Contemporary Issues, 2000, pp.1-56.

²³⁸ W. A., Warmington, “*the Background to Plantation Employment*”, p.32.

women were under their husband who often controlled their money, but they were however permitted to make purchases.

Ownership of cultivable land was considered a male issue. In the early years, it was generally unacceptable for women to own land. It was also a common thinking amongst the male folk that men should not idle while women toil alone in the farms. The cutlass and the money were for men while the women used the hoe but did not keep the money. There was generally therefore a lot of disparity in job description of the pre-colonial woman in the Cameroons. Men equally therefore controlled economic activities but also, some of them were carried out by both sexes.

Male labour dominant was vividly seen in the palm oil economy. As was generally the practice in most coastal and grassfields villages, men harvested the cones and transported them for the palm groves. The nuts were eventually removed, boiled and palm oil extracted for home consumption or sell. Men generally controlled the proceeds from the oil and those who were responsible used the money for the family carrying out activities like repairs especially on the farm houses if these were already at the verge of collapse²³⁹.

There was yet another economic activity in which men provided unquestionable domination. This was in the domain of cultivation and harvesting of coffee. It was one of the earliest and main cash crops introduced especially in the Western grassfields in the Cameroons. The coffee crop soon became of great economic value in the Cameroons. The post-colonial period saw the Cameroon government boasting it in the 1960s when agricultural production was encouraged. They established a five year development plan with the aim of promoting agricultural activities. However, commercial coffee cultivation soon faced out but though it had reached this stage, it is important to highlight here that as far as gender division of roles in pre-colonial Cameroonian society was concerned, this activity was a male dominated one though women assisted the men in harvesting and processing the coffee. Men were however central in decision making and the use of proceeds from the sale²⁴⁰.

The men therefore had a more puzzling duty in the agricultural sector. The discourse about gender and male- female roles and the division of labour was very prominent. Farming- food- female continued to be linked as a gender maker while the men owned the fields. Male identified themselves as hunters who had to go out to the fields and bring home the harvest.

²³⁹ Talla Ngarka, *The Wimbun People of Donga Mantung Before the Coming of Europeans*, Nigeria, Star-Link Communications, 1998, pp1-15.

²⁴⁰ Goheen, *Men Own the Fields*, p.36.

Their role was limited to going to the field. Men's agricultural activities and labour time were almost impossible to measure because they varied significantly with age and status and rarely included sustained task over a given period. A small but growing number of young men farming food crops for sale and not for household consumption could be found in these communities.

However aside from the initial clearing of land, most men's labour remained little involved in food production and certainly not in production for the family pot. Men were in theory responsible for tree crops and clearly claimed all cash income from these crops. Women most often tilled the men's coffee farms and along with the children helped in harvesting²⁴¹. Of vital importance was equally the role of these women in traditional governance. Gender division of roles in the Cameroons in terms of traditional government presented a different picture that rather portrayed the woman's strength and ability to be the custodian of tradition. The woman was not relegated. In fact, no task was gender specific except in child bearing. Before the coming of Europeans to the Cameroons, women were very important in politics and traditional government. This was also true of other African societies like the Igbo society. This brought to play a new and different argument within feminists theorizing on sexual asymmetry, male domination, and women's sexuality. Without necessarily glorifying pre-colonial gender relations in these societies, it must be noted that most of the flexible gender relations were rigidified during colonial rule and were part of the post-colonial heritage in African urban communities. These more rigid gender roles failed to assimilate the earlier gender-integrated power structures in which women played major roles. Certain gender roles became fixed in that they had to be performed by women. Indigenous spiritual practises empowered women in the person of the powerful goddess. Women assumed the role of goddesses and there were also female high priestesses. Though men were generally powerful, so too were/could be women²⁴².

Towards the end of the 19th Century, *Yaa*, a woman ruled in *Wiya* when Nfor Rambo was captured and taken to Banyo by Fulani raiders. Nfor who was the successor was young and so *Yaa*, the step-sister of Nfor Rambo, the captured chief had to rule until she was of age. This was however the only situation where a woman ruled chiefdom in the *Wimbum* land²⁴³. In the administration of the Ndu society, women were directly under the *Yaa*, *Ma-Nye* or *Yewong* (Female Administrator). This female administrator was a princess who was crown at a young age at the same time that the *Nkfu* (Fon) was crowned. The *Yaa* had many functions; She could

²⁴¹ *Ibid* p.85.

²⁴² Juliana Makuchi, *Gender in African Women's writing Identity, Sexuality, and difference*, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1997, p.23.

²⁴³ Ngarka, *The Wimbum People of Donga Mantung*, p.34.

act as a regent as in the *Wiya* case, organise women societies like the *Njuh* (Traditional dance Society), led women in economic activities and organised them in times of war to collect food suppliers and other needs for the soldiers²⁴⁴.

Patriarchal Believes and Gender Roles

Patriarchy was very prominent in the Cameroons especially in the plantation farms in the grassfields regions like the Ndu tea estate which affected the men and women working in the Estate. Patriarchy was in other words regarded as sexist. It therefore promoted the belief that women were innately inferior to men. To keep these women powerless, they were denied the rights to education. Most parents in the Ndu society gave preference to male education and he was considered the hope for the future generation and an ensure of the family lineage. The woman according to the Ndu society was considered a stranger in his own land as it was believed that she would one day get married and will belong to another family thus nothing had to be invested on her and even if her family spent anything on the woman, her future husband had to pay back to her parents before taking her away²⁴⁵.

Miriam testified that she had never seen the four walls of a classroom because her parents preferred sending her brothers to school. She was left to go to the farm with her mother who was suffering from the same fate²⁴⁶. Gender disparities in the Ndu society and patriarchy affected the rate of employment in the estate. Women could not occupy important positions in the estate because they could not read and write. They were from the creation of the Ndu Tea Estate employed on casual bases to perform the mean jobs in the estate and were only employed on permanent bases from 1977 when the Cameroon Development Corporation took over the estate from the Estate and Agency Company Limited.

Even till then, the highest qualified woman was the stores accountant who had ended at the level of having an Advanced level. Again, gender division of role and disparity especially in job description could be vividly seen in the estate in the fact that, from creation of the estate till 2002 when our study ends and even beyond, a woman has never managed the estate even with the fact that some educated women were transferred from the South West Region to work in the estate (Coastal women unlike the Ndu women had been exposed to education earlier due to colonialism and the fact that they were found at the coast²⁴⁷.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁴⁵ Interview with Florence, Nfor, 68 Years Old, Retired Teacher, Binka Village-Nkambe, August 10th 2014.

²⁴⁶ Interview with Miriam Talla, 69 Years Old, House Wife, Njimphru Village-Ndu, 9th August 2014.

²⁴⁷ Member, December 11th 2014.

It was common place to see most of the men refuse their wives from moving around or visiting even a relative without their knowledge. The grip of males on women was so strong that, a woman could even be sent out of her matrimonial home if the husband reported to the council of elders that she misbehaved. Her own part of the story most of the times was not listened to but the action could be taken based on the fact that she was a woman and that the information was coming from a man²⁴⁸.

Gender and Plantation Labour Policies before 1916

Before the taking over of the territory the Cameroons in 1916 by the British, the Germans had already set up plantations especially along the fertile slopes of Mount Fako. These plantations were auctioned when the Germans were defeated and ousted from the territory by the Allied forces. The German planters however re-purchased these plantations and so continued with a steady employment of labour for plantation work. Plantation labour therefore was well established prior to 1916 with the German planters controlling labour flow, employment, task labour and job description. It is worth noting that these labourers spent several hours on plantation work, under very poor working conditions with little or no pay. Most of the times, the remunerations were not commensurate to work done but then, these workers were compelled to work under what was known as forced labour. The negative effect of plantation labour employment on the indigenes was the fact that, they concentrated on cash crop production that was even going to help rather the metropolitan European towns and economy to the detriment of food crops which was the main source of livelihood in those communities. The end result was an increase in misery and a drastic reduction in living standards. However, women continued to hoe for household consumption but most of the land had already been expropriated for plantation work. There was therefore insufficient food crops and insufficient land which rendered the situation even more difficult.

With colonialism came cash crop production. With the Germans determined to set up large scale plantations, they had little hesitation in using force labour to develop the agricultural industry. Under their administration, any grown up male capable of supplying labour was obliged to supply labour for thirty days or pay six marks yearly²⁴⁹. The Germans and their plantations depended on Africans and especially the male folk for their labour. Temgoua opines that, these early European planters did a lot in the economic domain but their greatest works

²⁴⁸ Delancey Virginia, "The Relationship between Female Wage Employment and Fertility in Africa: An Example from Cameroon", ph.D. Thesis in Economics, University of South Carolina, 1980, pp. 78-85.

²⁴⁹ J. Ebune, *The Growth of Political Party in Southern Cameroon: 1916-1960*, Yaounde, CEPER, 1992, p.40.

were found in plantation agriculture given that these plantations were going to act as a source of raw material to the growing industries in Europe due to the advent of the Industrial Revolution. Initially, it was found that the supply of labour from local sources was inadequate and so a large number of workers had to be imported from the hinterlands. This in turn caused many Bakweri indigenes to drift off to the new plantation settlements that were found mostly along the coastal villages²⁵⁰.

Of note was the fact that, a good number of Dahomeans soldiers who had served the German colonial administration in military campaigns and who were present in Cameroon took part as plantation workers. They were forced to work for five years without pay. To keep their families alive, the soldier's wives were forced to prostitute and carry out force gathering labour²⁵¹. The idea of employing women in the plantations on casual bases was therefore seen in the time of the Germans in Cameroon. It was in view of this new need of men and women to work as labourers in the plantations that Konings stipulates that, the Tole estate created in 1954 was the "first estate to recruit predominantly female labourers".

Although female employment was no new phenomenon, estate work had remained virtually a male preserve. Management in this estate however preferred female labour to male labour²⁵². The C.D.C management promoted the recruitment of a female labour force with the hope of addressing long standing problems. The first was that, there was the constant shortage of male labour especially in some vital but arduous tasks like weeding. There was equally a fluctuation in the supply of labour and in an attempt to complete the process of labour stabilisation; it was assumed that the male labourers would be encouraged to extend their stay on the plantation if their wives were incorporated in the labour process²⁵³. Kaberry postulates that one of the female labourers told her that, "a woman is an important thing, a man is a worthless thing, indeed, because a woman gives birth to the people of the country, what work can a man do? A woman bears the child then takes the hoe, goes to the field and is working there; she feeds the child. A man only buys palm oil, men only build houses"²⁵⁴.

²⁵⁰ T. E. M. Robert, and Robin, P., *A History of the Cameroon: New Edition*, England, Longman Group, 1974, p.72.

²⁵¹ Simo David, "Colonization and Modernisation, The Legal Foundation of the Colonial Enterprise: A Case Study of German Colonisation in Cameroon" in Klotz E. A. and Wildenthal L. (ed), *Germany's Colonial Past*, London, University of Nebraska Press, 2005, p.204.

²⁵² Konings, *Gender and Class*, p.27.

²⁵³ Akara, "Plantation Agriculture in the Former British Southern Cameroon", p.41.

²⁵⁴ Kaberry, *Women of the Grassfield*, p.150.

Kaberry suggest that women were employed to work because they were seen to be more available and hardworking than men but it was a common practise for plantation work to be attributed to men. Women in the later years were however timidly employed and their efforts not given much attention in terms of remunerations and nature of work done. Konings again concludes that, ‘Bakweri women who did sort for employment on the Tole estate did so, on a casual basis especially during the seasonal peaks in tea production’²⁵⁵.

Although men held most managerial positions, because of the lack of qualified women and the belief that women were unsuitable to hold those positions in a predominantly male dominated activity, there were no wage differences in operations jointly undertaken by both sexes. However, the unavailability of qualified women in the agricultural sector and the chauvinistic beliefs of men in the agro-industrial sector did not disappear²⁵⁶.

Female and male labour was a commendable effort that was made to discover the enormous potentials in both sexes for common welfare and for the progress of human society. According to gender fundamental issues, men and women should work in partnership in developmental projects especially in the Cameroonian context²⁵⁷. For too long over the ages; women’s rights were neglected and trampled upon. Most often, their abilities in economic terms were measured not on their own merits, but in relation to male capacities²⁵⁸. Both had potentials for economic operations and especially tea plantation agriculture.

Many episodes in history have shown women’s bravery, and their positive attitudes and beneficial activities by assuming heavier work-loads and by undertaking additional income generating activities²⁵⁹. There is therefore no doubt that, in spite of rising levels in capitalist penetration in various parts of the continent, employment of women in the plantation sector has remained rather marginal. Overall statistics are not available and those that are, must be treated with extreme caution. The example in table 1 is suggestive.

Migrant Labour

It has been generally investigated that, indigenes provided part of the labour required in the plantations in the Cameroons. Most of the labourers equally came from out of the locality.

²⁵⁵ Konings, *Gender and Class*, p.30.

²⁵⁶ Nkoli, et al., “Women in the Banana Industry”, p.79.

²⁵⁷ NWRA, File:N W/Sa/d/2000/1/BK, Gender Fundamentals and Contemporary Issues, 2000, p.6.

²⁵⁸ Nyansako-Ni-Nku, “Promoting Women’s Empowerment in contemporary Cameroon: The perspective of the philosophies and Dogma of Religious Teachings”, in Endeley, et al. (eds.), *Issues in Gender and Development*, p.37.

²⁵⁹ D. Abwa and Charles F, “Gender and poverty alleviation in Cameroon: Social equation and cause for Concern”, in Endeley, et al. (eds.), *Issues in Gender and Development*, p.10.

Initially, it was found that, the supply of labour from local sources; from the Bakweri, Bamboko, Isuwu and other communities, was inadequate, and so a large number of workers had to be imported from the hinterlands. This in turn caused many Bakweri women to drift off to the new immigrant settlements on the plantations²⁶⁰.

The employment of women to work in the plantation therefore came much more later and was motivated by several factors. However, of note was the fact that the recruitment of female labourers had a significant impact on the production level given that one of the main reasons for employing the women was the shortage of male labourers caused by the increase demand for tropical products in the world market and the need for large number of people to be employed as carriers. The need for these carriers was due to the fact that, horses, oxen and donkeys could not be used because of the prevalence of tsetse fly. A new group of labourers was equally needed because there was need to maintain the foot paths leading to the plantation sites and so migrant labour became inevitable.

The period of absolutely voluntary individual labour migration in the Cameroons began in 1926 when the plantations were purchased and managed by private individuals and companies. It should be noted that, the German plantations in British Cameroon fell under the control of Britain when Germany was defeated in Cameroon and Britain and France divided the territory. The British government put up the German plantations in British Cameroon for sale and initially excluded the Germans from purchasing them. When the British business circle showed little or no interest, the sale was opened to the Germans and a London Estate Agent bought the plantation for the former German owners.

The plantations were quickly bought at various prices. For instance, the Moliwe estate which comprises 32067 acres of land, 60 equipped buildings, a fully furnished housing section and a hospital was bought for 22500 pounds. Although Germany was no longer the colonial authority in Cameroon, in 1931, she still imported a lot of agricultural produce from British Cameroon. In 1937, British Cameroon imported a lot from Germany. It is therefore concluded that, even though the British had taken over, she still had some economic dealings with Germany²⁶¹. To keep the labour flow, they had to maintain and improve the incentives already initiated. In a freely competitive atmosphere, each establishment controlling its plantations tried to attract and return the amount of labour it needed by providing salary, housing and other attractive

²⁶⁰ T. E. Mbuagbaw, *A History of the Cameroon*, pp. 70-73.

²⁶¹ Ngoh, *Cameroon 1884-Present*, p.155.

conditions of work. This period of competitive private enterprise in the plantation industry ended with World War II when the German operators were finally repatriated for good²⁶².

Of note was the fact that, employers adopted crude tactics to obtain some of these labourers. They offered liquor, arms and gunpowder to chiefs who agreed to recruit their own people. This method met with some successes though attempts to recruit out of the territory failed. A good example was the Fon of Bali, Fonyonga who in 1916, supplied a reasonable quantity of plantation labourers and carriers to the Germans and when the British took over the territory, he continued with the supply of such labourers and carriers. Nyamndi therefore concludes about the relations between the Bali Fon and the British in these words;

It appears that the arrival of the British was a subject of conflicting advice to the Bali from the Germans. Von Summerfield is reported to have advised Fonyonga II to remain neutral or even mildly to support the British, as the German position became increasingly hopeless. He is on record as advising the Bali to receive the British, provide them with food and labourers and even show them the main road of the Grassfield²⁶³.

Migrant labour therefore came from French Cameroon and nearby counties like Nigeria and many more from the grassfields that migrated down the coast to work in the plantations. Fanson corroborates by asserting that;

Labour was required in abundance. In order to acquire labour, the administrative officers in the Bamenda grassfields were instructed to go on a recruitment tour of the Division and to urge the chiefs to supply workers for the plantations. The administration also embarked upon the importation of labour from Nigeria. Some 2000 workers consisting of Hausa and inhabitants of the Southern provinces of Nigeria were recruited. To encourage free labour from Nigeria, the grasslands of British and French territories and other distant areas, the rates of pay were set at 4½ a day for local workers, 6^d for workers from the grassfields, and 9^d for workers from very distant places²⁶⁴.

It is equally worth noting that, labour from out of the territorial boundaries was generally very minimal because each neighbouring colony was also desperately looking for labour. The need for more labourers became even more serious and the government was asked to do everything to get workers. However, unlike the case with the Germans where forced labour dominated as one of the labour policies, the case with the British was different for they concentrated on voluntary labour where their conditions of work were better²⁶⁵ (See Appendix 10). The politics of migrant labourers to the plantations cannot be under estimated as these labourers were recruited in their numbers from the Bamenda grassfields areas to come and work in the newly opened plantations along the coast of Cameroon²⁶⁶. Migrant labourers helped to create the new

²⁶² E.A. "Gwan, Labour Migration in Cameroon Republic", in Cameroon Geographical Review: Geographical Series of the Annals of the Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences, Semester Publication, 1991, p.12.

²⁶³ N. B. Nyamndi, *The Bali Chamba of Cameroon*, p.128.

²⁶⁴ Fanson, *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges*, p.241.

²⁶⁵ N A B, File: Qb/a/1959/5. N0 59116, The Economy of the Southern Cameroon Under the United Kingdom Trusteeship, 1959,p. 4.

²⁶⁶ Adig, "The Politics of Colonial Labour in the Bamenda Grassfield and its Implications: 1889-2000", p.56.

economy but the conditions of work were generally very poor and this led to a high mortality rate²⁶⁷. Most of the labourers came down from the high, healthy lands of the grassfields to labour in the humid, material lands near the coast, where even the diet was unfamiliar. Many died and others arrived exhausted. Epidemics flourished in crowded and insanitary quarters amongst ill-nourished men.

Historical background to study area clearly examines the origin of plantation labour from the time of the British take-over of the plantations from the hands of the Germans in March 1916 with a recap of sources of labour in the plantations. It will further examine task and job description in plantation labour with an in-depth study of the types of jobs ascribed to plantation labourers in the Cameroon. A close examination of gender and plantation labour during the Mandate will also form part of the discourse in this part of the work and the conclusions will be on male and female wages during the Mandate.

The League of Nations through article 22 of its covenant gave former German Cameroon to Britain and France as a mandated territory. Britain received one-fifth of the Cameroons and for easy administration, London divided the territory in to two parts: a northern portion which was administered as part of Northern Nigeria and a southern portion which was administered as one of the provinces of the eastern region of Nigeria²⁶⁸.

The section of British Cameroons (later on called the Southern Cameroons) that was governed from the Eastern Region of Nigeria was situated on the coast between the Cross River on the West and the Mungo River of the East. The French Cameroons was on the East and Nigeria was on the West. In 1938, it had a total area of 16,581sq miles with a population of about 445,753. British administration in this part of the territory was based on the policy of “Indirect Rule” as was propounded by Frederick Lugard in his book; *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*²⁶⁹.

Prior to the British take-over of the territory, Cameroon was unique among African states in the remarkable variety of its historical experiences. Once a major portion of the infamous Western African Slave Coast, it became a German protectorate after the inevitable race for the annexation of the territory between Britain, France and Germany; then divided, it was transformed to two League of Nations Mandates²⁷⁰. It will be remembered that the

²⁶⁷ N A B, File Qb/1/1930/N° 20, Camp and Statistics, 1930, p.8.

²⁶⁸ Ngoh, *History of Cameroon Since 1800*, p.168.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.169.

²⁷⁰ Le Vine, *The Cameroon Federal Republic*, pp.1-4.

administration of the mandated territory was to be a model but the supervisory role exercised by the League of Nations left much to be desired for reasons that are not hard to find.

The L.O.N was dominated by powers with colonies either in Africa or elsewhere. Each of the powers had skeletons in its cupboard and was not prepared to rock the boat for the other by making open and frank criticism against the arbitrary administration of any of the mandated territories. Moreover, the L.O.N had neither the legal nor the practical instruments to penalise any of the powers whose administration of the mandated territory fell short of expectations.

Furthermore, the League never visited any of the territories to have first-hand information on the extent to which the ideas of a sacred trust of civilisation were being translated in to practical reality. Any information on the administration of the respective territories was sent to the L.O.N by the administering power in the form of Annual Reports that were often inaccurate and misleading. Although the inhabitants could send petitions to the L.O.N, Britain and France objected at the peace conference to the process by which the petition could be sent without passing through the administering power. This, to a large extent explains some of the reasons for the ineffectiveness of the L.O.N and the ultimate failure of the ideas of a sacred trust of civilisation²⁷¹. Britain in view of this confessed that the standards of economic and social development in the Cameroons were the gloomiest in Africa and during the inter war years; the First World War (WW 1) and the Second World War (WW 2).

Cameroon has been inhabited since very ancient times. Stone implements were collected, which were catalogued as either Palaeolithic (early Stone Age) or Neolithic (late stone age). These implements were found throughout the Cameroons at both high and low levels with some unusual concentrations in Bamenda. It has been suggested on the basis of the forms and material of these implements that their makers made their way down the Cross River valley²⁷². This assertion is corroborated by Nyamndi who holds that, the Bali, one of the tribes in the Cameroons and which supplied a lot of plantation labour originated from the Cross River valley in the mid-18th Century around River Faro in Northern Cameroon²⁷³.

The people of the Cameroons were the Bantu and the semi Bantu. It is now widely believed that, Cameroon was the original homeland of the Bantu. It is thought that, some 2500 years ago, Bantu was a single language spoken by a limited group in the Cameroon area, and that as the population grow, and expanded outwards, people from Cameroon carried their language in

²⁷¹ Aka, *The British Southern Cameroon*, p. 51.

²⁷² T. E. Mbuagbaw, *A History of the Cameroon*, pp. 16-18.

²⁷³ N. B. Nyamndi, *The Bali Chamba of Cameroon: A Political History*, Paris, Editions Cape, 1988, pp. 1-5.

to the rain forest of the Congo and eventually over a long period of time as far as Southern Africa. It should therefore be remembered of course that the present inhabitants of the Cameroons are not necessarily the direct descendants of these original immigrants. The Bantu came and went in this region in waves. The semi Bantu tribes mostly settled the Western grassfields and most of these tribes were involved in plantation agriculture along the coast when the plantations were opened by the Germans ²⁷⁴(See Appendix 9).

The history and origin of the people of the Cameroons has a lot of complexity because most of those who finally made up the labour force and who of course settled the area were migrant labourers from different parts of the territory. An insignificant percentage of these plantation workers were the original inhabitants.

The Cameroons is therefore one of the most fragmented parts of the Republic of Cameroon and even of Africa from both ethnic and linguistic standpoints. Because of its rugged and mountainous nature, the region can and did in fact, provide refuge for human groups fleeing from the pressure of conquering or invading people. People of diverse origin, and scattered fragments of people of common origin coming in to this region as well as in other areas of the Republic, in a vast melting pot of languages and races. Thus in the Bamenda grassfields, lived a coterie of people who, although had similar cultural and to some extent, linguistic similarities could be divided in to five main groups according to origin; Tikar, Widikum, Mbembe, Aghem and Bani²⁷⁵.

The origin and history of the Bakweri people is of prime importance because, most of the plantations were opened on the land of the Bakweri precisely in Fako Division. The Bakweri claim the same ancestor as the Duala, yet they claimed to have originated from Mboko country via the Northern side of Mount Cameroon. Most of the Bakweri villages claim to have been founded from most of the villages which lie in the belt between 650m and 1000m up Mount Cameroon. The expansion was generally North and South along the estuary, with the largest number going towards the Southern and South Eastern foothills.

It is worth noting that this was one of the major tribes in plantation history in the Cameroons that suffered in the hands of colonial rule. Unlike the Duala chiefs, Bell, Hickory and Akwa, none of the Bakweri people seemed to have obtained great wealth and influence through trading with Europeans along the coast. On the contrary, they suffered greatly from European

²⁷⁴ N A B, File: Qd/a/1918/1. N0 11118, Plantations Yearly Report, Cameroons Province, January, 1918.p.12.

²⁷⁵ Epale, *Plantation and Development in West Cameroon*, p.14.

commerce and colonisation, dispersed when their lands were taken over as plantations, and with their villages swamped by immigrants from the North, the Bakweri underwent a severe cultural and demographic crisis from which they were only recently recovering²⁷⁶.

Bali was one of the influential tribes in the Cameroons that supplied a lot of labour in the plantations. This was mostly due to their hard working nature and also due to the fact that their leaders were very influential. This group of people started the supply of labour from the time of the Germans and when the plantations were opened along the coast. Our investigations revealed a list of Bali workers to the plantation sites with a reasonable number of these labourers dying “*en route*” to the plantation sites²⁷⁷ (See Appendix 11). However, the number of Bali workers to the plantations cannot be overestimated. The coming of the British after the departure of the Germans had thus been a matter of continuity and change for the Bali. For some indigenes, the departure of the Germans had gone unnoticed, in spite of the war and the British were just another group of white men. The Bali like most tribes that supplied labour embraced the new administration and were determined to work their way back to the forefront of economic development²⁷⁸.

²⁷⁶ T. E. Mbuagbaw, *A History of the Cameroon*, p.40.

²⁷⁷ N A B, File 53/16, Qd/a1916, Bamenda Labour Employed on plantations, 1932, pp1-13.

²⁷⁸ N. B. Nyamndi, *The Bali Chamba of Cameroon* 1988, pp. 137-138.

Map 7: Tribal Presentation of the People of the British Southern Cameroons



Source: Ardener E., et al, *Plantation and Village in the Cameroons*, p.1, Modified by Researcher in August 2015, 2022.

A lot of tribal groups migrated in to the Cameroons for plantation agriculture. Prominent among these groups were the Moghamo, the Bali, the Kaka, the Balondo and many other coastal tribes as illustrated on the map²⁷⁹.

²⁷⁹ Ardener E., et al, *Plantation and Village in the Cameroons*, p. 278.

Conclusion

The British Southern Cameroons became the pinnacle of plantation agriculture, a type of agriculture that had been introduced in the territory by the Germans who arrived in 1884. Planting a variety of cash crops, those of interest and under study were the oil palm, tea and rubber which soon saw the involvement of men and women from the Cameroons and from other places in this new form of farming. Replacing the traditional subsistence farming in the coastal and grassfields regions of the territory²⁸⁰, Plantation agriculture crept its way to the economy of the territory and soon reached the level of involving labourers in the British Southern Cameroons in capitalised farming. The choice of the plantations in the Cameroons could not be over emphasized owing to the fact that the soils were fertile and the tropical climate coupled with the low lying coast for the plantations in the coast and the hilly plateau of the Ndu for the plantation in the grassfields, provided a ready physical and conducive milieu for the development of these plantations. The availability of land was an encouraging factor for this new form of agriculture though there was a disturbing factor seen in the fact that there were stereotypes as far as land ownership was concerned and this affected and shaped the recruitment of female and male labourers in the plantations. Culture being a part of the engines of the Cameroons was seriously going to affect the recruitment of especially female labourers who were regarded as custodians of the family and so should concentrate on taking care of the home and the family. The beginning of the 20th Century therefore saw the coming in to the economic scene of the Cameroons of a new foreign and European form of agriculture with a male chauvinist background. The capitalist form of this new form of agriculture soon led to a mad-rush for the employment of female labourers.

A predominantly male labour force was employed from the beginning of the plantations as seen in the Ndu estate²⁸¹. For a people who had gone through the rough road of migration and settlement and finally settled in their present site as Bantus, Semi- Bantu and Tikars, the people of the British Southern Cameroons soon developed very keen interest in plantation agriculture especially with the increase demand for plantation product in the world market. Men and women gained employment opportunities in this new economy. The next chapter therefore discusses gender politics in plantation agriculture with detail analysis as seen below.

²⁸⁰ Konings, *Gender and Class*, p .102.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

CHAPTER TWO

ORIGIN OF PLANTATION LABOUR AND GENDER POLITICS IN THE CAMEROONS

Introduction

Plantation agriculture was generally viewed as a male issue in Europe. For the Cameroonian society, the beginning of plantation agriculture ushered in a new class of labourers but with a predominantly male labour force. Konings contains that the main reason was to protect the woman who was considered as a treasure²⁸². However, the increase in the capitalist world and economic progression gave need for female labourers to be recruited but their efforts were generally undermined leading to disparities in plantation agriculture in the Cameroons. To perfectly navigate this part of the research, it is primordial therefore to consider the origin of plantation labour in the Cameroons, the concepts of gender and land ownership in the Cameroons, the concepts of gender and labour, general conditions for labour recruitment and female task labour policies, the organisation of work in the plantations, conditions of work and an over view of general aspects of gender and remunerations.

Origin of Plantation Labour in the Cameroons

Labour recruitment for plantation work was male intensive by 1916 when the British took over the territory from the Germans. Women were later going to be recruited in large numbers when the Cameroon Development Corporation (C.D.C) took over the plantations in 1946. Fanson contains that;

The C.D.C was created in 1946 as a statutory corporation to take over and administer most of the plantations confiscated from the Germans in 1939 for the benefit of the inhabitance of the Trust Territory. In fact, the plantations were acquired by the Governor –General of Nigeria on behalf of the government at the end of the war from the Custodian of Enemy Property for £850,000 and leased to the C.D.C for 60 years at a nominal rent.

By the 1950s; the C.D.C made it a policy to recruit female labourers because of the shortage of male labourers in the plantations²⁸³. A few women could be found in the plantation area but mostly the local inhabitance that came mostly as traders selling cooked food to plantation labourers. The reasons for a male dominated labour recruitment by the start of 1916 were enormous. This was because plantation agriculture was viewed as a male issue given that women were generally considered docile. According to Mark Delaney, the C.D.C management promoted the recruitment of a female labour force with hope of addressing two major long-

²⁸² Goheen, *Men own the Fields*, p.23.

²⁸³ Akara, "Plantation Agriculture in the Former British Southern Cameroon", p.41.

standing problems. The first was that there was the constant shortage of male labour especially in some arduous but vital task. An example of such occupation was rubber tapping²⁸⁴. Secondly, there was fluctuation in the supply of labour. In an attempt to complete the process of labour stabilization, it was assumed that the male workers will be encouraged to extend their stay in the plantations if their wives had a steady source of income as plantation employees. The management therefore did all it could to secure the employment of the wives of those who worked in the Estates²⁸⁵.

The pre-colonial Cameroonian society had no immediately exploitable mineral resources. The setting, establishment, development and exploitation of the major agro-industrial projects in the Southern zone of the country led to the recruitment of labour. It is vital to examine the first phase of labour recruitment at the start of plantation agriculture in the territory by German individual enterprises in 1885²⁸⁶. The first phase of labour migrations to the plantations lasted from 1885 to 1916. Most of the migrant labour force utilized was either forcibly recruited and indentured or temporally enslaved in lieu of unpaid taxes. The only voluntary members of the work force at the time comprised of the large number of German entrepreneurs that provided the management with skills.

A lot of intense labour was however required for the plantations that were newly opened and the local inhabitants who were mostly hunters and again were insufficient could not provide the labour needed. Efforts were then directed to the areas beyond the plantations for the conscription of especially male labour force for short use duration of three to six months and for very low wages²⁸⁷. The labour question was a pressing one for the German colonial government. Plantations were developing along the coast and many more labourers were needed there than people from the coastal villages could provide. The practice was therefore to conscript Africans and Cameroonians in particular from the interior part of the colony. On top of heavy work under very difficult conditions, these people faced the double burden of having to cope with the climatic changes and with the difficulty of being taken away from their own tribes and environment in to a totally different one. Many of them never returned and if they did, they were often severely ill²⁸⁸. Mark Delancey corroborates by maintaining that, the need

²⁸⁴Delancey, Mark Wakeman. "Changes in Social Attitudes and Political Knowledge Among Migrants to Plantations in West Cameroon". Ph.D. Thesis in History, Indiana University, 1972, p.100.

²⁸⁵ Akara, "Plantation Agriculture in the Former British Southern Cameroons", p.42.

²⁸⁶ Kengne Fodouuop, "Cameroon Geographical Review, Geographical Series of the Annals of the Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences", Semester Publication, 1991, p.10.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p.11.

²⁸⁸ Karin U. Schestokat, *German Women in Cameroon. Travelogues from Colonial Times*, Peter Lang Publishing, INC; New York, 2003, p.125.

for labour could not be solved within the plantation area. This was because of the sparse population in this area. The eventual solution to this problem was the encouragement of migrant labour from the interior to the coast²⁸⁹. Most of the plantations in the British Southern Cameroons were located in the land of the Bakweri, Bamboko, Isubu, Mongo and Balong tribes of the Victoria Division. The Kumba Division had plantations like the Mukunje, Tombel and Boa estates but the indigenes could not provide adequate labour for these plantations²⁹⁰. With a total population of plantation labourers of 34038 in the 1970s, only 2312 or 6.8 percent were identified as members of tribes indigenous to the Division of the plantations. The remainder 31726 migrated in to the Division of which 24313 came from the British and French spheres of the Cameroons, a figure representing 71.4 percent of the total plantation population in the Division and 76.3 percent of the immigrant plantation population. The balance came from Nigeria and elsewhere²⁹¹.

Table 5: Regional Composition of Plantation Labour Force for a Number of Selected Years

Regional Composition	1926	1941	1950	1960	1970
South West Province					
Fako Division	06	05	07	04	07
Meme Division	09	05	09	05	08
Ndian Division	09	04	08	05	08
Manyu Division	09	14	09	12	14
Total	33	28	33	26	37
North West Province					
Momo Division	-	01	09	12	16
Mezam Division	14	20	13	12	13
Bui Division	-	07	02	01	01
Donga Mantung Division		05	02	05	06
Menchum Division	-	04	08	15	20
Total	14	37	34	45	56
Grand Total	47	65	67	71	93

Source: Konings, *Gender and Class*, p. 67.

²⁸⁹ Delancey, "Changes in Social Attitudes and Political Knowledge Among Migrants to Plantations in West Cameroon", p.92.

²⁹⁰ Ardener et al, *Plantation and Village in the Cameroons*, p.267.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p . 279.

A close look at the statistics on migrant labour from the table above revealed that more labourers were conscript from the North West Province to work in the coastal plantations. This was because coastal inhabitants hated the maltreatment that the Germans had given to plantation workers during their stay in the territory. The natives worked for very long hours under very harsh conditions with very poor wages. The solution was to get more labourers who knew very little about the German attitude from the Bamenda area. Because of the small size of the native population, these new arrivals were only absorbed by the indigenous societies where they came as individuals or as small groups²⁹².

By 1916, there were a remarkable number of German plantations in the territory with the first being the Hamburg West African Plantation Company Victoria with a working capital of two million five hundred thousand and a labour force of five hundred and twenty²⁹³.

The British and the French took over the territory from the Germans after World War One and also took over the economic development of the territory. The plantations fell in the British sector after the partition of the territory in 1916. These plantations that were owned by the Germans were confiscated and handed over to the Custodian of Enemy Property to be administered for some time. In 1922, the British government put up the German property in British Cameroon for auction but the offers were considered not high enough. Another auction was held from 24-25 November 1924 and even though the British government ironically accepted less money for the property than was proposed in 1922, it should be noted that the plantations were bought by a London Estate Agent who actually acted as agent for the former German owners²⁹⁴. Le Vine concludes that, most of the potential buyers were unwilling to put up the large sums of money needed both for the initial purchase and for the necessary subsequent development²⁹⁵.

The supply of local genuine voluntary labour remained a thorny problem as it had been during the German period. One of the best sources of labour had been Yaounde which in 1916 fell under French spheres. 1916 is of importance because, the partition of Cameroon was formalized in March 1916; the division went in to effect on 31st March 1916 at midnight in application of Dobell's proclamation²⁹⁶. Recruiting labour from there would be infringing on the French administration. The workers from the grassfields could not easily survive the climate and

²⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 284.

²⁹³ Ngoh, *History of Cameroon since 1800*, 1996.p.82.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 179-180.

²⁹⁵ Le Vine, *The Cameroons, from Mandate to Independence*, p.20.

²⁹⁶ Ngoh, *Cameroon 1884-Present*, p.92.

strange food thus the forest land had the challenge to supply the labour²⁹⁷. An estimate of 1916 showed that only 3000 males were available in this area. The plantation demanded about 10000 workers. The problem was reported to the British governor in Nigeria and hastily, labour of mostly Hausa origin was recruited to the strength of 2000 and the Bamenda chiefs sent 2000 forcefully recruited workers on contract of three to six months²⁹⁸. The labour problem was therefore the most acute difficulty encountered in plantation operation at the beginning of British rule in Cameroon.

By 1926, the British were constrained by many factors to continue the inherent labour recruitment for the plantations. The cutting off of the single most important labour source around Yaounde and the Bamileke region in the French administered sector, the strong dislike of many native for plantation work following the bitter experience under the Germans that included very harsh treatment, low wages, poor housing, poor food and the high death rate prevailing particularly amongst those who originated from the grassfields with a different climate resulted in acute shortage of plantation labour force²⁹⁹. Labour recruitment in the plantations by the British was dominated by the male folk. Statistics revealed that there were about 30000 labourers in the plantations by 1926. The female labourers in the plantations were mostly the wives of the workers who contributed to plantation work as cooks to sell to the workers³⁰⁰.

Gender and land Ownership in the Cameroons

Land ownership was generally a male issue in the Cameroons. This was one of those societal laws that were strictly respected especially by the custodians of the tradition. The men were considered as the symbol of continuity and so land was mostly associated to men. They were shared land by their parents and the family head. Once these men got married, they brought in their wives to work on their piece of land given that agriculture was the main economic activity in the Cameroons. It was generally considered an abomination for a woman to own land. Our investigations revealed that, women were not associated to land ownership because it was generally considered that they belonged to some other man. This was because, it was considered that these women would one day get married and at such a time, they would have

²⁹⁷ Gwanfobe, "An Economic History of the British Cameroons: 1916-1960", pp. 46-47.

²⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.48.

²⁹⁹ Kengne Fodouop, Cameroon Geographical Review, Geographical Series of the Annals of the Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences, Semester Publication, 1991, p.11.

³⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p.11.

to leave for their husband's house and so she was going to be the property of another. In view of this economic law, these women were never given land³⁰¹.

The situation of land ownership was not different in the coastal area of the Cameroon. It was just like in most African communities; land was considered a male issue. Though most of the land had been taken as plantation land, the left overs were generally owned by men but their wives farmed these pieces of land³⁰². Just like in the Cameroons, the situation of land ownership was not different in other African countries. Land ownership was generally considered a male issue given that it was a source of power and wealth in most African communities³⁰³. It is important to note that though women in the African content and in the Cameroons generally did not own land, these women were the back bone of their economy seen in the fact that, once they got married, they were shown a piece of land by their husbands on which they worked relentlessly, planting all types of food crops and doing mix farming to feed their family and the community. Our informant revealed that she had a big farm of one hectare that was handed to her when she got married by her in-laws and the farm had for several years feed her children and husband and she even used money that she sold crops from the farm to buy cloths and other household articles³⁰⁴. To Miriam therefore, the African communities were dominated by female farmers who spent most of their time in the farms working to take care of their household³⁰⁵.

Another aspect of land ownership was seen in the fact that, strangers were exempted from land ownership. When a stranger wished to have land, to farm or build, he had to obtain permission from the Fon to approach a quarter chief for the loan of some spare land on which to settle. It was difficult for him to get permission to plant permanent tree crops like coffee, raffia, and kolanuts for the case of the Western Grassfields and palm trees and fruit trees for the case of the coastal regions. The stranger therefore felt no security to own the land if he farmed or built. This insecurity extended to some extent to the villagers themselves because they were sometimes afraid that the stranger could stubbornly plant some of these crops and trees that he had been refused. Village land was under the tutelage of the Fon but such power as care taker of the land was usually divided between the lineage head and the quarter head who were also members of the extended family compound. The quarter head for each quarter was therefore responsible for all the land in his quarter and upon the dead of the man and owner of land, his

³⁰¹ Interview with Divine Nformi, 79 Years Old, Quarter Head, Ndu Village, August 20th 2014.

³⁰² Ardener E., et al, *Plantation and Village in the Cameroons*, pp.309-335.

³⁰³ L. Beneria and S. Feldman(eds), *Unequal Burden, Economic Crisis, Persistent Poverty and Women's Work*, Westview Press, San Francisco, 1992, pp.1-140.

³⁰⁴ Interview with Angelica Tamfu, 67 Years Old, Farmer, Ndu Village, August 10th 2014.

³⁰⁵ Goheen, *Men Own the Fields*, pp.71-98.

land was divided only amongst his sons. His daughters had nothing to do with the land. It should however be noted that, the fruit trees and the cattle were under the tutelage of the lineage head who had the responsibility and duty to take care of the widow and her children³⁰⁶(See Appendix 10).

In the subsistence or traditional system of farming, there was limited use of money. Production was conditioned by consumable demand. In this system, methods and implements remained almost always unchanging. The system rarely knew any kind of specialization since production was aimed at immediate consumption and was limited by lack of labour and modernized implements.

In the traditional system, land tenure ship was not highly considered since production on a given terrain was seasonal and never as long lasting or permanent as was the case with the plantations. In the Cameroons, pre-colonial and colonial traditional agriculture had regional differences caused by environmental influences. The tropical forest area or Southern sector of the territory did little cultivation and more gathering while the Northern sector or Savannah zone of the same territory did a lot of cultivation. It is however not too difficult to explain these differences. In the forest zone; lots of food and root crops grew naturally, uncultivated and was not catered for by anybody in the forest.

The natives of these areas therefore were used to going round and gathering such crops. It was equally necessary to realize that even if the forest inhabitants decided on intensive cultivation, it was going to face enormous problems because of the existence of thick forest. To cut off the trees and pull off the roots demanded powerful implements which the indigenes could not afford. In addition, it was realized that wild and destructive animals were more commonly found in forest area. To put off these animals from destroying farms was not easy. The effect of climate on these coastal workers could not be over emphasized. It was generally a hot area and any tedious work turned to exhaust the workers. In addition, tropical diseases like malaria weakened output and equally reduced the number of willing farmers in the zone³⁰⁷.

We cannot also ignore the fact that this habit became part and parcel of some of the people. There were a number of these people that had never had the practice of farming and did not easily create interest in farming. The farming that was done remained a simple operation intrinsically linked to subsistent patterns and unproductive of a commercial momentum.

³⁰⁶ N A B, File: Qd/a/1959/5. N0 59116, The Economy of the Southern Cameroon under the United Kingdom Trusteeship, 1959, p.41.

³⁰⁷ Gwanfogbe, "An Economic History of the British Cameroons", p.23.

Cultivation was therefore generally limited in scale and in scope in the forest region of the Cameroons³⁰⁸.

Cultivation of land contrary to the coastal people was however the main activity of the grassfields people. In this zone, the soil was generally poor and needed serious tilling before any good harvest was achieved. Gathering was not quite possible in the grassfields zone because, nature was not kind enough to produce for man to gather as was the case in the forest area. Soil structure and vegetation cover did not in any way inhibit cultivation. It was therefore easy for a willing farmer to till according to his demand and endurance. However, although we attributed the success of subsistence cultivation in the Cameroons to the grassfields inhabitants, it was also worthwhile to note that the scale and scope of such production was highly limited to the quantity demanded at kinship level for consumption, and only with very little extended to markets. One factor that limited the quantity of production was the fact that only women were fully engaged with cultivation.

Men were generally occupied with hunting and other domestic activities. In the grassfields, women were especially important in farming whereas in some other parts of Africa like the Yoruba land in Nigeria, they spent much more of their time trading. From Zintgraff report, it was evident that before the advent of the white, the people of this zone were already great farmers. "From a height of about an hour distance from Bali, we saw in a large cultivated valley, the first farms of Bali... together with the extensive fields, green banana groves..."³⁰⁹.

1916 as already mentioned marked the end of German rule in Cameroon and consequently, the birth of a new era as far as plantation life was concerned in the Cameroons. By the time of the departure of the Germans, plantation agriculture was already well established in the territory. According to Harry B. Rudin, the first plantation in Cameroon was a venture in partnership between the hitherto rival firms of Woermann on the one hand and Jantzen and Thormahlen on the other³¹⁰. Epale however opines that, both companies founded different plantations in 1885. According to him, the Woermann Company founded the *Kamerun Land-und Plantapen-Gessellsdoft* (LPG). The plantation was begun at Man o' war Bay, East and North East of Victoria (Limbe) and fronting the Atlantic. It was subsequently extended across the present-day Mabetta and the River Ombe to cover most of the Tiko plains right down to the Mungo

³⁰⁸ NAB, File: QC/9/1963/3. N0 L G 23, Land Development in the Cameroons, 2nd of May, 1926, p23.

³⁰⁹ E.M. Chilver, *Zintgraff Exploration in Bamenda, Adamawa and the Benue Lands, 1889-1892*, Government Press, Buea, 1966, p. 2.

³¹⁰ Harry. R. Rudin, *Germans in the Cameroons: 1884-1914, a Case Study in Modern Imperialism*, New York, Greenwood Press, 1968, p. 249.

River. The ownership of the plantation passed from C. Woermann to C. Woermann commanditgesellschaft, by two deeds of sale dated respectively 6th July 1906 and 7th May 1909³¹¹. The plantation of Jantzen and Thormahlen was established around Bibundi village on the sea Coast Southwest and West of the Cameroon Mountain some fifty kilometers from Limbe. It was called *Westafrikanioko Plantapen-Bubundi* (WAPB). Initially, the land was bought from the natives and was limited to a relatively small area which was divided into three farms. The acquisition of this land was subsequently regularized and extended by a deed of sale which extended the plantation to Mukondange, some ten kilometers away from Victoria.

When Cameroon fell to the allied forces, German planters and estate managers escaped. In the absence of these Germans, the plantations soon became derelict. In order to prevent the looting of plantation assets and if possible to save them from ruin, F.St.C. Stobard was appointed temporary civil administrator for the Cameroon mountain district towards the end of 1914, and he later became divisional officer for the Victoria district. His plantation duty was stated as being the preservation of the plantations, the employment of labourers who were unable to return to their homes owing to the war and who if allowed to remain in idleness on the plantations would have caused damage and prove a source of embarrassment to the administration³¹².

In the process, the military administration felt justified in using any profits accruing from the operations of the plantations to defray the cost of managing the estate and of running both the military and civil administration in Douala as well as in the Buea and Victoria districts. From the 1st of December 1914, the plantations were placed under British military administration but on the 1st of January 1916, it was again necessary to place the plantations under civil though still British administration. Evans of the department of agriculture of Nigeria became the head of the plantation department with headquarters in Botsa. The department which was a self-accounting quasi-government department was inaugurated on 1st January 1916³¹³ (See Appendix 9).

The acquisition of labour was a problem to the plantation department because the labourers employed in the plantations in 1914 escaped soon after the outbreak of the war. People had developed a negative attitude toward work because of the forcible method of recruitment. To solve the problem of labour recruitment after the war, the government of Nigeria sent in 1000

³¹¹ Epale, *Plantation and Development*, p.25.

³¹² *Ibid.*, pp57-58.

³¹³ NAB, File N° Qd/a/1917/11, Report on Plantations, p.15.

workers from Northern and Southern Nigeria. The Hausa from Northern Nigeria came from an almost practically desert country that was an enormous long distance off where every condition of life was as different from plantation life as could well be. Neither individually nor collectively had the Hausa the least qualification for plantation and estate labour, it being that no such thing as a plantation existed in their own country. Worst still, the Hausa not being plantain or rice-eaters, had to be supplied with corn and meat at a cost that was entirely out of proportion to any probable value of services³¹⁴ (See Appendix 9).

For their part, the Southern Nigerians were a less unlikely proposition. They were recruited at the same rate as those recruited in 1916 by the British political officers in the Cameroons. Unfortunately, the men were not carefully selected so they were physically unsuitable. Many of them being too old and practically every one of them suffering from anchylostomiosis in greater or less degree. Their head men too with few exceptions, turned out to be of an unworthy type who were mostly profiteers. The plantation authorities were however of the opinion that these head men would have turned out to be fairly useful had they been sent in small groups of 25 to 50 and got them accustomed to new conditions in a reasonable way.

Besides these two groups of Nigerian gangs, there were on some estates Cameroonians who had been recruited by the civil authority. There were also large numbers of voluntary workers recruited privately. These Cameroonian workers were mostly, Balondo, Bamenda and Dschang men. The major problem of this category was that they were carelessly recruited without any written agreement or statement as to length of term of office. By July 1917, the officer who recruited them had left the country as had the military officer estate manager who received them so that no one knew on what terms they had been recruited³¹⁵.

There was also a great mass of ordinary private labour engaged just from around the villages in the plantation area. The issue with this set was that they came and went back at any time but a reasonable number however stayed but they were generally unpredictable. By the 1990s, the problem of labour mobility and inconsistency had become stable given that it was difficult to find plantation labourers being recruited on contract bases and for a short period of time as obtained before. The issue of contract workers could only be once more seen in 1977 in the Ndu tea plantation at the beginning of the estate where the chief of the locality insisted that labourers be recruited on contract bases, but this was only a temporal situation. Recruitment of

³¹⁴ NAB, File N° Qd/a1917/11, Report on Plantation-Rendition of Request by His Excellency for Victoria Division, 1917, p.7.

³¹⁵ NAB, File N° Qd/a1919/13, Report on Plantations in the Cameroons, 1919, p.13.

labourers especially in the oil palm, rubber and tea plantations had evolved with space and time and had become much more stable and therefore no longer a major source of problem to management³¹⁶.

Other causes of trouble for the plantation department came from misbehavior and incompetence. Misbehavior was promptly and sternly dealt with but incompetence was less easy to eliminate especially in the case of young men doing their best in an entirely new and unexpected situation. For instance, the plantation supervisor found himself in command of a staff of planters composed of 3 junior inexperienced agricultural department officers from Nigeria; 3 junior mercantile assistants from firms or shops on the coast, 1 marine foreman engineer, 1 marine boat builder, 1 ex-ships engineer and 1 German mechanic. All of them were filling positions of trust and authority which were really not capable of being filled except by professional men of considerable standing and ability. It therefore had to be no surprise that some of them made mistakes from time to time, but in general, they carried on so successfully and with so little friction than the prophets of doom would have wished³¹⁷.

Another problem recorded was that of insufficiency in the supply of rations and commodities. The food shortage could have been avoided had the political officers cared for the plantation farms, but these farms had been abandoned. Information on the diet and nutritional standards of the plantation workers was by no means complete but it was clear that diets were often inadequate and that the deficiencies were in some cases serious. Observational evidence indicated this, and the general inside which came from talking to the labourers in the course of the survey interviews. An encouragement on these labourers to make comments on the nature of their expenditure showed that there was really a serious problem of dieting³¹⁸. Even in the most favourable areas, (for example, the Molyko-Ekona area) the normal diet of many of the men were or had been deficient. The appearance of the better nourished labourers who started higher than average expenditure on food was often markedly different especially as regards skin condition from that of the majority³¹⁹. New clearings had to be made and while the new plantains grew, the labourers starved. The neglect of these plantations by the British government was again seen in the fact that there were no British coins to even pay workers. The food problem was aggravated by the presence in the plantation of 5.000 Kribi and 2000

³¹⁶ Interview with John Ekane, 66 Years Old, Administrative Staff in the Tiko Estate, Tiko, August 8th 2015.

³¹⁷ NAB, File N° Qd/a1917/11, Report on Plantation-Rendition of Request by His Excellency for Victoria Division, 1917, p.10.

³¹⁸ Ardener et al, *Plantation and Village in the Cameroons*, p .118.

³¹⁹ *Ibid*.

Bakoko refugees-men, women and children. They had sort shelter in the plantations and were provided with rations and housing. There was equally an appeal for labour from the Bamenda district area³²⁰.

The Concepts of Gender and Labour

Richley defines gender as a social identity that consists of the roles persons are expected because of their sexes³²¹. It is the non physiological aspects of sex, a group of attributes and or behaviors, shaped by society and culture that are defined as appropriate for the male sex or the female sex. The term is also used more broadly to denote a range of identities that do not correspond to established ideas of male and female. It is the characteristics of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed. This includes norms, behaviours and roles associated³²². Gender is therefore not given at birth; its identity then begins to intervene through the individual's developing self-conception and experience of whether he or she is male or female³²³. Gender roles looks at socially perceived differences between men and women that define how men and women should think, act and feel. These roles constantly change and can vary between and within cultures³²⁴. In the plantations in the Cameroons, these roles were affected by patriarchy where women were considered irrational and men were looked upon as being very rational.

Gender division of labour means an overall societal pattern where women are allotted one set of gender roles and men allotted another set. Unequal gender division of labour refers to a gender division where there is an unequal gender division of reward. Discrimination against women in this sense means that women get most of the burden of labour, but men collect most of the income and rewards resulting from the labour. Men dominate in cash crop production and wage employment³²⁵. Gender division of labour has from every investigation not changed in favour of women but rather added to their burden and enhance practical limitations on the possibilities for active involvement of women. Women are therefore not favoured in the capitalist world but are rather relegated and considered irrational³²⁶. This situation was vividly

³²⁰ C.D.C Archives, File: 8, Statistics of Bamenda Labourers, 1962. p.8.

³²¹ Richley H. Crapo, *Cultural anthropology Understanding ourselves and Others*, New York, Mc Craw Hill, 2002, p.98

³²² <https://www.who.int.health-topics>.

³²³ Tyson, *Critical Theory Today*, p. 16.

³²⁴ Adapted from DPU Training Team, Training Materials, for Gender issues and planning, 1992, p. 3.

³²⁵ *Gender Dictionary*, p. 3.

³²⁶ B. Sorensen, *Women and Post Conflict Reconstruction, Issues and Sources*, Geneva, UNRISD, 1998, p.4.

true of the Ndu Tea Estate as revealed in the fact that, there was a dominant male labour force in the Estate.

Gender discrimination means to give differential treatment to individuals on the grounds of their gender. In many societies, this involves systematic and structural discrimination against women in the distribution of access to resources and participation in decision making³²⁷.

Gender disparities analyses the differences in men and women's access to resources, status and well-being that usually favour men and are often institutionalized through laws and social customs³²⁸. In the Ndu Tea Estate there were particular jobs just for men as seen in the technical sector. Women could not work in these and many other sectors in the Ndu Tea Estate as a result of disparities in job description. Such gender roles finally resulted in socially determined behaviors, task and responsibilities for men and women based on socially perceived differences that defined how they should think, act and feel, based on their respective sex. Gender roles therefore can and do change through individual choice and over time, they change in response to events and processes such as economic crisis declinational of fertility rates and the increase of educational levels for women.

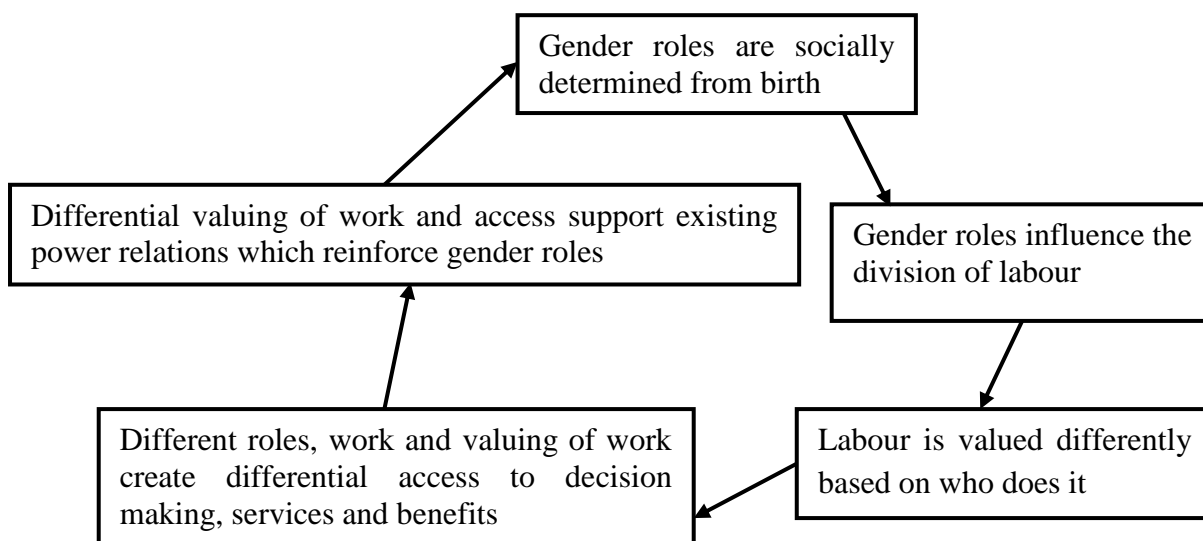
Labour on its part relates to human activity that produces goods and or services. The term labour is most commonly used to refer to remunerated work. The relations between gender and labour was as old as our species, but no humanistic discipline in Western thoughts, anthropology included has ever been able to free its ideas entirely from the prevailing social systems within which it functioned. Despite this reality, during the last several decades, the study on gender and labour was lifted to a new plane in the social sciences and in History. At the same time, even the recent feminism of the West has suffered from a common inability to integrate its insights in a way that transcends effectively the difference in class³²⁹. Remuneration here means payment or compensation for a service, loss or expense. There is therefore a linkage of these key components to be used in analyzing gender division of roles and disparities in the Cameroons.

³²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.5.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.7.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.1.

Plate 4: Linkages of Key Components in Gender Studies



Source: Bongfen, Conceived from Training Materials, for Gender Issues and Planning, 1992, p. 3, 11th June 2014.

Gender roles are socially determined from birth and such roles influence labour which is valued depending on who does it. In the Cameroons, gender determined and influenced the division of labour which was done following the value of work.

The African continent during the colonial era witnessed the emergence of persistence pressure on rural communities for labour and natural resources to serve the needs of the expanding urban population as well as the expanding industrial complexes in Europe. This turn of events coincided and in some cases laid a firm result amongst women of different African countries to tackle poverty and diseases as well as participate in decision making in the new colonial dispensation. During this same epoch, urban women and children in some African countries were stressed up by the capitalist force of their colonial power. Unable to bear this pressure, some of these women mobilized and developed different strategies to repel economic and political domination of the men in different colonial dependencies in Sub-Saharan Africa, notably Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and Cameroon³³⁰. The pre-colonial situation in many parts of Sub-Saharan Africa was generally different. It offered women opportunities to actively participate in a stage of production. Conversely, many of them were relegated to domestic chores during the colonial era because of a new economic superstructure that projected men to

³³⁰ H. K. Kah, "Feminist Activism, Economic *Carte Blanche*, Political Control, Symbol and Symbolism: A Historical Interpretation of the *Kelu* Women Revolution in Bu-Cameroon, 1957-59" in *Afrika Zamani*, N°. 17, 2009, pp.82-83.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*

³³⁰ Ardener E., et al, *Plantation and Village in the Cameroons*, p.12.

the lime light. Some women who continued to engage themselves in economic activities observed that these activities were systematically deformed and devalued. The women of Ivory Coast for instance played the prominent role in yam and cloth distribution and were engaged in inter-cropping cotton in the yam field in the pre-colonial era³³¹.

The Organisation of Work in the Plantations in the Cameroons

In order to achieve greater output in the plantations in the Cameroons, work had to be well organised, taking into consideration the different task to be assigned to different male and female working in the plantations and also of the plantation crops under study which include, oil palm, tea and rubber. There was a lot of specialization in palm work between the men doing the work of harvesting, and pruning which normally entailed climbing the trees and those doing other types of field work who were generally in the majority. Men who did both types of work were organised in to gangs and the specialization extended as far as the oversee level. Most of the palm field workers were like banana plantation workers who were involved in harvesting and weeding. We also had wagon loaders and specialist workers in the nurseries and among the young immature palms³³².

Palm fruit cutters were normally responsible for carrying their own bunches of fruits to the collecting point where each man's output was checked. The checking was done by a palm checker and recorder whose duty was to particularly take note of how many bunches were there in general and also to take note of the quantity per collector, so as to have statistics that were going to be used for the payment of the workers³³³. From the point of collecting, bunches of the palm fruits were loaded in rail trucks (plantation rail lines had been set up particularly for the transportation of the raw material to the factory site), and taken to the oil mills for processing. It should be noted that work in the mills was highly mechanized and a considerable amount of skill and responsibility was needed in some of the oil mill occupations if the high quality of products and the flow of material in the processing plant was to be ensured. The oil was at the time of our survey stored either in bulk storage tanks or in drums³³⁴.

³³¹ *Ibid.*

³³² *Ibid.*

³³³ Mukunje, August 29th 2015.

³³⁴ Enanga, July 30th 2015.

Plate 5: Processed oil Stored in Tanks at Idenau



Source: Researcher's Field Work, August 29th 2015.

The processed oil was stored in tanks ready for dispatching by the authority. The Idenau factory had more than 8 tanks where processed oil was stored.

Pertinent issues to note on the organization of work were the fact that, there was gender disparity seen in the task given to men and women in the palm production process. Our investigation revealed that, the plantation officials particularly preferred that women labourers should work in the palm nurseries because this aspect needed a lot of care and patience³³⁵. They also preferred that male labourers should be climbers because the job was risky for women. There was therefore gender division of role in proportion of what each gender could do best but more of “smaller” jobs like weeding, gathering and picking were mostly reserved for female labourers because they were generally considered docile³³⁶.

The organization of work in the tea estates of Tole and Ndu was equally of prime importance and was different. There were field workers, factory workers and the administrative staff. The work of the field workers ended with tea harvesting which was usually done mostly by the

³³⁵ Field work observation by researcher from July to August 2015.

³³⁶ Interview with Joseph Fuh, 58 Years Old, Palm Harvester, Idenau, August 20th 2015.

women. However, of note was the fact that one of the estates, the Tole estate started to employ a predominantly female labour force while the other, the Ndu estate started to employ a predominantly male labour force but by the 1970s, most of the pluckers in the field were female labourers³³⁷.

From inception, the labour force of the Tole estate was predominantly female in character. In 1966 for example, there were 435 women in the labour force of 790. It was estimated that in the decade after 1968, about 800 women would be needed during peak periods³³⁸. This was because there were plans to continue increasing the number of hectares. Looking at the 1966 statistics, it would be realized that women constituted 55.1 % of the labour force while men constituted only 44.9%. By the end of 2000, women still dominated in the field. Out of 587 field workers, 427 were women³³⁹.

Women therefore dominated the fields in the tea estates of the Cameroons carrying out tasks like weeding and plucking. This opinion is also shared by writers like Sanford, Bederman, Konings, Shobhita, Reddock, Epale and Arderner. It should be noted that, workers of the field were mostly pluckers and they did not have very attractive salaries compared to other sectors of the plantation. Our investigations revealed that, these field workers were mostly women, especially in the tea estates.

Another aspect of work organization was seen in the way tea was plucked. There was a head man or woman as leader of each team of about 20 pluckers who brought their tea to a measuring stand after plucking. The harvested tea was weighted and the number of kilograms indicated under each pluckers name. These pluckers were therefore remunerated according to work done. In the tea plantations in the Cameroons, the majority of workers were found in the field as pluckers³⁴⁰.

³³⁷ File: MTIS/DHSI/NK/17, Ndu Tea Estate General Correspondence, Speech of the Fon of Ndu on the Occasion of the Workers Welcome Ceremony, 6th Of April 1977, p.3.

³³⁸ Bederman, *The CDC*, p.9.

³³⁹ Akara, "Plantation Agriculture in the Former British Southern Cameroons", p.50.

³⁴⁰ Interview with Joseph Ngalla, 57 Years Old, Head man in the tea estate, Ndu Village, August 13th 2014.

Plate 6: Female Head Plucker waiting for Workers under her Care at the Ndu Tea Estate



Source: Researcher's Field Work, July 7th 2014.

The head women and head men acted as the main administrators in the field, they checked the harvesting process, controlled a group of about 20 pluckers and ensured that the plucked tea was weighted and recorded under each labourer's name. Most of the times, they were the last to leave the tea field, just to be sure that everyone under their care had retired home³⁴¹. Just like in the Ndu tea estate, the Tole estate equally had a lot of field pluckers and the organization of work followed the same procedure as that of the Ndu tea but for the fact that, the number of labourers in the Tole tea estate greatly outnumbered those of the Ndu estate ³⁴²(See Appendix 11).

The next level of work organization was seen in the factory where labourers worked in shifts given that the machine at times had to work round the clock especially during peak periods

³⁴¹ Interview with Evelyne Mayah, 53 Years Old, Head woman in the Ndu Tea Estate, August 29th 2014.

³⁴² NAB, File: QC/g/1941/5.No 12221, Tea Control production of Local Tea, 1941, p.2.

where harvesting was plenty. The peak periods were usually from April to June. Work in the factory during such period was usually very tedious as workers had to do every thing to ensure that the plucked tea brought from the field was processed³⁴³.

The last level of work organization in the tea estates was seen in the administrative sector. These administrators mostly concentrated on statistical development of number of workers in the various sectors, those who were sick, quantity of work done, number of tons of tea plucked per day, week and month, number of tons produced and they equally took kin interest in taking note and recording estate problems. These administrators included managers, assistant managers, secretaries, Clerks, etc.³⁴⁴.

Work organization in the rubber plantation had its own peculiarity. Rubber work differed from that in other types of plantations in that there was comparatively little weeding work in mature plantations and most field workers in these mature plantations were tappers or spare(that is reserve) tappers. Weeding could be done by those spare workers especially when not called up to take over a tapping task and equally by the tappers who were expected to put in about two hours weeding each full working day, after they had finished with latex collection. However, there was equally a large employment of other field workers to weed immature rubber, clearing bushes for new development, replanting and in nursery work, budding, planting and doing other development work. These second groups of field workers were equally an important part of the labour force in the rubber plantations³⁴⁵.

Rubber tappers, unlike any other plantation workers were given a set task seen in a given line of rubber trees which they were to retain for a very long period of time and in which beside the actual work of tapping, and latex collection, these workers had to ensure cleanliness, freedom from diseases and the long term condition of the trees. Latex after being brought to central collecting point by tappers was transported to the rubber factory, where coagulation, rolling and drying was carried out with varying degrees of mechanization and modernization. The process of transporting tapped rubber to the factory was labour intensive. Such rubber was usually transported and dumped around the factory in hips. The process of gathering the rubber blocks and cakes was particularly done by women because men resented the smell of rubber and so allowed mostly the female labourers to do the gathering³⁴⁶.

³⁴³ Interview with Bruno Molimbe, 67 Years, Factory Worker, Tole Tea Estate, August 25th 2015.

³⁴⁴ File: N T E R M/1/209, Ndu Tea Estate Managers, 2009, p.4.

³⁴⁵ Ardener E., et al, *Plantation and Village in the Cameroons*, p.12.

³⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

Plate 7: Tapped Rubber Awaiting Processing in the Tiko Factory



Source: Researcher's Field Work, August 5th 2015.

The tapped rubber was brought from the field by road and was dumped in the ware house in preparation for processing. Most workers working in the rubber fields were male labourers. Female labourers were mostly seen in the factory at Tiko.

Organisation of work in the rubber factory was more intensive than in the field given that labourers needed to be present and vigilant at every stage of production. Just like in the palm and tea factory, administrators of the rubber estate were mostly concerned with statistical data taking note of the quantities produced and equally on the problems arising from the factory³⁴⁷.

Work was also well organised in the building and engineering sector. It was investigated that mostly male laborers were part of this section. The beginning and the advent of education in the Cameroons saw the neglect of technical education and even when it was en vogue; it was viewed as a male issue and saw the presence of a very minimal proportion of females in this sector³⁴⁸. These labourers got themselves involved in building, civil engineering, mechanical engineering, timber extraction and rail tract maintenance. However, there were a large proportion of unskilled labourers especially in the building department and civil engineering work. There was a greater tendency to organize the labourers in to gang, a higher concentration of labour on one project and a higher proportion of supervisory staff. The methods adopted

³⁴⁷ NAB, File: QC/g/1931/5.No 12331, Rubber Control Produce, 1944, p.6.

³⁴⁸ Interview with Micheal Monde, 78 Years Old, Retired Estate Manager, Kwar Village, August 13th 2014.

combined the highly mechanized and the primitive. The primordial aim was to ensure that no machines were left unrepaired. Of note was the fact that some unskilled labourers after some times became skilled due to continuous work with those who were skilled³⁴⁹. Our investigations revealed that all the estates visited (Idenau, Tiko, Tole and Ndu estates) had the mechanical and engineering sector showing the importance of this sector in plantation agriculture especially given that such work was mechanized agriculture where the use of engines was inevitable.

Plate 8: The Mechanical Sector in the Idenau Plantation



Source: Researcher's Field Work, August 21st 2015.

Work was organised in gangs and was mostly male labour intensive. These labourers concentrated on repairs to ensure a continuous flow of production. These labourers came to work on a daily bases, controlled the garage and maintained the machines in the factories. They were available in all the plantation area under study.

Female and Male Conditions of Work in the Plantations

The normal working week for all employees was 45 hours made up of five days of 8 hours and one of 5 hours. These hours applied to all day workers but shift workers and such personnel as motor drivers, railway traffic workers and watch men who normally work at different hours from the majority were subject to different and special conditions, for instance, in the case of watch men, the daily rate of pay was calculated to take account of the very long hours worked and no over time was granted for a normal duty which was 12 hours per day. Rubber tappers

³⁴⁹ Ardener E., et al, *Plantation and Village in the Cameroons*, p.13.

who were normally expected to work a seven-day week were nevertheless paid as ordinary day workers but received over time at times. Statutory public holidays were usually normal work free days and employees got a day's pay for any public holiday which was not worked. Work done outside normal working hours was paid for an overtime rate for hours actually worked³⁵⁰.

Workers were generally employed on verbal contracts and were subject according to the roles and regulations of the plantation but there was an agreement of a 7 day notice of termination of their employment. There was considerable redundancy in the building section but in other sections, dismissal normally took place only for insufficiency or misconduct and in normal times, very few labourers were laid off from the agricultural sector for redundant behaviour. However, transfer and instant transfer from one plantation to another was very frequent. This was most of the time done without the concern of the labourers but again this was mostly due to the demand for labour which was a varying factor in most of the plantations.

All workers were expected to provide their working tools to use in working. The working tools mostly comprised of machetes, knives and hoes were mostly used by the female labourers. It should be noted that there was a worker's shop which was provided by the plantation management mainly to serve workers with their daily needs and especially their working materials³⁵¹. Worthy of note was the fact that these workers could be given a loan to buy their working tools but they had to pay back through monthly deductions from their wages. Motor drivers, launch crew and some messengers were provided with uniforms and very few other workers were given protective clothing in especially those involved in dirty jobs. Our informant maintained that it was the prerogative of management to ensure that work started once the labourers were there. Taking a loan to buy working tools was therefore of no advantage to the labourers but was rather in the interest of the plantation given that there had to be some assurance whether a newly employed labourer had working tools or not. He was immediately given his working tools upon arrival, if he complained that he hadn't one and the amount in turn curtailed from his monthly wages most often during the first pay out³⁵².

Daily rated labourers were entitled to paid leave at the rate of 7 days for every continuous period of 12 Months worked. The leave was granted at the discretion of the head of that section and also following the modalities in the plantations which stipulated that the labourer must have worked at least 23 days in each of 12 months and sickness absence with permission being

³⁵⁰ Ardener E., et al, *Plantation and Village in the Cameroons*, p.20.

³⁵¹ Interview with Divine Mesumbe, 68 Years Old, Field Worker, Tiko, August 8th 2015.

³⁵² *Idem*.

taken in to consideration. Most of the time, leave could be accumulated up to about four weeks and workers could easily be unofficially granted permission for a period of up to one month provided they had served for some time and had showed some good reasons why they needed to be absent³⁵³.

Monthly paid workers were entitled to higher allowances of leave and were equally paid travelling allowances or given free transport each time they took leave. By 1955, flat rate allowances took the place of travelling allowances, varying with distance. The scale varied from 6 Pounds every two years for salaried labourers below junior service ranks and 12 pounds for intermediate service staff but these allowances were amended in 1958³⁵⁴.

Other terms of employment included a contributory provident fund, which was compulsory for all staff in the senior, intermediate and junior service but was optional for monthly paid employees outside the junior service with over a year's employment on monthly rates. There was a contribution of 15 percent of the monthly wages which was made by the management to this fund. Personnel outside the provisions of the providence fund were paid retirement gratuity increases with the length of service in the plantation ³⁵⁵(See Appendix 13).

The conditions of employment of junior service personnel included entitlement to unfurnished living quarters. (Until late 1955, this was provided free, but charges were now made for the accommodation of salaried workers, senior service and intermediate service staff were entitled to furnished accommodation) Personnel below junior service ranks were given living accommodation in places where this was available. The situation was not the same with the case of unmarried labourers and especially with the female labourers because the accommodation had to be shared. Junior service personnel and overseer usually got a two-roomed house, and others, grades one room, or a share of a room in plantations where these were available. Most of these accommodations were by the 1980s in a dilapidated state because a good number were constructed during the time of the Germans and with the British take over and later the C.D.C; these houses had not undergone major repairs. These labourers were however left with the choice of accepting their living conditions and had to be happy because some plantation sites did not even offer such accommodations³⁵⁶.

³⁵³ Ardener E., et al, *Plantation and Village in the Cameroons*, p.20.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁵ NAB, File: Q6/a/1960/11. N° SD 251, Southern Cameroons Economic Planning Committee, February, 1960.p.2.

³⁵⁶ Interview with Alfred Elange, 81 Years Old, Retired Tea Estate Plucker, Tole Village, August 24th 2015.

Plate 9: Sample Accommodation for Labourers in the Tiko Plantation Area



Source: Researcher's Field Work, August 5th 2015.

Most of the houses seen during our investigations were those that had been constructed first by the Germans and later, the C.D.C took over most of the plantations, a few of those houses were added but a majority of these houses were not in good shape.

Other privileges that were granted to all labourers and staff were free medical treatment even though fees was later charge for the maintenance of in-patients in the hospitals, and the provision of workers shops at various point in the different plantation areas. The commodities sold in these shops included basic commodities like soap, sugar, tea, tined food, clothes and household articles at standard prices. There were also sport and entertainment facilities which included monthly film shows³⁵⁷.

Working hours and other conditions of work in the plantations in the Cameroon therefore took in to consideration every gender and labourer working in the plantation. It was only in the areas of unmarried women that some disparities could be seen as they were paired in the houses that were provided whereas there were also single men who on the contrary received their own rooms without any pairing.

³⁵⁷ Ardener E., et al, *Plantation and Village in the Cameroons*, p.20.

By the 1970s, only 9.8% of Cameroonian women were employed in wage labour. Women's entry in to the capitalist labour process was usually a late development and followed a trajectory different from that of men. They attributed this to women's subordination to patriarchal control in Cameroon³⁵⁸. These customs coupled with colonial economic and administrative policies went further to marginalize the woman's activity especially in the area of labour supply. Endeley focused on the fact that, women's work tended to be at unskilled level with inferior wages and the work made tedious. Gender discrimination was inevitable based on the nature of the specific assignments.

As already observed, the majority of female workers especially in the tea sector were pluckers. They were involved in the plucking of tea leaves for processing. The tea was manually harvested and the quality that was required was the flash or immature leaves (two leaves and a bud) for high quality production. Before weighing, the tea leaves were inspected by the checkers to ensure that only the required quantity was taken to the factory. After weighing and recording, the leaves were placed in big bags and transported to the factory for processing. To ensure discipline and effective work in the field, there were overseers but with only a few of them women who coordinated the work of these field workers. Each overseer had a few groups of 20 to 25 field workers called "gang" and led by a head man/woman who was answerable to the overseer who in turn were supervised by field assistant³⁵⁹.

The women used baskets hanging on their backs and as they harvested, they put directly in the baskets on their backs. This process was easier for these women to be faster in their task. It should be noted again that, these baskets were weaved by the female labourers with local material from their environment. This was because; it was the estate policy that each worker had to bring his tools and not to be given by the company. These women who were used to their traditional baskets therefore took time to weave these baskets so as to save money from buying working tools³⁶⁰. The African woman and the Cameroonian woman in particular could therefore be celebrated as an economic dorne who used every opportunity at her disposal to make earns needs and to develop her community.

³⁵⁸ Konings, *Gender and Class*, p.2.

³⁵⁹ Akara, "Plantation Agriculture in the Former British Southern Cameroons", p.53.

³⁶⁰ Interview with Angeline Shofola, 52 Years Old, Plucker in the Ndu Tea Estate, August 20th 2014.

Plate 10: Female Labourer Harvesting Tea with a Traditional Harvesting Basket at Ndu



Source: Researcher's Field Work, August 29th 2014, Ndu.

With baskets on their backs, female labourers could be seen all over the fields harvesting tea. The position of the baskets facilitated the harvesting and made these labourers to be faster in the job. Bags were however left in nearby huts where the harvested leaves were purred once the baskets were full.

An important aspect of female labour task was the use of song during harvesting. This was very peculiar with the Tole and Ndu tea estates. The use of songs as concluded by one of our informant gave these female labourers a sense of commitment, unity and it was difficult to get tired during the harvesting process. With a song leader chanting, the women answered and with their nibble fingers, work went faster. The songs also ensured team spirit because it was difficult for a member of a gang where songs were chanted to leave before the others. The songs again carried messages of encouragement and development. We got these wordings from one of the songs. "We are the heroines of our times, we will do our work, God is with us, we will not be tired, we will feed our children, we will take care of our family, we are the heroines of our times"³⁶¹.

From the foregoing, it can be said that, for a long time, women occupied lower positions in the plantations in the Cameroons. They were mostly concentrated in positions like plucking and weeding for the tea sector, gathering and picking in the oil palm sector and gathering and

³⁶¹ Interview with Labu Nformi, 48 Years Old, Plucker in the Ndu Tea Estate, August 20th 2014.

factory attendants in the rubber sector. Generally, the upper ranks such as managers, field assistants and even overseer remained male dominated. Konings corroborates with this opinion and his judgement that women would not rise to supervisory positions must have been based on his experience in other places like Sri Lanka and Asia. However, women were soon to occupy some leading positions but the percentage and ratio as compared to those occupied by men was still insignificant.

Table 6: African Women in Wage Labour, 1976-1989

Country	Year	% of Female Participation in Wage Labour
Cameroon	1976	9.8
Mali	1976	11.2
Algeria	1989	10
Malawi	1986	15
Gambia	1987	19
Kenya	1988	21
Botswana	1979	22

Source: Konings, *Gender and Class*, p. 2.

From 1977, female labourers were employed on a permanent basis and their numbers continuously increased as the years went by. There was however a drop as a result of the introduction of multiparty politics in the 1990s as most of them left to join the newly created political parties.

Table 7: Female Labour Pluckers in the Ndu Tea Estate

Year	Status			Total Number	%
	Singles	Widows	Married		
1977	7	4	2	13	0.13
1980	25	15	10	50	0.5
1986	47	30	20	97	0.97
1990	42	27	19	88	0.88
1995	62	33	27	122	1.22
2000	66	47	38	151	1.51

Source: Konings, *Gender and Class*, p. 108, Data Added by Researcher During Field Work, August 2014.

The statistics above show a steady increase in the number of female pluckers in the Ndu tea estate. There were generally more women working as pluckers in the field in the Ndu tea estate even though this plantation started by employing a predominantly male labour force.

The discourse on male task labour policies appears much the same in the later years as it was presumably before the colonists arrived. Farming-food-female continues to be linked as a gender marker while the axiom that “men own the fields, women own the crops” remained central in the gender discourse³⁶². Men were employed in plantation agriculture because they formed the basis of productive labour. According to the Half Yearly Economic Report of July 1982 (See Appendix 8) most men started work in the plantations on casual basis. Though there were permanent workers, a good number of casual workers had been employed given that the plantations were determined to do everything to increase and improve on its productivity³⁶³.

One of our informants informed us that, just like women, most men from the beginning of the cultivation were temporally employed because they were amateurs in the production process and also, there was a general fear of the unknown given that these labourers were job seekers and could leave for greener pasture if they found a job somewhere else. This was contained by Teke who admitted that workers migrated from the Donga Mantung Division to the C.D.C for job opportunities³⁶⁴. It was therefore according to our informant, risky to employ such unskilled labour on permanent basis³⁶⁵.

There was however male dominance in some plantation operations which were regarded as very tedious jobs that basically required a lot of stamina³⁶⁶. Men should work in partnership with women to redress constraints on women. True gender balance requires the rational element of the inclusion of women in the process of dialogue and remedial action to address gender in all aspects of public life.

It was equally striking how few men had had any difficulty in getting a job. Skilled work was very limited but unskilled work was much easier to find. A confirmation that for a long time, may be seen from the answer to a question asking how long a worker had spent in the area upon arrival before looking for a job. 70% of labourers searching for a job were looking for unskilled labour especially when they entered the plantation for their first time and 60% had

³⁶² Goheen, *men own the fields*, p.72.

³⁶³ NWRA, File: NW/Qd/a/1982/3/BK, Half Yearly Economic Report, Summary Activities of Ndu Tea Estate, July-December, 1982, p. 2.

³⁶⁴ J. Teke, “Role of North West Region Out-Migrants to the Cameroon Development Corporation”, p.94.

³⁶⁵ Member, December 11th 2014.

³⁶⁶ Nkoli, et al., “*Women in the Banana Industry*”, p. 85.

started work within the first week of their arrival and over 90% had started work within the first month of their arrival.

Table 8: Time Spent in Area before Starting Work by 1954

Period	Number of Men	Percentage of Total
Up to one week	250	59.4
One to two weeks	59	14.0
Two to three weeks	24	5.7
Three to four weeks	51	12.1
One to two months	20	4.8
Two to three months	11	2.6
Over three months	6	1.4
Unknown	26	-
Total	447	100.0

Source: Ardener S., et al, *Plantation and Village in the Cameroons*, p.40.

The statistics above reveal that, there were more unskilled labourers working in the plantations in the Cameroons than skilled labourers by the 1960s. Those who were unskilled spent at most one week to get employment whereas those who were skilled took more time to get employment. Our investigations revealed that these were the reasons why most of the labourers from the beginning were employed as field workers since there was no particular training needed to do field work in the plantation like clearing.

More men were however employed from the start of plantation agriculture than women. This was striking in contrast to the Tole tea estate that started to employ an almost exclusively female labour force. According to Konings, despite the local tradition of patriarchal controls over female labour, the Tole Estate management decided to recruit pluckers in 1958 when a number of the tea bushes planted had reached maturity and the reasons were that tea plucking had to a large extent come to be identified as “Women’s Work” and there was a general belief in management circles that female pluckers tended to be productive and more sub servant than male pluckers³⁶⁷.

Men occupied the posts of Senior Overseer and Overseer and head men for a long time. In the oil palm plantations, these men were always available to supervise the harvesting of the palms

³⁶⁷ Konings, *Gender and Class*, p. 29.

and especially picking. Picking was a very delegate aspect of the production process in the oil palm plantation. Picking generally determined the quality of oil. Well picked palm meant that the quality was going to be good but poorly picked palm meant that the quality of oil was going to be very poor. The men were therefore available in the palms to supervise the picking so as to ensure good quality oil³⁶⁸.

It is pertinent to note that majority of women working in the oil palm plantation could be seen in this section. This was because, picking required a lot of patience and women were seen to be very patient. Unlike men who most of the time could be impatient, management preferred the employment of more women than men as pickers in the field but then these pickers were supervised by men.

There were however male labourers in the field as far as male task labour policies were concerned. These male field workers were mostly seen in the oil palm and rubber plantations. Most of the climbers in the oil palm plantations were male. This was because it was considered a taboo for women to be climbers. 90% of field climbers were male. By the 1990s however, new harvesting tools known as cutters were introduced in the palm plantations and so labourers did not need to climb up the palm tree to harvest but from below the ground, they could use the cutters to harvest the palm fruits. With the introduction of this new harvesting tool however, a few women were found in this section of field work but still dominated by men³⁶⁹. The rubber plantations also saw the majority of the men occupying supervisory position but with men equally found in the field, seen in the tapping of the rubber. This aspect of field work was mostly done by the men because, it was required that rubber be tapped very early and mostly men were best suited for the job. Women however came in to do collection after the rubber had been tapped³⁷⁰.

³⁶⁸ Interview with Divine Ayuk, 52 Years Old, Supervisor in the Ideneau oil palm, July 20th 2015.

³⁶⁹ Interview with Isaac Mukunje, 57 Years Old, Palm Collector, Idenau Plantation, August 29th 2015.

³⁷⁰ Interview with Hilary Mah, 49 Years Old, Audit Clerk, Tiko Rubber Factory, August 5th 2015.

Plate 11: Michael Monde, First Indigenous Manager at the Ndu Tea Estate



Source: Photo Negative, Bongfen, August 13th 2014.

As the first indigenous Ndu Tea Estate manager, pa Monde made good use of his experience as an estate manager. He opened his small tea farm at *Kuwar* village and became one of the first to have a small holder scheme in the area. This was however made possible by some workers he got from the tea estate.

Remunerations in the Plantations

Remuneration remained part of plantation agriculture and was a great motivation to plantation workers who were paid monthly, mostly according to the work done per worker. There were generalities concerning wages as well as specificities owing to the gender and type of job done. These wages had far reaching repercussions on the life of the plantation workers and equally on the agro-industry as a whole.

General Aspects on Remunerations

Wages in the oil palm, tea and rubber plantations were paid entirely in cash. There was however non-monetary concessions such as free medical attention which were provided for the employees and a large proportion of these labourers were given free housing accommodation from the start. Education was equally provided free of charge for most of the children of the

workers until 1955 as school fees was introduced in 1956³⁷¹. The remuneration law by the time of the British take over was based on the British administrative policy. Wages were paid as work was done and it was done monthly.

The minimum daily wage of a labourer in the plantations in 1938 seemed to have varied between 3^d and 6^d and a free ration. (^d stands for pennies coming from the Latin word *denarius* which was one of the British currency used in the Cameroons during the British rule in the territory. 240 pennies is equivalence to 1 pound and 1 pound is equivalent to 761.82 frs³⁷²). The C.D.C Take over led to a paradigm shift in the remuneration rates as they were now paid following the rates paid by the Cameroon government to its industrial employees. There seemed to equally be a somewhat stricter grading of skilled and semi-skilled workers in the plantations so that some people were paid lower than others. There was however a considerable rise in the wages of workers in the plantations.

At the beginning of 1947, the general labour rate varied from 1s. to 1s. 1^d. a day, according to the area. It was soon increased to 1s. 3^d. By 1958, the daily wage rate for unskilled labour was 3s 1^d. a day and further wage and salary increases were made in 1960. The aspect of wage increase on skilled and unskilled labourers was a general characteristic of wages in all the German plantations before the war. Even unskilled labour was paid rates which varied from man to man according to length of service and value to the company. Wages were daily rates, but customarily, they were paid monthly, usually some two weeks after the last day of the month in which they were earned. The era of the Germans as already seen concentrated on remunerating male labourers because only male labourers were employed to work in the plantations.

These labourers according to our investigations were paid 10 marks per month in the time of the Germans³⁷³(See Appendix 8). The trust system was a general characteristic of the remuneration process. This aspect is further contained by Epale who opines that.

Skilled workers, including building and engineering craftsmen, electricians, dressers, motorized rail trolley drivers and some loco-motive drivers and firemen, were generally classified according to aptitude or the degree of skill required in the occupation as one of the two higher grades of labour: special labour grade II or grade I. Time keepers and most daily paid clerical workers were mostly employed in the lower of these two grades, and assistant

³⁷¹ Ardener E., et al, *Plantation and Village in the Cameroons*, p.16.

³⁷² WWW.bbc.com, Economic problem in the 20th Century.

³⁷³ NAB, File N° Qd/a/1916/22, Plantation Department, 1916, p.3.

overseers were given a special rate of 4s.7^d. a day, also in special labour grade II. Beside the skilled men, in the special labour grades, a few hundred workers were classified as daily rated artisans, almost all of whom were in the lowest class (grade III). Salaried staff included most of the clerical employees, motor drivers, launch crew and a few senior artisans. All overseers were on monthly rates of pay³⁷⁴.

The salary structure was a little complicated. In the first place, there were some 800 men, about three-quarters of all salaried staff who were outside the junior service of the plantations. These included firstly caretakers, messengers, laboratory assistants and others on rates of £70 to £108 a year; secondly, artisans; motor drivers, marine deck hands, some clerks, typists, storekeepers, welfare assistants and similar grades on £89 to £168 a year; and a third group comprising most of the agricultural overseers on £114 to a year. Probationer clerks, non-certificated teachers and nurses-in-training were also outside the junior service.

There were other labourers in the junior service in which the 1957 pay scales ranged from £121 for newly appointed clerical and technical assistants to a possible rate of £ 716 at the top of the senior technical scale. With the introduction of a new salary structure in mid-1955, these employees were classified in to six groups; clerical, technical, agricultural, medical, educational and shops services containing all together over 20 different grades of employee of which six grades were in the clerical service and six in the technical service³⁷⁵. To be noted was the fact that, salaried staffs were mostly those of the administrative bench. They had a stable amount that they received monthly whereas the workers in the field, the sector where a majority of women were employed were paid on task bases.

³⁷⁴ Ardener E., et al, *Plantation and Village in the Cameroons*, p.17.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p.18.

Table 9: Wage and Salary Structure in the Cameroons in 1958

Daily Rate Workers, Unskilled	Minimum Rates	Maximum Rates
Special Labour Grade III	3s. 2 ^d .	3s. 10 ^d .
General Labour	3s. 1 ^d .	3s. 5 ^d .
Daily Rate Workers, Skilled		
Special Labour Grade II	4s. 0 ^d .	4s. 7 ^d .
Special Labour Grade I	5s. 1 ^d .	6s. 0 ^d .
Artisan Class III	7s. 4 ^d .	9s. 10 ^d .
Artisan Class II	10s. 4 ^d .	11s. 4 ^d .
Salaried Workers		
Below Junior Service	£70	£168
Junior Service	£121	£716
Intermediate Service	£273	£750
Senior Service	-	-

s. (Shillings) ^d. (Pennies) £ (Pounds)

Source: Ardener E., et al, *Plantation and Village in the Cameroons*, p.16.

The table of wage rates reveals a steady increase in the salaries of all the categories of labourers working in the plantations in the Cameroons in 1958. From unskilled, to daily workers and monthly paid workers, there was a consideration of work done and the time put in, so that, the longer these plantation workers stayed as workers in the plantations, the more increment that they received.

Almost all the wage and salary rates in the plantations were subject to increment based on length of service. Increment in monthly salary rates was annual, although subject at intervals to efficiency and promotion bars; these increments varied according to salary from £ 6 to £ 21 in the junior service and from £ 6 to £ 9 in the monthly rates below the junior service³⁷⁶The increment for daily rate artisans was also annual at the rate of £ 6 a day after each year's service up to maximum of 9s. 6^d. And 11s. A day respectively for class III and class II artisans. Increments for other grades of daily rates were finally given after every two years. Special labour grade 1 received three increments of 4^d, 3^d respectively.

³⁷⁶ Ardener E., et al, *Plantation and Village in the Cameroons*, p.16.

Bonuses were also paid to certain grades of workers. Formerly, the most important of these was an attendance bonus for which all daily rates workers were eligible and which was paid from 1952 to 1957 in the form of bonuses of 2s. For 12 days attendance in each half of a calendar month, plus a further 2s. Payable only if both the others were earned. Other bonuses based on output were paid but only to a proportion of the men. The most important being palm harvesting bonuses, a bonus for rubber tappers and a shipment bonus for the loading and packing section and for certain road transport drivers.

Wages for grades of labour and junior staff was paid monthly and in cash within a few days after the end of the month. The usual system of payment in the plantations was for labourers to line up in front of a pay table and to be paid by gangs in the presence of their headmen and overseer by the Senior Service or intermediate service officer in charge of the section. In the larger sections, names were usually called out by the wages clerk; the money counted by the paying officer and handed to the overseer of the section who in turn handed it to the labourer. The reason for this procedure was that, as the overseer knew his labourers, impersonation was made more difficult on pay days. It was also aimed at increasing the prestige of the overseer amongst the labourers.

It was common place for a labourer to discuss behind the doors with an overseer who was directly responsible for the wages on his or her financial situation. This activity was mostly undertaken by male labourers who took goods on credit either from the plantation canteen or from a nearby store. In compliance with the overseer, the money was curtailed directly from their pay page on pay day. It was therefore very common to get labourers who came around for their wages but left with very little or nothing at the end of the day³⁷⁷.

The management allowed an advance of wages already earned to be drawn by all men who went in on a given day between about the 15th to the 20th of a month. Our investigations revealed that, this system of lining up in gangs was still a practice in plantation agriculture in the British Southern Cameroons even up to the year 2002 and beyond. The main reason for these lines was to avoid scrabbling and to maintain some order on pay day. It should be noted that, though management tried its best to maintain maximum order on payday, there were still some instances where people fought with each other. Our investigations revealed that, these fights

³⁷⁷ Member, December 11th 2014.

were mostly among men and debtors who were refusing to pay their debts after receiving their wages and this led to quarreling³⁷⁸.

Plate 12: Workers in the Ndu Plantation Lined-up to receive their Pay, August 29th 2014



Source: Researcher's Field Work, August 29th 2014.

Pay day was an exciting day in the life of plantation workers. Standing on the line in gangs following their specific area of labour, they were ready to be paid by their overseer in the presence of the headman. This was done to avoid personification that was a reality amongst plantation workers. Every labourer from every department, male and female made efforts to be available on such days and to answer present on the pay roll table.

The trust book was instituted to meet the demands for part payment before the normal date; in special circumstances, this was occasionally obtained in cash, but the general practice was to allow it only in the form of credit notes on the plantation's own store. On some plantations, such as the Likomba and Holtforth, it was compulsory for employees to take part of their wages in credit notes. In the case of Holtforth, of the total monthly wage of 7 shillings which was possible, about 50 percent was given out in the form of trust tickets³⁷⁹.

Although the tendency on the part of the plantations to press employees to take part of their wages in credit on the employer's store was open to objection, it is true that the practice had been recognized and accepted by the workers for many years, and there was nothing to compel a man to work for a firm whose conditions of service were repugnant to him. Also, the prices charged by plantation stores were not different from those prevailing on the open market.

³⁷⁸ Interview with Andrew Ngalla, 61 Years Old, Field Supervisor, Ndu Tea Estate, August 13th 2014.

³⁷⁹ Epale, *Plantation and Development in West Cameroon* pp.110-111.

Gender and Remunerations in Plantation Agriculture

Looking at the remuneration of male and female labourers in the oil palm, tea and rubber plantations in the Cameroons, it was investigated that the reward was not always commensurable to the energy and time spent. These men and women worked for long hours and were most of the time paid very little. The wages were paid entirely in cash with the amounts varying with the position occupied by the labourer in the plantations. The lowest paid labourers were the field workers whereas they did the bulk of the work in the plantations. Our informants revealed that field workers were paid an amount ranging from 15000 FCFA to 25000 FCFA depending on how much work had been done. Some could even go above the average amount of 25000 FCFA especially those who chose to work overtime. Extra money was therefore paid for extra work done³⁸⁰.

Looking at the mechanical sector which was plagued with a lot of gender inequality, they were paid a fix amount with no variations, likewise the break laying sector, carpentry, plumbers, electricians, factory workers and administrators. They were paid depending on the terms of the contract signed at the beginning of their engagement³⁸¹.

Gender inequalities were seen in especially the engineering sector because, mostly men were found in this sector. Our investigation revealed that engineering in the Cameroons was generally viewed as a male job. Technical education was offered for both male and female but mostly the male went to these technical schools. These sections of the plantation therefore needed mostly labourers who were skilled and understood especially the technicalities of the machines. However, the few female labourers who showed up to work in this section were not always given confidence, most probable because of their gender but generally because of the traditional stereotypes and believes about women's work in the technical sector.

Our informant revealed that, on the list of applicant that was usually forwarded to management as application files, there was a tendency to select mostly men to work in the technical sector and the female labourers could only be employed in the absence of male labourers in the particular technical sector that they were applying³⁸².

Most recently, female labourers were employed in the security sector in the oil palm, tea and rubber plantations of the Cameroons. This sector of labourers was also viewed as a male sector

³⁸⁰Monde, 38th August 2014.

³⁸¹Mbeng, 8th of August 2014.

³⁸² Ayuk, July 20th 2015.

given that men were considered to be very strong so as to be the protectors of the communities but the women joined these men in the security sector and were equally employed. One of our female security guard in the oil palm plantation revealed that she enjoyed being a security guard and that was what she applied for. She had been employed as a security guide since 1998³⁸³.

Plate 13: Female Security Guards in the Oil Palm Estate at Idenau August 21st 2015



Source: Researcher's Field Work, August 21st 2015.

Female labourers were employed in the security section of the plantations. Well identified by their uniforms, they could be seen during field work moving up and down checking and controlling those who came in and went out of the estate. Just like in the Idenau estate, these security guards were found in the rubber and tea estate the estates.

The wages of labourers in the Ndu Tea Estate were lower than on the Tole Estate. The C.D.C being a parasitical tended to follow government wage rates closely. The EAC initially refused to do so but with the C.D.C take over from 1977; they closely followed the rates provided by the governments. However from the workers point of view, this was a starvation wage as the cost of living in the Dong-Mantung Division was among the highest in Anglophone Cameroon

³⁸³ Interview with Onorine Ettananyi, 41 Years Old, Security Guard in the Idenau Plantation, August 20th 2015.

due to the area's isolated position³⁸⁴. It should however, be pointed out that, the management appeared less interested in changing the situation than the workers. The management in fact was for a long time deaf to the repeated Union request for an increase in task work and remuneration as it wanted to keep labour costs low.

The C.D.C then adopted a policy of zone unique involving a uniform wage for all its estate irrespective of the zone in which they were found. The minimum wage of FCFA 19 per hour was allocated for an 8hours working day giving a total of 156 FCFA for the 8hours. However by 1987, the payments were increased and Ndu labourers were paid according to the amount paid in the other tea Estates. It increased to 23 FCFA per hour given a total of 184 FCFA for 8 hours. The working hours had therefore equally been increased but the standards were generally low³⁸⁵.

By the 1990s, the remuneration rates had increased drastically. Remuneration was paid especially in the plucking sector following the number of kilogram of tea plucked. 60kg of tea was rated at 35 FCFA and an additional of 35 FCFA per 60kg for every additional work done. Most pluckers therefore worked overtime after working for the normal 8 hours in order to gain more money and improve on their standards of living³⁸⁶.

Table 10: Plucking Norms and Incentive Bonus at the Ndu Tea Estate

Year	Amount of Leaves	Incentive Bonus
1961	20 kg	3 Frs. C F A for every pound plucked above 20
1969	15 kg	10 Frs. C F A for every kg plucked over the basic task
1970	17 kg	Same as 1969
1977	18 kg	7 Frs. C F A for every kg plucked above the basic task
1980	26 kg	15 Frs. C F A for every kg plucked
1987	32 kg	20 Frs. for 46-55kg
1997	60 kg	35 Frs. for 60kg

Source: Konings, *Gender and Class*, p.113.

Labourers in the estate worked for a total of 8 hours daily. Work started generally early in the morning at 7.30 am and ended at 3.30pm. During field work the researcher could see men and

³⁸⁴ Konings, *Gender and Class*, p.111.

³⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p.112.

³⁸⁶ File: CTPS/N W/93/2, Ndu Tea Estate Wage Summary Record, 1993, p.2.

women from far and near dressed in thick clothes and rain boots, each carrying a wooden basket on the back going to work as early as 6.am in the morning. With the early morning biting cold given that Ndu is the coldest place in Cameroon, they had no choice because they had to trek for several kilometers before reaching the plantation site and the various sectors of work. Our informants revealed that it was necessary to be on time especially for the pluckers given that they were paid according to the number of kilograms of tea they had plucked. Those who reached the plantation farms early generally occupied the road-side farms and started work immediately while those who came much later had to do an additional trekking to get in to the interior so as to occupy portions that had not yet been occupied. It was therefore generally advantageous to reach the plantation farms early.

Those of the other sector equally needed to be early at work because coming late and being notorious was such an act that warranted instant dismissal. A roll call was made early in the morning as soon as work started to ensure that none was absent, and to take note of those who were not at work. There was a break period of 30minutes from 12:30 to 1pm and work resumed immediately only ending at 3.30 pm³⁸⁷. The break period was spent differently by the different genders in the plantations. Men generally retired to a near-by palm wine store to take some cups while women said together in groups to eat the food they had brought from their homes. Sharing, solidarity and community spirit was usually very popular amongst plantation women³⁸⁸.

Our investigation revealed that both men and women had the same working hours. They all came at 7.30 and left at 3.30 but disparity was indirectly seen in the remuneration. Though there was no particular difference on salaries of men and women, the difference lay in the fact that women were given a different job title and job description. It was difficult to see a woman earning above 5, 0000 FCFA in the estate whereas, the lowest paid job was in the plucking sector and that was where the majority of women were found. Their salary ranged between 15, 000 FCFA to 30, 000 FCFA whereas men who were given different job description could earn as much as 15, 0000 FCFA. Our informant revealed that, she was the highest female authority in the estate but her salary was not above 40 thousands though she did not reveal the exact amount³⁸⁹.

³⁸⁷ Interview with C. Nfor, 44 Years Old, Ndu Tea Estate, August 16th 2014.

³⁸⁸ Mbeng, 8th of August 2014.

³⁸⁹ Lumba, July 7th 2014.

Another informant, who was a male, revealed that, he was now above 15, 0000 FCFA and most female pluckers told the researcher that they worked at an average of 25, 000 FCFA to 30, 000FCFA monthly. Seeing the researcher as a Saviour, they exposed their entire plight hoping we were going to carry their plight to hierarchy. Some said they had worked for several years in the estate and would have equally loved to be general overseers but were not given the opportunity. They said “they want us to only pluck tea because there is no money. If they really want us to work, let them give us the big positions with a lot of money and we will still do the work”³⁹⁰.

This revelation brought to mind the fact that there was gender inequality in job description as men were given different jobs and most women employed to work as pluckers. This indirectly affected the remuneration as male labourers generally earned higher than female labourers.

Impact of Gender Division of Roles in the Plantations

With gender division of roles in the plantations of the Cameroons, a lot of changes took place that affected the social structure of the estate in terms of educational facilities, housing and religious believes. There was equally an impact in the economic development of the communities seen in the fact that the employment rate increased and there was a general growth in the revenue of plantation workers. This was going to have an impact on the communities in terms of the growth of an urban landscape and a growth in the population.

As postulated by Konings, the creation of the Tea Estates in the Cameroons had an enormous impact on the society. He referred to as “a milestone in the history of community. This reference is particularly made to the Ndu tea estate area. It thus transformed the areas from a small, insignificant town into a busy regional commercial centre”³⁹¹. This transformation was going to be evident in the development of the educational level of the indigenes. Before the development of this estate, the educational level of the indigenes especially around the tea area was very low. This was because the first formal school especially in the Ndu tea area only came up by 1939 and was set up by British Baptist missionaries³⁹². Very few *Wimbum* (The people of Mbum land) indigenes however were interested in education given that; they had distributed their economic activities in such a way that there was no place for education. Konings postulate

³⁹⁰ Interview with J. Muba, 47 Years Old, Plucker, Kakar Village, 14th of August 2014.

³⁹¹ Konings, *Gender and Class*, p.102.

³⁹² Ngarka, *The Wimbum People of Donga Mantung*, p.62.

that “there used to be a clear sexual division of labour” and they concentrated their activities on agriculture³⁹³.

Apart from wages that were paid to labourers in the various categories as postulated above, plantation workers had other financial dealings that added to their income and thus improve on their livelihood in the plantations. Many writers on plantation agriculture like Konings, Delancey, Shobhita, Nalova, acknowledge that women in the plantations generally earned lower wages than men. The researcher agrees with this opinion seen in the fact that, these low wages was reflected in the type of job that was ascribed to women especially as highly paid jobs were generally ascribed to men. However, it is equally true that, some of these women got an additional income through other sources like *chop farms*, family allowances, and savings.

Looking at *chop farms* in the plantations, it is worth noting that, the provision of these farms by management for subsistence farming had an enormous effect on the income of especially the women given that they were most of the times the once who were involved in this farming activity. Of importance was the facts that, from the beginning of these plantations, these chop farms were given to men. This was because plantation labour, from the beginning was a male issue. Women got involved because they were the wives of these male labourers but before long, chop farms were allocated to the female labourers. The process of allocating these chop farms therefore cannot be over emphasizes; the variation in the proportion of those owning chop farms was very evident as this could be seen in the various divisions from where labourers came from. We had the Victoria, Kumba, Mamfe, Wum and Nkambe Divisions of the Cameroons³⁹⁴. All the labourers admitted that, their families, under the care of their wives were working chop farms near their work places.

There was also a variation with the occupation of the workers. Over 40% of all the field workers and head men and women admitted that they had chop farms. About 123% of the clerical and field labourers had these farms while still, only 15% of the technical staff had these chop farms. Our informant admitted that, these variations were because of some factors. It was much easier for the supervisory staff to have these farms because they were the once sharing and so could always reserve large portions for themselves. The field labourers and the technicians generally had the problem of time. They worked almost round the clock, especially during peak periods. It was even worst with the technical staff that had to always be at work to ensure that the

³⁹³ Konings, *Gender and Class*, p.100.

³⁹⁴ Ardener E., et al, *Plantation and Village in the Cameroons*, p.114.

processing machines were working well³⁹⁵. Some other labourers did not receive these chop farms because of the need to expand the plantations and therefore, the shortage of land.

Shortage of land was therefore an important factor because the number of chop farms seemed least on the West Coast, where there was little native land nearby and underdeveloped plantation land was not very suitable for such an activity. It was also low in Missellele, Mukonje and parts of the Tiko plains where almost all the land was used to develop the plantations. The area where land and farm ownership was more developed was that with a good deal of native land or the local management encouraged the use of unwanted land for allotments of this kind. It may therefore be concluded that, if more land was made available, especially in the more difficult area, a somewhat larger proportion might have worked the farms. The number of male labourers who had chop farms was mostly those who were married because these farms were worked by their wives³⁹⁶. When the plantations started employing female labourers, the number of these female labourers who had chop farms was generally more than men.

Table 11: Chop Farms in the Plantations

Plantation Site	Administrative Staff	Field Workers	N° of Male	N° of Female
Idenau	20	58	21	59
Tea	35	67	31	69
Rubber	19	26	07	22
Total	74	151	59	150

Source: Researcher's Field Work, July-August 2015.

The rubber, tea and rubber plantations provided chop farms to its female and male labourers. The relative proportion of chop farm owners was higher among administrative staff, though they were not up to field labourers. The number of female labourers with chop farms was equally higher than the men with chop farms. This was because, subsistence farming was generally viewed as a female issue and so even the men who had chop farms handed to their wives for cultivation.

Family allowances were another source of income of plantation workers in the Cameroons. These allowances mostly concerned the female labourers in the plantations. It should be noted that these allowances were not the same for each female labourer. It deferred from one woman

³⁹⁵ Interview with Jonathan Ndumbe, 53 Years Old, Field Worker, Ideneau Palm Plantation, August 20th 2015.

³⁹⁶ Ardener E., Ardener S., et al, *Plantation and Village in the Cameroons*, p.115.

to another depending on the number of children they had who were under 21 years of age. For example, a woman who had four children was given 22,000 FCFA and one with two children received 11, 000FCFA. Another contention here was that, apart from the fact that, the allowance was not paid monthly, but quarterly, some workers who were eligible did not benefit from it³⁹⁷.

Labourers in these plantations in the Cameroons equally got their additional income from savings. Ardener concludes that;

Almost all the savings in the plantation was organised. It was undertaken through clubs or tribal societies. Most of it was short-term savings, either in contribution clubs or in the 'Xmas Club' type of bank which was a feature of most Cameroonian tribal and clan unions. Contribution club proceeds were usually used to purchase cloths or remittances home, to meet the expenses of entertaining relatives or to settle debts already incurred; and the bank distributions are usually spent on miscellaneous articles at Christmas.

Almost every worker in the plantation was involved in savings with an ultimate intension of adding to the monthly income earned which was generally very small. The amount of savings also seemed to vary depending on the gender and on the marital status of especially the male labourers and the way about of their wives. Those men who were married but whom none of their wives were in the plantation area, tended to have saved more than others and the worst savers, (most likely for financial reasons) were those who had more than one wife in the area with them. There was no significant difference between the savings of those who were married with one wife and those who were single. Looking at the savings level following the different tribal composition in the plantations, it does appear that, the British Cameroons tribes with the noticeable exception of those from the Balundu area of Kumba Division all tended to be more consistent savers. Some of the money saved especially by plantation workers who came to the plantations without their wives was usually sent home for family use while some irresponsible men collected the savings and spent it all around the plantation area³⁹⁸.

Our investigation revealed that, women in the plantations saved more than men. From field work conducted in the Tiko estate amongst female labourers, more than 90% of them were engaged in savings either in a monthly 'njangi' or in a 'Christmas njangi' These women who were mostly single mothers told the researcher that they had to save some money to be able to educate their children. To them, they were the bread winners of their entire families. One said "If I no save money, I no go fit send my pikin them for school"³⁹⁹. Our investigation during

³⁹⁷ Akara, "Plantation Agriculture in the Former British Southern Cameroons", p.86.

³⁹⁸ Ardener E., et al, *Plantation and Village in the Cameroons*, pp.176-181.

³⁹⁹ Interview with Flora Njikan, 51 Years Old, Factory Worker, Tiko, August 23rd 2015.

that same field work revealed that only 30% of male labourers in that plantation were in a savings scheme and all their response was that, there was no money to save. Some men admitted that they did not save because they had more important things to do with money than savings. Savings therefore was an important source of income in the plantations that added to the remunerations of labourers but especially, female labourers who were better savers than male labourers. These savings had a positive impact on the lives of these labourers as it not only added to their income but equally help to improve on their livelihood.

Gender Administrative Labour Politics

One of the most hotly debated issues in African labour politics was administrative labour policies. For the situation of the Cameroons, there seemed to be a continuous focus on male chauvinism given that these men had always been given an upper hand in the plantation economy. Female labourers though entering the economy much more later turned to prove their worth in the fact that they were very hard working and could be more sustainable than men given their experiences as house wives and custodians of their families. The situation of administrative policies between men and women was not very friendly to this new class of labourers.

The plantations presented an unequal distribution of roles in the administrative staff of the labourers. There were more men in offices than women. Looking at the administrative organization, men occupied positions like managers, general overseer, field assistant, head of the technical sector and head of the meteorological centre while only few women occupied an administrative position. This was seen in the positions of accountants, secretaries and head nurses for all the plantations visited⁴⁰⁰.

One of our informants informed us that, she had worked so hard and climbed the labour ladder so fast. She had started from a casual labourer employed to weed from where she had been employed as a permanent plucker and was finally promoted to the position of head woman. She soon realized that she was going to end at that position. She testified that other men who started work at the same time with her had been promoted with but had been raised to the position of field assistant and given an office, while she remained head woman for the rest of the time. She was so disappointed and talking to the researcher, to her was a big relief because she wished that something should be done to ameliorate the situation⁴⁰¹. Again, the head nurse

⁴⁰⁰ Lumba, July 7th 2014.

⁴⁰¹ Interview with Magdalene Yefon, 52 Years Old, Worked as a Head Woman, Tatum Village, August 22nd 2014.

in the health centre informed us that even though she was a head nurse, there were some labourers who looked down on her because she was a woman. As a head nurse, she was in charge of all the other nurses and worked closely with the visiting doctors. She was given accommodation in the health centre because she could be called up at night to attend to a patient. This she did with all sincerity but was most of the time disrespected by patients (male labourers) who came for consultation. Some preferred to consult with the few male nurses that were present in the health centre⁴⁰².

As an accountant, Lumba was the most privileged as no woman has ever climbed to that position especially in the Ndu Tea Estate. Seated in her office, she had functions such as balancing the account and records of the Estate in terms of number of workers at the different levels, amount to be paid to the different categories of labourers in the Estate and she was equally responsible for statistics and record of monthly production. Our interview with her revealed that she had gained a lot of experience as the first permanent female labourer in the estate. She was well versed with the activities in all the different sectors in the estate, ranging from field workers to managers in the estate and would have loved to climb higher but had never been given the opportunity⁴⁰³. The secretary who was an “O” level holder, equally wished to one day have a higher office in the Ndu Tea Estate. She did not see any reason why her male counter parts occupied prestigious positions and she remain only at the level of an Estate secretary. Though she did not reveal the amount she earned as a secretary, other sources revealed that, she earned 30, 000 FCFA which was lower than the amount earned by the Field Assistants who were generally men and who were not even as educated as her. Most of them had dropped out of school and had not succeeded in having the “O” Level like her but had been given administrative positions that were more lucrative than hers.

The story of male domination in administrative positions was not different in the other plantations in the Cameroons. The Tole tea estate for instance had a dominant male labour force in the administrative sector while the oil palm and rubber plantations equally had the same story. All these plantations under study had as managers, assistant manager and supervisory officers, men. Women mostly came in at the level of head women, accountant or head nurse but even so, very few women occupied those administrative positions. A good number of them complained that their male colleagues with whom they were employed at the

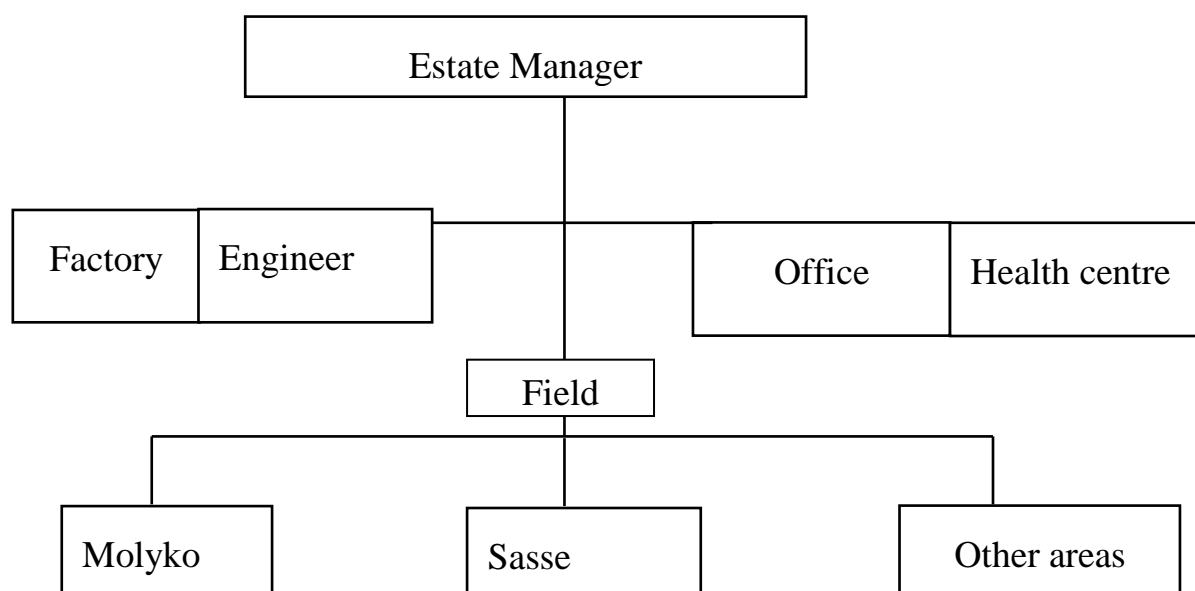
⁴⁰² Aba, August 19th 2014.

⁴⁰³ Lumba, July 7th 2014.

same time and sometimes they even having a higher qualification than them had climbed so fast in the administrative ladder that these female folk were left in wonder.

Konings equally shares this view by postulating that, following the entry of women in to the capitalist economy, women were working alongside men, and like their male colleagues, they were subordinated to managerial control and exploitation⁴⁰⁴. This subordination was vividly seen in the employment of administrative staff in the plantations in the Cameroons.

Table 12: Organizational Chart of the Tole Tea Estate



Source, conceived from Data Attained during Field Work, August 2015.

The organizational chart of the Tole Tea Estate presented the manager as the highest authority in the Estate. He was closely assisted by the general overseer of the factory who had as collaborators, the head of the technical sector, office workers and the head nurse. Beneath these groups were the field assistants who were each responsible for each of the fields (Sasse, Molyko and other fields). We had the last sets who were head men and women directly under the field assistant. These head men and women were directly in control of the pluckers in the field who formed the bulk of labourers in the Tole Tea Estate.

The highest administrative staff in the plantations was the Estate Manager. He had a lot of authority and a lot of power invested in his hands. Major decisions in the plantations were taken by him. In accordance with the objectives of the plantations which were to grow and manufacture oil palm, tea and rubber, with the subsidiary function of marketing the produce.

⁴⁰⁴ Konings, *Gender and Class*, p.6.

The manager as the overlord of the estate was determined to meet up with the objectives and aspirations of the estate⁴⁰⁵(See Appendix 2).

He had the final say in terms of managerial aspects of the office staff, the factory staff, technical, nursing and could even intervene in matters of the credit union. As managers of the various plantations, he was the liaison officer between the Estate and the general manager of the C.D.C who was resident at Bota in Limbe⁴⁰⁶.

It is important to ascertain the fact that amongst the managers who managed the plantations from 1916 to 2002, none was a woman. Male chauvinism therefore triumphed as far as managerial aspects of the plantations were concerned. (See table below). Apart from men occupying the position of estate manager, the second most important position in the Estate was that of the general overseer in the factory. This was equally occupied by a man. For the case of the Ndu tea estate, Bah Bantar had occupied the position from the 1980s till the time of our findings. It was a very delicate position that needed a lot of experience. Having worked in the Estate for long, he had gradually climbed to the position of general overseer in the factory. He controlled all the technicalities in the factory and ensured the smooth functioning of the tea production process. He was there from the time the harvested tea was brought to the factory and made sure that the tea had been well selected and well plucked. He followed every detail of tea processing very closely, from one stage to the other and had the right to halt the tea processing especially if he noticed that there was a problem.

He was equally there to make sure that all the workers, especially those concerned and involved in the tea processing were there and steady at work during the tea processing. He had the knife and the yam in terms of access into the factory⁴⁰⁷. The researcher had to wait for some time during field work because the general overseer had gone for other duties. It was only when he returned that we gained access into the factory. Another reason however for his importance was because he was the only one in the factory who had a mastery of all the stages and steps involved in the tea processing and so was the only labourer who was competent enough to educate the public on matters relating to tea processing and the tea factory. Other male administrators included the Head of the Technical Sector and the Head of the Meteorological Centre. There were also, the Mechanical Foreman and the Head of the Fuel Department. They

⁴⁰⁵ NAB, File: NW/QC/9/1976/1/BK, Report of Tour of Agricultural Projects in the North West Province of Cameroon, October, 1976, p.16.

⁴⁰⁶ Interview with John Mbeng, August 8th 2014.

⁴⁰⁷ Interview with Andrew Bah, 55 Years Old, Factory Worker, Ndu Tea Estate Factory, August 16th 2014.

all had specific functions to perform and had other personnel under their control with the responsibility of educating and directing them on what to do and at what time.

Table 13: Ndu Tea Estate Managers from 1957-2003

Name of Manager	Period of Service	Nationality	Sex
J.M.H Barrable	1957-1967	British	Male
R.D Murray	1967-1972	British	Male
P.G Sausman	1972-1973	British	Male
P.F Baxter	1973-1974	British	Male
K.P Macnicol	1974-1975	British	Male
M.B Gardiner	May 1975-Sept 1975	British	Male
B.C Alijah	Sept 1975-Oct 1975	Ghanaian	Male
K.V.S Krishna	Oct 1975- Jan 1977	Indian	Male
E.A Eloundou	1977-1983	Cameroonian	Male
R.J Murray	1983- Jan 1986	British	Male
P. Bonheure/	Jan 1986-March 1986	French	Male
K. Macnee	March 1986-Oct 1987	British	Male
R.D Ouvry	Oct 1987-1988	British	Male
R.W Scott	1988-1990	British	Male
S.M Monju	1990-1994	Cameroonian	Male
Mr.M.Monde	1994-1995	Cameroonian	Male
Mr. F.A.Fonge	1995-1999	Cameroonian	Male
Mr.C.F. Sah	1999-2003	Cameroonian	Male

Source: Konings, *Gender and Class*, p. 119, Archives of the Ndu Tea Estate, File: NTER M/1/209, Ndu Tea Estate Managers, 2009, p.3.

By 1977 the first Cameroonian to manage the Ndu estate was E.A. Eloundou who managed from 1977-1983. In 2002, the manager of the Estate was C.F. Sah. Nine Cameroonians had so far managed the Ndu Tea Estate and it is interesting to note that among these, there had never been a female manager in the Estate.

There was also a meteorological station to study the weather conditions. It was well equipped with instruments like anemometer, sunshine recorder, thermometer, hygrometer and rain gauge⁴⁰⁸.

⁴⁰⁸ Specialisation Report carried out at Ndu Tea Estate on Vegetative Propagation of Tea, Regional College Bambili, 1987, p.5.

To conclude this discourse on gender and administrative politics in the plantations in the Cameroons, one accentuates that women could be better administrators if they were given the chance to lead in plantation economy. These conclusions were drawn from some principles. Pre-colonial Cameroonian women had been prone to hard work as care takers of the family. They could be more prone to develop a stronger commitment to their work role because they became the principal bread winners for their families. Haven't practiced such a role for long, being used to it, they could not afford to regard their work role as temporary or secondary. They most probably would be more serious and with their experience at home, be able to manage human resources than these men who had no practical evidence and experience of house hold practices and management.

The plantations revealed a lot of disparities in the allocation of roles. One maintains that only 10% of administrators were women and the rest of the 90% of administrators were men. These men occupied very prestigious position like managers, general overseer and engineers and were highly remunerated while the 10% of female administrators occupied positions like secretaries and could not be given the opportunity to climb higher as their male counterparts.

Gender disparities and division of roles was vividly exposed in the technical sector. Technical here referred to labour connected with practical knowledge, skills or methods. These technicians were seen in labour provided by mechanics, break layers, carpenters, plumbers and electricians, who had specific task and role in the plantations. Our investigation revealed that there was no single female labourer in the technical sector. Randi maintained that. "That one is for men"⁴⁰⁹.

In the Mechanical sector of the plantations, there was a foreman who was at the head of the garage. Most of the garages in the plantations were constructed in the 1950s as soon as the factories were constructed. It was immediately equipped but the tractors soon entered ruin especially because there were no experts to maintain the vehicles. The Ndu tea estate in particular was unfortunate as it was never under the C.D.C from the beginning. By 1977 when the C.D.C took over, new trucks and tractors were bought in to revamp this section. The mechanical sector was not only responsible for maintaining vehicles but machines that were used in the factors equally needed the services of these mechanics who could be called up by the general overseer of the factory to check and correct a technical fault with one of the machines in the factory.

⁴⁰⁹ Randi Bantar, 46 Years Old, Ndu Tea Estate Factoryv Worker, Ndu, August 16th 2014.

The foreman therefore had a lot of authority in his hands given that he was the controller of all the other mechanics in his sector. Some could be called up to travel for long distances if a tractor had a problem in one of the plantation sites. They were therefore ready at all times to be called to work when the need arose. The Ndu Tea Estate employed a total of 5 mechanics who worked in shift⁴¹⁰.

Amongst them, the most skillful was the fore man who took off time to educate the others especially during field work on technical issues. One of the mechanics maintained that he was simply a garage boy in the Ndu Town and because he was well known for his hard work, he was recommended by some labourers in the estate and simply incorporated in to the Ndu Tea Estate technical staff. Under the fore man who was the most experience, he had developed a lot of skills and became a fulltime mechanic who could work on his own without the assistance of the foreman. He had therefore acquired skills through in-service training and was one of the best mechanics in the Ndu Tea Estate⁴¹¹. In the history of the Ndu Tea Estate especially from 1977 there had never been a female mechanic. This role was therefore particularly ascribed as that belonging to men.

Plate 14: A Cross Section of the Ndu Tea Estate Garage



Source: Photo Negative, Researcher, August 17th 2014.

⁴¹⁰ Interview with Ernest Nfor, 47 Years Old, Mechanical Foreman, Mechanical Garage, Ndu Estate, August 18th 2014.

⁴¹¹ Interview with Tom Ndi, 50 Years old, Mechanical Technician in the Ndu Tea Estate, Ndu Tea Garage, August 17th 2014.

The machines and vehicles used during the time of the Estate and Agency were bad. It was only in 1977 when the C.D.C took over that new Machines and vehicles were reintroduced.

The brick laying department was also part of the technical staff of the Ndu Tea Estate. This department was particularly responsible for construction of warehouses and repairs. The department was equally set up soon after the construction of the factory in 1959. It constructed warehouses where tea already manufactured could be stored awaiting transportation. Such warehouses were equally used to store firewood which was used in the factory. They were equally responsible for the construction of senior staff quarters and were directly under the tutelage of the general overseer of the factory. This department was equally headed by a headman who had a lot of authority and was responsible for distributing task to the other members of that department. There were all together 3 brick layers in the Ndu Tea Estate⁴¹².

Gender disparities were clearly illustrated in this department as seen in the fact that there were no female brick layers. The implications were that women were generally regarded as weak and docile.

In the technical staff, there was equally the carpentry department. This department was headed by a headman. They were responsible for every aspect of the estate, dealing with wood work. They constructed huts in the field which were used to store tea after plucking and weighing for tractors and trucks to transport to the factory. These huts were constructed at an interval of 1km from each other and were not only used to store the plucked tea but, workers equally used the huts especially in times of heavy rains in the months of July and August and in the dry season in the months of January and February. These huts therefore became resting ground for the pluckers where they waited for their plucked tea to be transported⁴¹³. Our informant testified of the use of these huts remarking that, the huts constructed by the carpenters made work to be easier as some of them at times could take a nap in those huts⁴¹⁴. The Ndu Tea Estate employed a total of 3 carpenters with gender inequality being very prominent as our investigations revealed that there was no female carpenter.

Electricians were equally employed as labourers in the Ndu Tea Estate. There was a chief electrician who was responsible for all the other electricians in the Estate. Their functions were to ensure that there was no electrical fault and whenever there was any, in any part of the Estate,

⁴¹²Interview with Nathan Munki, 56 Years Old, Head of Building Department, Ndu, August 17th 2014.

⁴¹³Interview with Emmanuel Tarla, 51 Years Old, Head of Carpentry Workshop, Ndu Tea Estate Carpentry Workshop, August 16th 2014.

⁴¹⁴ Interview with Andrew Nfor, 48 Years Old, Plucker, West 1 Plantation Site, August 18th 2014.

they were called upon to correct the fault. The chief electrician was always on the spot and worked overtime especially given that during seasons of very high yield, tea was usually manufactured at night. Just like the other senior members of staff, he was equally provided with a resident as he could be needed at any moment when there was power failure⁴¹⁵. Note should be taken that there were all together three electricians in the Ndu Tea Estate and just like in the other technical fields, there was gender inequality as none of those three was a female.

Closely linked to the electrician was a plumber who was there to ensure and check every problem connected to water failure in the Estate as a whole. An important arm of the technical department was the “firewood men” as they were popularly called. One of the informants informed us that the work was very tedious and added “*we be the most important people for this place*”. To him, their role was regarded as mean as they were called by everybody as “firewood men” but they were there to provide fuel for the machines to function. During field work, they were seen splitting wood while others were just on the spot sending the wood into the machines. They enjoyed a lot of warmth given that Ndu is very cold. This section often received a lot of visitors who came around to enjoy the warm produced by the burning flames of the wood⁴¹⁶. There were about 10 woodmen while some followed the trucks to bring the wood from the fuel bushes, others were found daily in the factory to split and pack the wood while still some were permanently in the Machine house to be supplying the machines with wood for fuel.

⁴¹⁵ Interview with Victor Ngeh, 48 Years Old, Chief Electrician, Ndu Tea Estate Factory, August 7th 2014.

⁴¹⁶ Interview with Aaron Nji, 34 Years Old, Woodman, Ndu Tea Estate Factory, July 7th 2014.

Plate 15: A Cross Section of the Wood Department in the Ndu Tea Estate



Source: Photo Negative, Bongfen, August 16th 2014.

Only energetic men were needed in this sector as energy was needed to carry, split and transport the wood. They therefore worked from morning till evening as they needed to continuously add fuel to the machines⁴¹⁷. While some were found in the fuel bushes, a majority of the wood men were found in the factory because there was a lot of division of labour in this sector as some were constantly splitting the wood, others were parking in store houses and the majority of labourers in this section were found by the machines to ensure a constant flow and supply of wood to the machine that ensured a steady supply of energy for the tea processing.

Table 14: Statistics of Technical Staff in the Plantations

Department	Oil Palm	Tea	Rubber	Sex	Time of work
Mechanical sector	5	5	3	Males	7:30am to 4:00pm
Bricklaying	3	2	2	Males	7:30am to 3:00pm
Carpenters sector	2	3	2	Males	7:30am to 3:30pm
Electrical sector	4	3	2	Males	7:30am to 3:00pm + overtime
Plumber	1	1	1	Males	7:30am to 3:00pm
Woodmen	-	10	-	Males	Worked in shifts as far as the machines were on.
Total	15	24	10		

Source: Bongfen, Data collected during Field Work from the Ndu Tea Factory, August 16th-17th 2014.

⁴¹⁷ Japhet, August 2014.

The technical sector was made up of only men. With a total of 49 technical workers, their time of work varied depending on the department involved but those that worked relentlessly were those of the mechanical department given that they had to be on the spot to ensure continuity in the production process. Electricians equally had an overtime work schedule given that they had to ensure that there was no power failure⁴¹⁸.

Gender disparities was not only found in the Ndu tea estate but equally in the technical sectors of the Tole estate, the oil palm plantation and the rubber plantations in the Cameroons.

Conclusion

A historical analysis of the origin of plantation labour and gender politics in the plantations in terms of labour recruitment and remunerations revealed that, more men were employed than women. The general trend of events in the plantations in the Cameroons as far as gender and administrative labour policies were concerned was the fact that, there was a general tendency of having mostly male supervisors and administrators in the oil palm, tea and rubber plantations. The technical field also recorded a considerable number of male labourers and with even a very high percentage given that technical education at the beginning of formal education in the Cameroons was viewed as a male issue so much so that even the female labourers who showed up with qualification were not taken very seriously. The contrast of these employed labourers in the plantations was however recorded at the level of field workers and especially in the tea estates where the majorities were female labourers, and employed as pluckers in the Tole and Ndu tea estates. Just like these female pluckers in the tea estates, there were also a good number of field workers in the oil palm and rubber plantations where they were employed as weeders, pickers and nursery attendants for the oil palm plantations and as gatherers in the rubber plantations. Gender disparities in these plantations in terms of administrative staff, technical staff and field workers seemed to be the conclusions of this part of the discourse given that the ratio of female labourers in the field were more than in the other sectors of the plantations but their remunerations were lower. A contrary situation was seen in the administrative staff that had a higher ratio of male labourers than women where remunerations were higher.

Our findings from the study suggest that, there was male chauvinism in the plantations and a majority of female labourers earned lower wages making them unable to meet up with their daily expenses. Both men and women were employed as labourers but there was a tendency

⁴¹⁸ Lumba, August 2014.

for women to undertake mostly less lucrative and traditionally feminine work in the plantations with almost all the supervisory positions ascribed to men, making these female labourers to be considered as second class in the plantations economic politics.

CHAPTER THREE

MANIFESTATIONS OF GENDER DISPARITIES IN ASSIGNING TASK IN PLANTATION AGRICULTURE

Introduction

Disparity in this context refers to the unfair differences that existed between men and women working as labourers in the plantations. Task labour relates to labourers involvement in their activities. Such disparities in task were clearly evident in the plantation agricultural sector especially in the tea estates, oil and rubber plantations. Konings presented a general statistic of labourers recruited in the various sectors by 1990. Statistics reveal that there were a lot of gender disparities in ascribing task in the plantations. There were more men in highly paid jobs like administration as opposed to women in that department⁴¹⁹. This situation was a contrast when it came to field work which was manual. Majority of women were found in this sector. Even though the number of men surpassed that of women, it is important to note that this was where the highest number of women were found. There were equally a lot of disparities in the production process of Rubber, oil palm and tea where it was investigated that, particular jobs were ascribed to female labourers and those jobs were considered mean in the production sector. Female labourers were therefore considered subservient as they were viewed as the gender that could be ready to do whatever was assigned to them.

Gender Disparities in the Plantations

Shobhita maintains that, different and many categories of male labour existed while only few existed for female. Women wage work had a lower pay while men's work wage was higher⁴²⁰. Gender disparity was manifested in plantation agriculture at various levels. This situation could be seen in the tea estates in terms of assigning task labour and job description, employment requirements, working conditions and labour remunerations. This situation was also visible in the rubber and palm plantations of the Cameroons and equally in the production process of the various agricultural products.

In 1952, just two years before the re-development of the Tole Estate, Phyllis Keberry published her classic study, *women of the grassfields*. Though focused on the Bamenda grassfields, her findings seemed largely applicable to the coastal area of Anglophone Cameroon as well. Throughout her book, she emphasizes the contradictory position of women in the society. On

⁴¹⁹ Konings, *Gender and Class*, p.99.

⁴²⁰ Shobhita and Reddock, *Women Plantation Workers*, p.34.

the one hand, there was the general recognition that women played an indispensable role in the society as child bearers and food producers. Women were themselves fully aware that they were in some ways the backbone of the country. They took great pride in their skills and competencies as farmers as well as their responsibility for feeding and caring for the household. Men were often the object of derision, being referred to as incompetent, even worthless, unable to care for themselves. These women could be seen in their majority as field labourers in the plantations in the Cameroons.

The Tole estate management decided to employ female pluckers in 1958 at the start of the estate. There were a number of factors that appeared to have influenced managerial decisions; the then expatriate managers were hardly familiar with African cultural traditions. However, they were often acquainted with and had been employed on, tea estates in India and Sri Lanka, where plucking was done mostly by women. If women in Asia were plucking tea, why could women in the Cameroons not do same? Due to the high unemployment rate of women on tea estates in Asian countries, and elsewhere, tea plucking had to a large extent come to be identified as “women’s work”. On the basis of the Asian experience, there was a general believe in management circles that female pluckers tended to be not only cheaper, but also more productive and more subservient than male pluckers.

The idea of enjoying these benefits on the Tole estate must have been particularly attractive to management. At the time the Tole estate was opened, there were already some women working on the C.D.C estate usually on casual or seasonal basis. These were mostly the wives of estate workers and women from the surrounding villages. The management was confronted by a serious shortage of male labour on the plantations during the fifties due to the spread of local cocoa and coffee production. This gave the impetus to a large recruitment drive among women⁴²¹.

Epale admits that the C.D.C had to undertake the employment of female labourers to solve the problem of shortage of labour and this remedy was seen in the employment of female field workers⁴²². The estate labour force rose steadily up to the mid-1980s, when the economic crisis gave rise to mass layoffs. Generally speaking therefore, female labourers concentrated in the fields as pluckers.

⁴²¹ Konings, *Gender and Class*, p.29.

⁴²² Epale, *Plantation and Development*, pp.137-146.

Striking in contrast to the Tole Estate, the Ndu Estate started to employ almost exclusively male pluckers. This raises a number of important questions that may be answered. Why did the E.A.C management opt for the recruitment of male pluckers? What percentage of women were finally recruited in the Estate and were there disparities in the job description.

Our investigation gave answers to all the questions above. Agriculture was and, still is, the mainstay of the local economy in the Ndu society. There used to be a clear sexual division of labour. The role of men was usually limited to clearing new farms and transporting the harvest. The women did all the rest of the work; girls assisted their mothers from a very early age. Women grew a variety of food crops to feed the family and increasingly to market a surplus and earn an income of their own. These food crops included maize, coco yams, cassava, groundnuts, beans, sweet, and Irish potatoes. Women were socialized in their food producing role to such an extent that they tended to be proud of this very demanding responsibility and their prestige within the family and village depended on the quality and quantity of food they produced⁴²³.

The men used to hunt and trade in small livestock (poultry, pigs, sheep and goats) kola nuts and palm products (palm oil, palm wine and raphia). They engaged in the long distance trade in kola nuts to Nigeria, which used to be an important source of income before the start of labour migration and coffee production⁴²⁴. After the Second World War, there were two important changes in the men's roles: first, there was a steady increase in male labour migration to the coastal plantations. Local labour resources had hardly been exploited after the establishment of colonial rule because of the isolated position of the *Wimbum* area in the Bamenda Grassfield. Serious shortages of labour on the coastal estates after World War II encouraged active labour recruitment among *Wimbum* men. Gwan revealed that about 5-6% of coastal plantation labour during the 1960s and 1970s came from Donga-Mantung Division⁴²⁵. Secondly the introduction of Arabica coffee provided a new major source of revenue to the men and an insurance against old age.

Cash crop production together with population growth expansion of cattle herds of the Fulani who share the region with the *Wimbum* and the creation of the Ndu Tea Estate brought in major economic changes. It provided local wage employment and in its wake, a whole range of other

⁴²³ Konings, *Gender and Class*, p.102.

⁴²⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴²⁵ E.A. Gwan, "Types, Processes and Policy Implications of Various Migrations in West Cameroon", Ph.D Thesis in History, University of California, 1989, p.64.

income-generating activities especially in trade, commerce and services. The Ndu society was therefore transformed and with the insistence of the chief, an exclusive male labour force had to be employed⁴²⁶.

The 1959 report on the economy of Southern Cameroons under the United Kingdom Trusteeship revealed that tea just like cocoa was a minor but old established plantation crop. Though started at Tole in 1928, the Ndu Estate later surfaced in the 1950s and saw rapidity in growth that this report estimated that “by the end of 1959 some 750 acres had been planted; and the plan was to consolidate at 1000 acres before proceeding to 2000 acres...and there was a chance of considerable expansion as mature tea needed one adult worker per acre to maintain”⁴²⁷(See Appendix 3).

In order to get adult workers to work in the newly created Ndu Tea Estate, the management engaged on employing male pluckers who were believed to be very powerful given that plantation work was viewed as a male issue. The Ndu Tea Estate unlike the Tole Tea Estate therefore operated on this principle and began to employ an exclusively male labour force especially in the plucking department. This was again made easy and possible due to a report on the alarming number of deaths on the coastal plantations. A lot of labourers had been employed on the coastal planted of Mukonje and Ekona and those from Nkambe were included as revealed by Ardener⁴²⁸. It was regrettable to note that, most of the labourers died along the coast of diseases like dysentery and influenza⁴²⁹. It was in view of these death rate that the supply of labour to the coast reduced and then these labourers concentrated on the newly created Ndu Tea Estate which was highly in need of especially male labourers in order to meet up with the agreement contracted between the Fon of Ndu, HRH Nformi which stimulated that “employment on the estate should be a virtual male monopoly”⁴³⁰.

One of our informants who was described by Mr. R.J. Murray as intelligent, dynamic, hardworking and reliable⁴³¹, revealed that, from the start of the estate, one could see mostly healthy men plucking tea in the estate. These men he added could work for hours because of the enthusiasm with which they received the newly created estate. Just like Ndu women going

⁴²⁶ Konings, *Gender and Class*, pp. 102-103.

⁴²⁷NWRA, File: no Q b/a/1959/5, The Economy of the Southern Cameroons under the United Kingdom Trusteeship, 1959, p.17.

⁴²⁸ Warmington, et al, *Plantation and Village in the Cameroons*, pp. 204-207.

⁴²⁹ NAB, File: Q d/a/19 no 53/16, Bamenda Labour Employed on Plantation, 1953, p.1.

⁴³⁰ Konings, *Gender and Class*, p.104.

⁴³¹M. Ngeh, “Specialization Practical Report Carried out at Ndu Tea Estate on Vegetative Probation of Tea”, Regional College of Agriculture, Bambili, 1987, p.2.

to the farm with basket on their backs, so was the case with these men who carried the baskets into which the plucked tea was kept on their backs and worked tirelessly and paid only according to work done and according to the quantity of tea that was plucked⁴³².

Women were equally employed as Pluckers but with a lot of reservation, discrimination and disparities even in the job description in this section. These women were especially employed by the Estate and Agency Company to perform mean jobs like hoeing of tea beds and weeding in the tea farms⁴³³.

Table 15: Statistics of Female Labour Pluckers in the Ndu Tea Estate

Year	Status			Total number	%
	Singles	Widows	Married		
1977	7	4	2	13	0.13
1980	25	15	10	50	0.5
1986	47	30	20	97	0.97
1990	42	27	19	88	0.88
1995	62	33	27	122	1.22
2000	66	47	38	151	1.51

Source: Konings, *Gender and Class*, p. 108, Bongfen, Data Collected During Field Work, August 2014.

Employment of women was therefore evident from the start of the Estate but with a lot of discrimination seen in the fact that they could only do mean jobs and worked on contract basis. The Ndu women were generally subjected to patriarchal domination in the Ndu society where these women were generally casted as docile and given a secondary position in the society as they were mostly considered as child bearers and custodians of the family. Ironically, these managerial positions if ascribed to these women were going to train them to be better managers than men but unfortunately, they were never given the opportunity to exercise their managerial skills.

One of our informants revealed that at the start of the estate, they were deprived of their farm land and when they went to management, they were asked to come in a group so that they could

⁴³² Monde, August 13th 2014.

⁴³³ Ntobo, "Female Labour", p.115.

be employed on contract basis to perform mostly casual jobs like weeding⁴³⁴. Our investigation came out with the conclusion that, these women from the start of the estate undertook arduous jobs and worked mostly in the tea beds. Their efforts were generally undermined as they were not given the opportunity to exercise their talents in higher positions in the estate.

The aspect of gender considerations cannot be over emphasized in plantation agriculture in the Cameroons. Though the employment of women in most of the plantations in the Cameroons started on contract basis, the situation was going to change as soon as there was an increasing demand for labourers. Female labourers were now employed on a permanent basis. These women even though few but mostly seen as field workers were very hard working and could do better work than men because they had been used to manual work in their homes⁴³⁵.

The main reason why more women could only be employed in the fields was because of their educational level. Our informant revealed that, most of the women were not educated because accordingly to the tradition in the 1960s, mostly a boy child was sent to school in most of the societies in the Cameroons. It was even worst in the grassfields area than in the coastal area. This formal education had been viewed as very foreign and so the local folk preferred to send boys to go and face this new culture than the girls. To them, they were protecting the girl child from something new and preferred informal education for the girls by allowing them to work in the farms⁴³⁶. These women therefore were not given the opportunity to be educated and when the capitalist economy came, they could only be employed as pluckers given that this sector did not need any formal knowledge to be applied.

These female Pluckers were therefore employed as soon as they were ready to work and even started work on the very first day of their employment⁴³⁷. The puzzling situation was however the fact that, even when a few educated female job seekers later came for employment opportunities in the 1980s, their educational qualification was not taken in to considerations. They were mostly employed just as before as unskilled labourers working mostly in the fields. In the palm sector, there were more of gang head men than women but with the majority being female field pickers though under male gang heads. A gang head had other specific duties to perform in the field. He had a minimum of 25-30 workers under his supervision and was in charge of positioning pickers in the different positions in the field. They took charge of the

⁴³⁴ Asana Winteh, 92 Years Old, First Female Labourer in the Ndu Tea Estate, Karka Village, December 12th 2014.

⁴³⁵ Japhet Koni, 62 Years Old, Retired Factory Manager, Ndu, August 20th 2014.

⁴³⁶ Goheen, *Men own the Fields*, p. 36.

⁴³⁷ Lumba, July 7th 2014.

quantity of palm, picked, placed each picker under their control and recorded their daily record especially by the close of the day when palm fruits was weight. They equally settled disputes that erupted among team members and reported to the field assistant when the matter was going out of hand. The gang head men and women therefore had some level of authority especially among their team members in the field and were highly respected by team members given that they were the only ones who could propose a field worker to climb to a higher level in the administrative chain of the palm plantation⁴³⁸. However, there was a lot of disparity in the number of gang men and women in the plantations in terms of number and status. This disparity was also seen in terms of the number of female field workers and male field workers as exemplified by the table below.

Table 16: Statistics of Gang heads Men and Women in the Oil Palm Plantations

Name of plucker	Sex	Position	Status
Joseph Fuh	Male	Gang Head Man	Married
Melon Bella 1999	Male	Gang Head Man	Married
Or Desia Kibung 1998	Female	Gang Head Woman	Single
Nyeh magerale 1997	Female	Picker	Single
Nfogang Cyprain 1990	Male	Gang Head Man	Married
Mukunje Isaac, 1993	Male	Climber	Married
Christopher Mesumbe, 1989	Male	Gang Head Man	Married
Aaron Nji 1980	Male	Plucker	Married
Matilda Mayer 1994	Female	Plucker	Married
Victor Ngeh 1995	Male	Head man	Married

Source: Bongfen, Data Collected during Field Work, August 2015.

The table above reveals that there were a lot of gender disparities in the palm plantations. Out of every 10 pickers and selectors of palm in the field, there were more female pickers with more gang head men. It was equally investigated that 90%% of the gang head women were either single or widows; this brings to mind male opposition to female labour in the plantation.

For the Ndu tea estate, the situation was a little bit different. Though the Ndu Tea Estate started to employ predominantly male Pluckers, it is important to note that management would have preferred female pluckers. Our investigation revealed that the chief's rejection of female

⁴³⁸ Augustine Afamba, 53 Years Old, Gang Head Man in the Field, Idenau, August 8th 2015.

employment on the estate was a great disappointment to the Estate and Agency negotiation team which had informed him that the company preferred female pluckers to male ones. There were several reasons for the company's preference to female labour which included the facts that;

There was a general belief in management circle that women were naturally more suited to pick tea. Because they had nimble fingers, were more docile seen in their habituated to subordination and were cheaper exemplified by their income which was defined as supplementary to that of the so-called breadwinner, the husband. The Company's long experience with tea plucking in India and Sri Lanka had strengthened their managerial beliefs. The idea of enjoying similar benefits on a tea estate in Cameroon and particularly the newly created Ndu Tea Estate must have been particularly attractive to manage⁴³⁹.

One reason for preferring female pluckers was the fact that tea plucking had to a large extent become identified as women's work due to the high employment rate of women on the tea Estates in Asia and elsewhere. The Estate and Agency Company Management was insensitive to the possible differences between the African and Asian socio-cultural situation with regard to the position of women. Small wonder, that the Estate and Agency Company negotiation team questioned the chief as to why women in Cameroon and Ndu in particular could not be engaged in tea plucking like their sisters in Assam⁴⁴⁰.

Tea Pluckers in the Ndu Tea Estate brings to mind contrasting situation with the Tole estate in the South West Region of Cameroon. This was revealed by Akara in his "Plantation Agriculture in the Former British Southern Cameroons: Female Labour on the Tole Tea Estate" when he concludes that "The first major experiment started off with the recruitment of a predominantly female labour force at Tole in 1958". From its inception the majority of the women on the estate were pluckers. In 1988, for example, women comprised 63% of the pluckers (field workers) and in 2002, the figure rose to 72.2%. They worked as tea pluckers where no formal education and training was required. This was because many of them had not gone to school. The C.D.C management preferred women at Tole for a number of reasons. One of the most outstanding of there was the assumption that women were going to be docile and obedient in the labour process"⁴⁴¹.

⁴³⁹Konings, "Chieftaincy, Labour Control and Capitalists Development in Cameroon", p.336.

⁴⁴⁰*Ibid.*

⁴⁴¹ Akara, "Plantation Agriculture in the Former British Southern Cameroon", p.111.

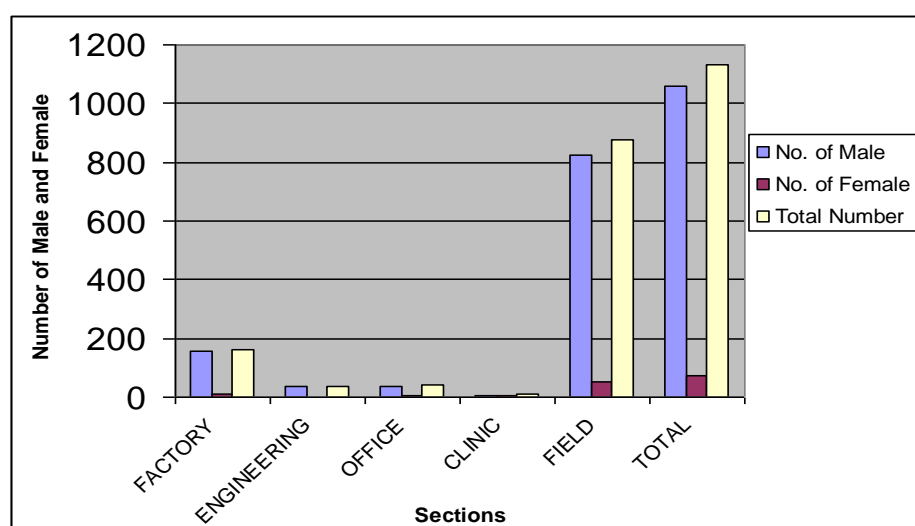
The Ndu Tea Estate just like the Tole Tea Estate as exemplified by the above extract had the same view of women, but for the fact that with the Ndu Estate, chieftaincy control had an effect on the employment of these female pluckers. By 1977 when these women were employed, they were discriminated upon given that, 95 percent of the recruited female labourers in the Ndu Tea Estate were recruited as pluckers. The 5% could only occupy the position of tea test attendants and nurses. Gender disparities and division of roles in the estate was therefore evident seen in the fact that these women could not go beyond field workers. By 2002 however, the gap had been closed to an extent given that female labourers could be found in the factory, and administration. That notwithstanding gender disparities in terms of controls, and in terms of work description still remained a reality in plantation agriculture in the Cameroons.

Table 17: Ndu Tea Estate Labour Force in 1990

Section	No. of Male in %	No. of Female in %	Total Number
FACTORY	154	9	163
ENGINEERING	36	0	36
OFFICE	39	5	44
CLINIC	5	6	11
FIELD	825	54	879
TOTAL	1,059	74	1,133

Source: Ndu Tea Estate Records, 2014.

Graph 1: Graphical Representation of Ndu Tea Labour Force



Source: Ndu Tea Estate Records, 2014.

Statistics on the table and graph above showed male dominance in some of the operations, which were considered “male jobs.” Strictly male operations included the engineering sector. A very minimal number of women (five) by the time of the survey were found in the office whereas the greatest number of women worked in the field as pluckers. There is therefore a general tendency to assign unskilled work to women in plantation agriculture with very little or at times no administrators amongst them. The table above revealed that the male labour force dominated in almost every aspect of the estate but in the plucking sector women were highly employed as compared to other sectors. The 5% of female administrators only ended at the level of accountant. Gender disparities were therefore evident⁴⁴².

It is interesting to note that by 1990 there was a general opposition to female labour in the Tea Estates, spear headed by male labourers. Most women who started work on the estates even on temporary weeding contracts and later pluckers faced a tough time on the Ndu estate. Several reports mentioned that the male workers engaged in various modes of resistance against the women’s employment. J.M.H Barrable, the first estate manger lodged a complaint with the union about this behaviour of the men. Konings postulates that, “recently there were many women who reported that they had been threatened in various ways should they work on contract on the estate. This was not in the interest of the estate. At certain times of the year, work becomes out of hand due to the quick growth of weeds an only by employing contract workers could this be held in check”⁴⁴³.

“Recently, there were many women who reported that they had been threatened in various ways should they work on the estate ... this is not in the interest of the estate. At certain times of the year, work becomes out of hand due to the quick growth of weeds and only by employing contract workers can this be held in check”⁴⁴⁴. Some male overseers were equally inclined to maltreat these women. They were accused of under payment. These women finished their work and were told to be paid only half money because they were bad women⁴⁴⁵.

Male opposition to female employment on the estate continued as reflected in the minutes of the staff representative preparatory meetings during the 80s. On 10 June 1986, it was remarked that employment of females should be well examined because there are some of them who abandon their husbands and come to work on the estate⁴⁴⁶.

⁴⁴² Konings, *Labour Resistance*, p. 81.

⁴⁴³ Konings, *Gender and Class*, p.104.

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.98.

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p.99.

⁴⁴⁶ C.D.C Ndu Tea Estate Record of Minutes of Staff Representative Preparatory Meeting, 1981, p3.

Our investigation revealed that male opposition to female pluckers in the estate was because they tend to be much younger and better educated than the men. These were precisely the women who tend to resist the traditional female roles and patriarchal controls in the local community⁴⁴⁷. These women even when educated were still given arduous jobs in the tea Estate. Konings concludes that they would have preferred a job less arduous than plantation work and more in line with their educational achievements. They had no alternative but to work on the estate and to do that which they were asked to do.

One will therefore conclude that male pluckers had been given the upper hand in the Tea Estates seen in their numerical superiority. This was however due to the political and chieftaincy set-up of the community. Female pluckers even though small and less educated from the beginning were neglected but were later on employed in the estate especially as pluckers in the fields. They were maltreated and greatly opposed in the estate by the male labourers which still bring to mind part the questions to be answered by this research work.

Gender Disparities in the Tea Estates

These gender roles were used very successfully to justify such inequalities which existed, as excluding women from equal access to leadership and decision making positions in the family as well as in politics, academia, the corporate world and especially the economic sector which is the researcher's main point of focus⁴⁴⁸.

In the case of the Cameroons, these women were unable to obtain the job and were not exposed to the economic world. They were convinced that they were not fit for careers in such areas. Their place was in the kitchen and to take care of household chores. The man was considered the bread winner of the family who needed to go out there and gather enough for his household⁴⁴⁹. Goheen corroborated Tyson's idea by concluding in her *Gender and Power in the Cameroon Grassfields*, that;

*Men own the fields, women own the crops. Control over women's productive labour has been central to pre-colonial male hierarchies and post-colonial Kinship. Relation and the manipulation of marriage payments and alliances have been key variables with regards to control over labour in African States. Hierarchy was gendered. There was a cultural emphasis on the complementarity of power between male and female qualities*⁴⁵⁰.

From Goheen's analysis of the Cameroonian woman vis-à-vis men, it is no doubt that power belonged to men and there was struggle over such power between men and women who ended

⁴⁴⁷ Konings, "Chieftaincy, Labour Control and Capitalists Development in Cameroon", pp.337-338.

⁴⁴⁸ Tyson, *Critical Theories Today*, p.84.

⁴⁴⁹ Interview with Emmanuel Nformi, 60 Years Old, Fon of Ndu, Ndu Palace, April 6th 2014.

⁴⁵⁰ Goheen, *Men Own the Fields*, p.16.

up being relegated. However, the situation of labour recruitment in the Tole estate was quite different from that of Ndu. The Tole estate began with the recruitment of a predominantly female labour force. Before all these, it is pertinent to answer the question of why tea cultivation in the Cameroons.

Anglophone Cameroon was the centre of tea production in Cameroon. This process was started by the Germans during their epoch in Cameroon. Though it never developed, it was not until 1928 when the German plantation owners, encouraged by the British, who had taken over the territory encouraged tea cultivation and an experimental tea farm of 26 hectares was opened at Tole, some five kilometres from Buea Town⁴⁵¹. Tea cultivation in Cameroon was influenced by many factors.

The availability of land and the rich volcanic soils for plantation agriculture gave a lot of impetus to plantation owners. The introduction of plantation agriculture in the South West Region under colonial rule resulted in large-scale expropriation of land. When the Tole Estate was created in 1954, the C.D.C which had taken over most of the ex-German plantation land was not depended on the good will of the local chiefs for the supply of land. They had no authority over the C.D.C Estates because such land which had already been made available through land expropriation was going to form the bases for tea production⁴⁵².

To establish the Ndu Estate, the situation was different. Mr Sydney Bolster, an E.A.C Director returned to Anglophone Cameroon. He was commissioned to survey the Ndu area for the purpose of setting up an estate. When the team arrived at Bamenda, they left for Nkambe as misdirected by the Senior Divisional Officer (S.D.O) who had preferred Nkambe to Ndu saying that it will contribute to the rapid development of the Divisional Capital. The team arrived Nkambe and started to survey the area in the vicinity of the town. The local population had not received any information about the objective of the team's mission. When rumours spread that its farming and grazing land were about to be expropriated, they revolted and started to erect barricades to block the team's access to its land on the ground that it will endanger women's food production and the Fulani cattle grazing (Ngenge, 1983).

The team later learned that it had been misdirected and it took off for Ndu accompanied by Messrs J. Nsame and J.T. Ndze (Two Parliamentarians). It approached the then chief of Ndu, His Royal Highness William Nformi. It told the chief that it planned to survey the area and

⁴⁵¹ Konings, *Gender and Class*, p.15.

⁴⁵² *Ibid.*, p.11.

requested that he allocates land for the creation of a tea estate. In the North West administrative and traditional organisation, the chief was the custodian of the land and all his subjects. This is corroborated by Tohnji when he states that “The chief by tradition was the sole trustee and distributor of all the land in his chieftdom and decided on the labour process”⁴⁵³. The two deputies were able to convince the chief about the benefits of the introduction of tea production in his area of jurisdiction. It was going to stimulate local development and halt the growing flow of labour to the coastal plantations. The chief then offered the EAC a vast land of approximately 1.660 hectares between Ndu and Nso⁴⁵⁴. The availability of such land therefore acted as a factor for the establishment of the second tea Estate in Anglophone Cameroon.

Closely related to the availability of land was the suitable climate and soils for the cultivation of tea. Teke revealed that the North West Region in which is found the Ndu Tea posed a tropical humid type of climate which exhibited significant variation and provided sufficient ecological diversity that permitted the cultivation of many crops such as coffee (Arabica and Robusta), oil palm, various food crops and tea which was essentially the only commercial crop in the Region⁴⁵⁵. Konings postulates that, the E.A.C. representatives collected soils samples from the Ndu area and analysed in London and it was discovered that the soils were suitable for tea cultivation. According to the report on tour of agricultural development projects in the North West Region of Cameroon by J.N Gabuin in October 1976, the climate and soils of the Ndu area were suitable, with an excellent climate with well distributed rainfall and no severe dry season. It had highly humid good soil for tea with soils not needing sulphates of Ammonic but Calcium Nitrates⁴⁵⁶.

Another report on the suitability for the cultivation of tea of lands in the Bamenda area of the Southern Cameroon by Eden SC.F.R.IC made in 1957 concluded that, the few climatic data that were made gave some indication of a general fertility of the soil and they were compared to those of East Africa where tea is grown⁴⁵⁷. The suitability of soils and climate of the area stimulated Monde to start up his personal small holder farm in Kuwar Wowo, a village near Ndu. This new individual tea farm measured an area of about 24 by 50 Metres⁴⁵⁸. Akara

⁴⁵³ W.T. Samah, “Chiefs (Traditional Rulers) in Anglophone Cameroon and Modern Governance: 1961-2000”, A ph. D. Thesis in History, University of Yaounde 1, 2006, p.76.

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p.103.

⁴⁵⁵ J. Teke, “Role of North West Region Out-Migrants to the Cameroon Development Corporation”, p.46.

⁴⁵⁶ NWRA, File:No. NW/QC/9.1976/1/BC, Report of Tour of Agricultural projects in the North West Province of Cameroon, October 1976, p.19.

⁴⁵⁷ N A B, File:No,QC/G/1957/2, Report on the Suitability on the Cultivation of Tea of Lands in the Bamenda Area, Southern Cameroons, 1957, p.5.

⁴⁵⁸ Monde, August 13th 2014.

concludes that the Germans were attracted by some geographical advantages while C.R Harler states that, tea could be grown economically in many parts of the world where there was a warm moist summer and a cool season. The fertility value of the volcanic soils around mount Cameroon greatly contributed to the setting up of plantations for the cultivation of cash crops including tea⁴⁵⁹. Bederman buttresses this point by adding that,

*The Tole Tea Estate is situated on undulating to hilly Land at the foot of the steep Eastern slope of Mount Cameroon at 2,000 to 2,00 feet elevation. The heavy rainfall (average 118 inches), along with the extending dry season, warm temperatures and high humidity provide an adequate climate for tea cultivation. Although soils of established tea district are described as typically leached, poor in lime and other bases, acidic in reaction, and are generally low in organic matter. Tole soils are atypical in that they are rich in bases and almost neutral in reaction.*⁴⁶⁰.

Examining all the above evidences, it is clear that the cultivation of tea in Anglophone Cameroon especially in Tole and Ndu was going to be inevitable due to favourable factors like availability of good soils, climate and adequate humidity.

Another important factor influencing tea cultivation and development was the Second World War which had both direct and indirect effects on tea cultivation. It gave rise to the first serious attempt to stimulate local tea cultivation. Tea growing came to be considered as a ‘A war effort production’. It was to help alleviate local tea shortages caused by the war. To this effect, tea production at Tole was expanded for some years. Though this renewed interest was important during the war period, production nonetheless remained with output rising from a few thousand pounds in 1943 to 26,208 pounds in 1947⁴⁶¹.

The C.D.C. takeover of cash crop production from the Custodian of enemy property in 1947, assisted by a number of foreign financial institutions such as the World Bank, (W B) the International Development Association (I.D.A), The Common Wealth Development Corporation (COMDEV), The European Development Fund (F.E.D.), and the Central Fund for Economic Cooperation (C.C.E.), the C.D.C. virtually doubled its cultivated area between 194/47 and 1985 to some 40000 hectares. The C.D.C was ordered by the government to proceed with the production of tea which had been started during the Second World War. In 1948 however, the management decided to discontinue tea production until Tole Tea could be made economically viable. It was not until 1954 that redevelopment started as the estate’s policy of effecting more diversification in agricultural production⁴⁶².

⁴⁵⁹ Akara, “Plantation Agriculture in the Former British Southern Cameroon”, p.28.

⁴⁶⁰ Bederman, *The C.D.C: Partner in National Growth*, p.50.

⁴⁶¹ Konings, *Gender and Class*, p.16.

⁴⁶² *Ibid.*, p.17.

Furthermore, the tea culture was revived due to the shortage of the beverage in British West Africa. The British Resident in Victoria and the general manager of the Cameroon's plantations promised to make the British Cameroons self - sufficient in tea requirements therefore negating the necessity of importing tea and using high- priority shipping space. A report was therefore made for tea export to Nigeria to help alleviate shortages there. Tea growing was equally revived due to its need for local consumption⁴⁶³.

The tea culture in Cameroon was motivated by the new political leader, President Ahmadou Ahidjo. After the achievement of independence for French Cameroon in 1960 and reunification with British Cameroon in 1961, the new president was not only interested in political development but also in economic development with special interest in tea production for the sake of both capital consumption and the necessary diversification of agricultural production. Several specialists were commissioned to conduct survey missions, with a view to localising sites suitable for implementation of tea projects.

Initially, these missions were confined to the Cameroons. Mr Lhomme Desages, a consultant at the *Institut Francaise du Cafe du Cacao et Autres Plantes Stimulantes (I.F.C.C.)*, was the first expert to prospect a number of sites in both federated states. Government interest was strengthened by both the management of the C.D.C and the E.A.C. in expanding tea production in Cameroon⁴⁶⁴.

⁴⁶³ Bederman, *The C.D.C: Partner in National Growth*, p.50.

⁴⁶⁴ Konings, *Gender and Class*, p.19.

Table 18: Cultivated Tea Area in the Cameroons

Year	Cultivated Area (H A)	Crop Production	Crop Trading Account (FCFA m)	Profit/Loss (FCFA m)
1977	102.80	1.003	510	
1978		1.710	1.113.1	
1979		2.015	1.200.6	
1980	1.083	1.950	1.190	
1981	1.149	1.882	1.288.6	
1982	1.233	2.131	1.702.6	+528
1983	1.382	1.801	1421.5	+275
1984	1.505	2.103	1.784	+391
1985	1.465	2.299	2.625	+1.034
1986	1.508	3.206	3.214	+1.097
1987	1507	2.797	1.855	_262
1988	1.507	2.882	1.466	_616

Source: Konings, *Gender and Class*, p.20.

A considerable expansion of tea production in Cameroon was very evident because with the C.D.C. takeover of the Ndu Estate in 1977, she was sure to increase its labour force. Labourers were going to come from the already established and well developed Tole tea estate and equally from the local population.

Table 19: Ndu Tea Estate Cultivated Area, Output and Labour Force

Year	Cultivated Area (Ha)	Output	Number Of Workers
1957	70		70
1958	300		300
1959	386		500
1960	416		600
1961			600
1962		16	629
1963		164	554
1964		244.6	588

1965		216.8	603
1966		271.4	609
1967		448.9	744
1968		532.9	793
1969		552.1	782
1970		679.7	737
1971/72		620.8	747
1972/73	422	741.3	781
1973/74		801.6	801
1974/75		1,001.5	846
1975/76		459.8	896
1976/77	575	711.4	947
1977/78		879.5	1,045
1978/79		1,007.2	1,042
1979/80		1,005.5	1,237
1980/81		1,145.5	1,456
1981/82		961.5	1,580
1982/83		985.6	
1983/84		1,181.0	
1984/85	592	1,446.8	1,563
1985/86		1,471.6	
1986/87		1,490.0	1,750
1987/88		1,125.4	
1988/89		1,210.2	
1989/90	613	1,200.3	1,133

Source: Konings, *Gender and Class*, p.107⁴⁶⁵

1977 revealed a dramatic increase in cultivated area from 422 in 1973 to 575 and an increase in labour force to 947. This drastic increase was as a result of the C.D.C's decision to employ female labourers who worked together with male labourers who had been employed since the start of the estate in 1957.

⁴⁶⁵ Konings, *Gender and Class*, p.107

Employment in the Ndu Tea Estate started in 1957 with a predominantly male employment. Women could only be timidly employed to perform mean jobs only after obtaining permission from their husbands. Monde revealed that as a labourer in the tea estate, it was difficult to see a woman permanently employed. Their place was in the house. They went to the farm and harvested food for their husbands and children⁴⁶⁶.

Patriarchy was thus very prominent in the Ndu society which affected the men and women working in the Estate. Patriarchy was in other words regarded as sexist. It therefore promoted the belief that women were innately inferior to men. To keep these women powerless, they were denied the rights to education. Most parents in the Ndu society gave preference to male education and he was considered the hope for the future generation and an ensure of the family lineage. The woman according to the Ndu society was considered a stranger in his own land as it was believed that she would one day get married and will belong to another family thus nothing had to be invested on her and even if her family spent anything on the woman, her future husband had to pay back to her parents before taking her away⁴⁶⁷.

Miriam testified that she had never seen the four walls of a classroom because her parents preferred sending her brothers to school. She was left to go to the farm with her mother who was suffering from the same fate⁴⁶⁸. Gender disparities in the Ndu society and patriarchy affected the rate of employment in the estate. Women could not occupy important positions in the estate because they could not read and write. They were from the creation of the Ndu Tea Estate employed on casual bases to perform the mean jobs in the estate and were only employed on permanent bases from 1977 when the Cameroon Development Corporation took over the estate from the Estate and Agency Company Limited. Even till then, the highest qualified woman was the stores accountant who had ended at the level of haven an Advanced level. Again, gender division of role and disparity especially in job description could be vividly seen in the estate in the fact that, from creation of the estate till 2002 when our study ends and even beyond, a woman has never managed the estate even with the fact that some educated women were transferred from the South West Region to work in the estate (Coastal women unlike the Ndu women had been exposed to education earlier due to colonialism and the fact that they were found at the coast⁴⁶⁹).

⁴⁶⁶ Monde, August 13th 2014.

⁴⁶⁷ Nfor, August 10th 2014.

⁴⁶⁸ Talla August 9th 2014.

⁴⁶⁹ Member, December 11th 2014.

The Tole Estate concentrated on the recruitment of a predominantly female labour force because of the shortage of male labourers in some arduous but vital task. The recruitment of these female labourers in the Tole estate was a strategy to hold back the male labourers given that there was a lot of fluctuation in the labour market and so they could easily stay in the plantation if their wives had a steady source of income as plantation employees. The management therefore did all it could to secure the employment of wives of those working in the plantation.

The recruitment of some married men was influenced by the decision of whether to allow their wives to work or not. For example, Pauline Abid accepted to work on the estate in 1967 because her recruitment was a precondition for the employment of her husband⁴⁷⁰. This was corroborated by Nabola Matilda who admitted that, it was as a result of her acceptance to work as a plucker in the estate that her husband was allowed and maintained as one of the heads men in the Tole estate⁴⁷¹. The authorities preferred female labourers on the estate because it was believed that by nature, women were passive and subservient.

Women were thought to be more docile and played a quieter role than men in plantation farming. Furthermore, it was generally believed that wage employment was of less significant in the lives of women than men. This could be explained by the fact that job openings to women in the capitalist world were few and wage employment gave them a certain level of freedom from customary patriarchal control. This was because it gave them the opportunity to become financially independent⁴⁷².

However, patriarchal control could not forestall an increase in the flow of female labourers in the Tole estate. This is exemplified by the fact that, the estate had 1.604 permanent workers and women constituted 63 percent of this figure. Some of them had accompanied their husbands to the plantations but a good number of them came on their own⁴⁷³.

⁴⁷⁰ Akara, *Plantation Agriculture in the Former British Southern Cameroons*, p.42.

⁴⁷¹ Interview with Matilda Nabola, 81 Years Old, Worked as a Plucker in the 90s, Tole, August 25th 2015.

⁴⁷² Konings, *Gender and Class*, p.7.

⁴⁷³ Akara, "Plantation Agriculture in the Former British Southern Cameroons", p.43.

Table 20: Status of Women in the Tea Estates

Name	Age	Status	Post Occupied	Year of Work
Lumba Elizabeth	52	Single	Tea test attendant	1979
Namondo Alice	59	Single	Plucker	1985
Nformi Vivian	72	Single	Plucker	1978
Enanga Brenda	51	Married	Tea Test Attendant	1985
Muba Juliana	47	Married	Plucker	1982
Mumah Angeline	50	Widow	Plucker	1995
Fabiola Monteh	42	Single	Plucker	1999
Bombi Elizabeth	42	Single	Plucker	1998
Ordesia Kibong	54	Single	Head woman	1982
Wanjar Victorine	51	Single	Plucker	1981
Ndamsa Juliana	62	Married	Plucker and later head woman	1979
Matilda Mayer	87	Widow	Plucker	1982
Ngeyu Confidence	70	Widow	Farmer	1972
Marie Lobe	54	Widow	Plucker	1992

Source: Researcher's Field Work, December 2014 and August 2015.

From the statistics above, it can be concluded that most women employed in the estate were single giving a percentage of 50%. The married women stood at 20% while widows in the Estate stood at 30%. The employment of women with no husbands therefore greatly helped in their economic development. The reasons as already mentioned were patriarchal domination in the Ndu society.

There were also some external factors which influenced the decision to recruit women on the tea plantation at Tole. Expatriate managers of the C.D.C who were mostly Europeans were not versed with the African culture, especially on the issue of female wage employment. Through their experiences in the tea plantation in Asia, they knew that women mostly did plucking. Women were considered suitable for plucking because of their nibble fingers; that is, women could easily harvest tea because they were used to harvesting vegetable and working at home⁴⁷⁴.

⁴⁷⁴ J. Shabhita and R. Reddock, *Women Plantation Workers*, p.3.

It is therefore worth mentioning that the Tole and Ndu tea estates were different in terms of sex composition of their labour recruitment. It is equally evident that the coastal region generally had contacts with the Europeans earlier than the grass fields. The common factor between the two estates is however the fact that the majority of these female labourers were recruited to work in the fields and particularly as pluckers, sweepers and selectors; a sector in plantation agriculture which is generally not highly remunerated.

Table 21: Tea Production at the Tole in Kilograms (kgs) and Tons

Year	Hectares	No. of Kgs	Tons
1947	01	12681	11
1948	01	788	11
1949			
1950			
1951			
1952			
1953	6.9	10,554	
1954	11		
1955	11		
1956	55		
1957	55		
1958	55	11,616	
1961	125	83,122	400
1968	322		622
Total	642.9	107,414	1,044

Source: Compiled from Sanford H. Bederman, *The C.D.C*, P.50, and the C.D.C

Commemorative Publication for the 50th Anniversary in 1997, p.19.

The table above shows the production and output of the Tole tea in kgs⁴⁷⁵. The early years of tea cultivation in the estate saw a huge quantity of tea production where 11,888 kgs were produced in 1947 but some years, after that, there was a minimal cultivation because the quality of tea production at Tole was inferior to that of other parts of Africa. The British authority then embarked on the importation of tea from East Africa. Production was resumed in 1953 and the

⁴⁷⁵ Bederman, *The CDC*, p.50.

amount processed stood at 10,554 and at independence, production stood at 83,122. Tea production graph increased drastically after independence given the world wide recovery from the Great Wars.

It was argued that an increase in revenue would enable the British to import capital equipment from Europe. It was further argued that the equipment would be used for development and to create employment opportunities for Cameroonians⁴⁷⁶. To Bederman, the cultivation of tea in the British Cameroons would be beneficial to the people through the creation of more jobs because it was a potential cash crop⁴⁷⁷.

General Labour Conditions

In general, the Cameroon labour code defines labour laws which are applicable to all labourers within the national territory. The Ndu Tea Estate being a corporation with labourers was certainly attached to the labour code which stipulated some conditions for labour in the Ndu Tea Estate. Law n°74/14 of 27th November 1974 instituted the labour code which repeated law n° 67-Lf.6 of 12th June 1967. It was the law that regulated the employee- employer relations⁴⁷⁸. The labour inspectors were in charge of implementing the laws. The C.D.C. over its existence had confronted the ministry of labour and social security for meeting to regulate labour conditions⁴⁷⁹. The Ndu Tea Estate just like the Tole tea estate therefore had its own conditions to be fulfilled for employment and specific job description given that one was a predominantly male dominated labour force plantation and the other a predominantly female dominated labour force plantation.

The Ndu Tea just like the Tole estate adopted a recruitment system as stipulated by the Cameroon intensive labour code (Republic of Cameroon, 1992). An employee maybe hired for a specific duration as a contract worker or for an unspecified period as a permanent worker. In the latter case the termination of the contract may not be forced in advance and could be affected at any time with prior notice either by the worker or the employed⁴⁸⁰. Both male and female labourers working in the Ndu Tea Estate therefore needed to fulfill certain conditions of work in the Estates. The Ndu estate however had a different approach as opposed to the Tole estate. HRH Williams Nformi, the Fon of Ndu gave a series of conditions. These conditions

⁴⁷⁶ Trumeh, Sofia, "Tole Tea Estate", Long Essay, Pan African Institute for Development, Buea, 1978. pp-4.

⁴⁷⁷ Bederman, *The C.D.C.*, p.50.

⁴⁷⁸ C.D.C Annual Report, 1967, p. 16.

⁴⁷⁹ D. Ayuketang, "Labour, Unionism and Social Welfare in the Cameroon Development Corporation Coastal Plantation, 1947- 2005", A Dissertation in History. University of Yaounde I, 2008, p. 54.

⁴⁸⁰ Republic of Cameroon, New Labour Code, Law N° 92..7, Yaounde, National Printing Press, 1992, p. 5.

were going to disfavour women employment but however, there was an agreement that “some women might be employed on the estate for specific activities, particularly weeding.” Most women who started work on the estate on temporary weeding contracts originated from neighbouring Nso areas but later, Wimbun Women dominated especially from 1977 when the C.D.C took over the estate from the Estate and Agency Company⁴⁸¹. For the condition of work for the male labourers, they were easily recruited with no particular problem given that the estate had as priority to recruit male labourers.

The conditions in the Tole estate were however different. Female labourers were needed more than male labourers so they were not given any particular conditions to be recruited given that the recruitment of these female labourers was considered a milestone in the establishment of a stable labour force⁴⁸².

The nature of labour in the tea estates was very elaborate with labourers found in the field, factory, and administration, technical, clerical and auxiliary staff. Men and women got involved in all these sectors but with a predominantly male labour force found in the factory and administrative sector. The first type of field work involved in tea cultivation was clearing. This was mostly done by men. The site selected was cleared. For areas with trees, the trees were killed, using a tree killer. The roots of the trees were dogged to prevent root diseases. The areas could be left for some times before hoeing. During clearing, it was advisable to avoid burning because it could destroy the soil humus. Perennial weeds were sprayed using glyphosphate⁴⁸³. One of our informant admitted that, he had been employed on casual bases to clear bushes in preparation for hoeing.

He revealed that the work was tedious and so only men did the clearing which took several days depending on the size of the bush. They were paid immediately they finished with the task. The payment varied depending on the amount of work done and they were employed as individuals not as a group. Each labourer therefore negotiated with management⁴⁸⁴. It should be noted that, before clearing, the site had to be selected. This selection was done based on some factors. The weather had to be favorable for tea growth and steep slopes were avoided to prevent soil erosion and equally sites with fern plants were given priority as this was indicative

⁴⁸¹ Konings, *Gender and Class*, p.10.

⁴⁸² Akara, “Plantation Agriculture in the Former British Southern Cameroon”, p.43.

⁴⁸³ Njeck, *Concise Notes on Quality Tea Cultivation*, p.8.

⁴⁸⁴ Edward, December 11th 2014.

of the fact that tea will thrive well in a given area, and finally, the site selected needed to be accessible to the factory⁴⁸⁵.

In the field, there was the initial stage which involved farming tea seed beds. This involved manual labour. Majority of labourers in this sector were mostly women who formed the seed beds through hoeing. Our investigation revealed that the remuneration here were very low given that this was mostly done by “*Njangi*” groups and a collective amount of about 15000FRS was paid based on task requirement⁴⁸⁶. Ngege admits that women groups did the hoeing and men were there to assist at this initial stage⁴⁸⁷. Konings equally corroborates by relating on the agreement between the Fon and the estate management when he insisted that if women were to be employed then it should have been done on contract basis⁴⁸⁸.

Standley contains that, these women were very important in the society given their economic role as food crop producers and it was considered that if they were employed on permanent basis, they will neglect food production⁴⁸⁹. Another nature of labour in the field was the planting. Our investigation revealed that this was done by both men and women. Some labourers who had worked on casual basis were finally employed on permanent basis. They were thought the skills of tea planting and immediately, they got themselves engaged in the exercise⁴⁹⁰. It was equally necessary to ensure that the soils were ferrallitic and had all the required minerals for tea cultivation⁴⁹¹. Before planting, the planters needed to measure the area of land where they intended to plant the ready cuttings. The distances between pits were obtained using the chains and the bearing which were taken using the compass. All the distances taken as well as bearing obtained were plotted on a graph paper to produce the figure whose area was then calculated⁴⁹². Statistics revealed that the total cultivated area stood at 668.28 hectares, with fuel plantations covering 503.4h, Tea seed bearers covering 9.5ha roads 32, buildings 38.43, fish pond 600, tea nursery 3.98 and reserved 327.88⁴⁹³.

⁴⁸⁵ Njeck, *Concise Notes on Quality Tea Cultivation*, p.8.

⁴⁸⁶ Lumba, July 7th 2014.

⁴⁸⁷ Tata, “The Socio Economic History of Ndu Tea”, p. 46.

⁴⁸⁸ Konings, “Chieftaincy, Labour and Capitalist Development in Cameroon”, p.336.

⁴⁸⁹ Standley Yengong Nforba, “Fondom Relations among the Mbum of the Nkambe Plateau from c 1780-2002. A ph.D.Thesis in History, University of Yaounde I, 2016, P199.

⁴⁹⁰ Konings, “Chieftaincy, Labour and Capitalist Development in Cameroon”, p.336.

⁴⁹¹ NWRA, File: N W/be/a/1982/1/bk, Economic Developments in the North West Province, 1981, pp.1-4.

⁴⁹² Ntalla, August 10th 2014.

⁴⁹³ Njeck, *Concise Notes on Quality Tea Cultivation*, p.8.

Table 22: Ndu Tea Estate Hectarage

Year of Planting	West 1	West 2	Centre	East
1958	18.72	21.60	19.71	-
1959	-	-	-	23.71
1960	21.37	23.87	-	-
1961	4.27	-	23.88	-
1971	-	-	-	11.34
1972	6.47	-	-	-
1973	19.42	16.07	-	-
1974	14.57	23.07	-	-
1975	-	-	19.41	-
1980	-	-	-	3.24
1985	-	13.24	-	-
1993	-	8.77	-	-
1994	3.50	-	4.11	6.80
1995	-	7.40	2.60	-
1997	18.10	-	-	-

Source: Researcher's Collection from Ndu Tea Estate Library, August 19th 2014.

The first planted area was the centre field. This explains the reasons for a smaller hectare planted. The total hectare was going to increase progressively as each year passed so that by 1977 when the C.D.C took over the Estate, about 102.80 H A of tea had been planted. It should equally be noted that the number of hectare planted dropped during the 1990s. This was because the number of labourers dropped.

Seeds to be planted were collected only after they had fallen to the ground. Seeds collected were sieved using a 1cm wire mesh and those considered good seeds were those that did not pass through the mesh (those large seeds had adequate foods reserves in their cotyledon to permit good generation). This germination process was started by inducing a crack on the seed. This was done by watering the seeds after spreading them either on a thin layer of sand or on black polythene sheets under the sun. They were sown in filled black polythene bags once the crack appeared. Overhead shades were constructed and all the necessary nursery maintenance operations were done such as watering, control of pests and diseases, and fertilization. Between

8-12 months, the plants were ready for field planting⁴⁹⁴. Ngege investigates that Tea cultivation is labour intensive. Tea growing in the Tea Estates started with nursery farms that supplied the seedlings. Tea nursery was a special job that was expensive and needed a lot of time and patience. The seedlings were transplanted when they were one and half year⁴⁹⁵.

Tea nursery therefore had two stages, the nursery stage which involved planting to get seedlings and the transplanting stage which involved planting the seedling on tea farms. Before transplanting, drains were constructed to prevent erosion and water loggings were connected to 9 natural waterway. In windy areas, wind breaks (e.g. Cypress) were established before transplanting the tea. Lining was done following a chosen planting distance e.g. (120cm x 60cm) which gave 13888 plants per hectare and pegs were used to demarcate the points where holes would be dug for planting. Double hedge planting was preferable and fields were best planted in one quarter block and the plucker paths were usually farmed during lining. These hold sizes had to be dug double the diameter of the polythene bags.

It should be noted here that digging was done mostly by men who were considered energetic and this was mostly done soon after the digging to prevent drying and soil infilling. Sulphur phosphate could be used at the time of planting (50g /plant). The polythene bags having the ready plants were transported to the field. The ball of earth around the plant had to be protected during planting. The polythene bags were removed and stuck on the stake for supervision purposed and were eventually carried away⁴⁹⁶.

Manual weeding was another type of job in the Tea Estates. This particular job was mostly done by Women. Konings concluded that, according to the initial agreement between the Fon and the manager some women might be employed on the Estate for specific activities, particularly weeding⁴⁹⁷. It was common place to allocate mean and audios jobs to women in the Ndu Tea Estate. One of our informants informed us on his labour ladder in the Ndu Tea Estate revealing that she had spent a lot of time (5years) in weeding. It was rare to see a man weeding. Just like hoeing these jobs were considered mean in the Estate and were left for the woman folk⁴⁹⁸. Rhoda Reddock and Shobhita Jain in view of this conclusion maintain that, female labour in many plantation communities had been reported to be double exploited and

⁴⁹⁴ Report on Cameroon Tea Estate Ndu Plantation Tea Hectarage, Author's collection from Ndu Tea Estate Library, 19th/08/2011.

⁴⁹⁵ Tata "The Socio Economic History of Ndu Tea", p. 32.

⁴⁹⁶ Njeck, *Concise Notes on Quality Tea Cultivation*, p.9.

⁴⁹⁷ Konings, "Chieftaincy, Labour and Capitalist Development in Cameroon", p.336.

⁴⁹⁸ Magdalene Yefon, 52 Years Old, Worked as a Head Woman, Tatum Village, August 11th 2014.

oppressed by the capitalist economic system. Kurian (1982) in her study reflected a system of heavily discriminating against women while Ramas Wamy (1993) sited the pitiable condition of women working on farms and tea gardens, all concluding that “women workers were unable to earn as much as men even when they worked more than them⁴⁹⁹. The researcher therefore concludes that control of labour especially that involving women negated the significance of work as an index of higher status.

Pruning was usually done to young tea to encourage branching and consequently more plucking points. After the first year of field planting, the first pruning was done at 15cm (6 inches from the ground). After the third year a further pruning was done at a height of 35cm from the ground. After the third pruning, the plants were allowed to grow and later on tipped at 20cm above the last pruned height. At the Tea Estates, the main types of pruning were the cut across and reduced pruning. The plants were pruned 5cm above the previous cuts and after the height of 65cm, reduced pruning was done at about 35 to 40cm, then plucking could start given that the tea plant was mature⁵⁰⁰. Ngeenge therefore concludes that pruning was aimed at controlling the tea plants and stimulating its growth. There were various types of pruning, namely top pruning, collar pruning, medium pruning and skipping. This last type was usually done by harvesters during harvesting. At Tea Estates, pruning was done in the months of March/April and September/October was a tedious and delicate job which was executed by experience tea labourers⁵⁰¹.

Harvesting and collection of the tea was usually another important type of job description in the Tea Estates. This involved plucking tipping, sorting, weighing, loading and the transportation of the green leaf to the factory. Plucking green leaves instituted the raw material which was manufactured in the factory to obtain made tea. The first three plucking after a field was pruned and young field was called tipping. This was done at about 20cm from the pruned height⁵⁰². First, the terminal buds and the top two leaves must be plucked from the mature tea plant⁵⁰³. Our investigation revealed that, in plucking, two leaves and a bud were harvested. Quality tea could be dictated from plucking. If well plucked picking was going to be more efficient and the end result was going to be high quality tea⁵⁰⁴.

⁴⁹⁹ Shobhita and Reddock, *Women Plantation Workers*, p.13.

⁵⁰⁰ Njeck, *Concise Notes on Quality Tea Cultivation*, pp.9-10.

⁵⁰¹ Tata, “The Socio Economic History of Ndu Tea”, p. 32.

⁵⁰² Njeck, *Concise Notes on Quality Tea Cultivation*, p.12.

⁵⁰³ Koni, August 20th 2014.

⁵⁰⁴ Tata, “The Socio Economic History of the Ndu Tea Estate”, p.33.

Tea plucking was an exercise that involved female labourers. Though there were men and especially in the case of the Ndu Tea Estate with a predominantly male labour force, this was the job description with about 80% of the total number of women employed in the Tea Estates. This assertion was maintained by one of our informant who said “most women were employed as pluckers (Koni, 9th February 2014). Konings corroborates by submitting that. “There was a general believe in managerial Circles that women were naturally more suited to pluck tea” (they had nimble fingers; Konings, chieftaincy and labour control, 1996, P.336.) Ngege maintains that, apart from the Tea Estates, in the major producing countries, in India, Indonesia and Sri Lanka, most shoots were plucked by hand and by women who had to be skillful to avoid damaging the tea. Shohbita’s investigations agreed with other researchers and concluded that it was the concept of family wages that pushed women into the labour market and they were offered jobs like pluckers⁵⁰⁵.

Job description in the Tole tea estate was not very different from the Ndu estate. Men and women were involved in the different types of jobs, depending on the gender. The types of jobs ranged from manual weeding, chemical weeding, pruning, plucking, and spraying for pest and diseases, road maintenance, fertilizing and other office inclined jobs. It should be noted that, the majority of the male field workers did pruning, followed by spraying and then, road maintenance. Women were on their part involved in activities like picking, manual weeding and especially plucking where the majority of women were found. Women were involved in the plucking of tea for processing. These leaves were manually harvested and the quality that was required was the flush or immature leaves (two leaves and a bud) for high quality production. The women used baskets hanging on their bags and transported to the factory for processing. To ensure discipline and effective work on the field, there were overseers (a majority being males) who coordinated the work of the workers. Each overseer had a group of workers under him to control and supervise and each of these groups was called a “gang”, and led by a head man or woman.

The head men or women were answerable to the overseer who in turn was supervised by the field assistants. It should be noted that the hard working headman or woman could be easily dictated and known from the quality and quantity of tea plucked. Our investigation revealed that, pluckers in the field were generally afraid of headmen and women who were strict and serious. These workers therefore equally got serious with such buses to avoid problems with

⁵⁰⁵ Shohbita and Reddock, *Women Plantation Workers*, p.14.

them at the end because victims could be disfavored in the case of special gifts given to workers by the company. Pluckers of such groups with serious headmen and women were therefore generally very hard working and their pay roll was equally always high given that tea pluckers were paid according to the quantity of tea plucked⁵⁰⁶.

Men occupied most of the senior post even in the field. These men were senior overseer and general overseer while the appointment of women in supervisory roles was limited mostly to female dominated sections of the estate like the plucking section. These women still occupied only the lowest position in the stratum such as senior heads⁵⁰⁷. Koning's judgment that women would not rise to supervisory positions in especially male dominated section must have been based on his experience in Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) and Asia in general. On the situation in Asia, Kurian maintains that, though women did the plucking in the fields, they were generally supervised by men⁵⁰⁸. It was probably based on the Asian experience that Konings quickly concluded. The impression was that in spite of the progress made in the appointment of women within the lower ranks at Tole, management could not go beyond this. He did not foresee women rising to higher positions. He maintains that "It is still unthinkable that women would be appointed to a supervisory position in male dominated section of the Tole estate"⁵⁰⁹.

This is generally contested because his conclusions could be considered hasty. This is because; there were female supervisors and a hand full though a smaller percentage equally occupied administrative positions⁵¹⁰.

One can draw conclusions to add that lack of rigidity in male and female roles in the Ndu and Tole Tea Estate and the high level of manual work for either sex provided space for women for a larger degree of visibility. There were particular jobs in these tea estates for men just like for women. Our investigations revealed that most of the times, the job description of female tea pluckers, rubber factory women and female oil nuts picking was even more demanding than the types of jobs offered to men. These conclusions may have been drawn due to the suggestions gotten from the field where male labourers vehemently refused to perform certain tasks while referring to them as "women's work".

⁵⁰⁶ Interview with Victorine Eposi, 61 Years Old, Head Woman at Tole, Tole, June 14th 2015.

⁵⁰⁷ Konings, *Gender and Class*, p.57.

⁵⁰⁸ Kurian Rachel, *Women Workers in the Sri Lanka Plantation Sector, A Historical and Contemporary Analysis*, International Labour Organisation, Geneva 1982, p. 71.

⁵⁰⁹ Konings, *Gender and Class*, p.57.

⁵¹⁰ Akara, "Plantation Agriculture in the Former British Southern Cameroon", p.55.

Plate 16: Ndu Tea Estate pluckers



Source: Photo Negative, Bongfen, August 18th 2014.

Men and women were involved in tea plucking in the Estate⁵¹¹. This was the sector that took the highest number of labourers with the highest number of female labourers employed in this sector.

Apart from the work in the field, there were other jobs in the Tea Estates ranging from, factory workers, to administrative and auxiliary staff. All these will be elaborated in our next chapter. It is important to however identify the fact that, there was a general tendency of disparities in job description and roles between men and women in the Estates.

The Ndu Tea Estate, being the first Agro-Industrial Corporation, in the North West Region increased its activities in 1977 when the C.D.C. took over the estate. The Estate engaged in the employment of male and female labourers but with a predominantly male labour force. The need for economic growth and development ushered the beginning of tea cultivation with labourers employed from the neighboring villages and some coming from the coastal plantation. With determination, these job seekers were ready to fulfill all conditions necessary for employment. With some employed on casual basis, from the start, a majority was employed as permanent workers but with different job description for men and women. There was therefore a general tendency for female labourers to be associated to manual labour while male labourers were assigned higher wage labour. Colonial and post-colonial socio-economic

⁵¹¹ Konings, *Gender and Class*, p.100.

imperatives therefore predicated the use of coercive forms of control and employment of women in primarily unskilled jobs.

Employment Requirements in the Plantations

Men and women had specific requirements to fulfill before being employed in the plantations. It was evident that the men who dominated the activities of the plantations needed to give a change and accept women despite the traditional norms of the society. This was because of the increasing economic changes in the capitalist world. Rosetta Bola and Rosemarie Rita investigated for the post-colonial African society and contend that the sexual division of labour was very important. The World Bank strongly emphasized that government and collaborating institutions could no longer afford not to invest in women⁵¹². This opinion on the changing status of workers was again acknowledged by the United Nations in their report which stated that “over the last two decades, the issues reporting the integral involvement of women in the economic development processes had slowly crept into the Agents of National and International Development Agencies. Economic development according to the report was closely related to the development of women”⁵¹³.

Labourers in the plantations needed to show interest on work. They were in most occasions employed as field workers. From the start, the women and some men were employed on casual basis. This was because they were unskilled and needed to be trained. Again the management needed time to evaluate the seriousness of these workers. It was in view of such that 2,843 casual workers were recorded in especially the Estates⁵¹⁴.

These men and women came around the plantation premises when they felt they were looking for a job opportunity. Some were simply judged on their physical fitness. One of our informants revealed that he started work as a Plucker and upon his arrival one Monday morning; he was simply placed under the control of a skilled labourer who had been in the field for several years. He believed that he was employed on the basis of his physical fitness because he was at his youthful age and could work for long hours⁵¹⁵. Matilda Mayer; a former Plucker revealed that in her quest for a job she was simply asked if she was ready to do the work. She had accepted and was told to start work the next day. These new workers were generally paired with old

⁵¹² World Bank Report, “Towards Gender Equality: The Role of Public Policy”, Washington D.C World Bank, 1995.

⁵¹³ United Nations Report” Women in Changing Global Economy,” Department for quality co-ordination and sustainable development Vol. 1, New York, United nations, 1995.

⁵¹⁴ NWRA, File: NW/Qb/a/1982/3/BK, Half Yearly Economic Report, Summary Activities of Ndu Tea Estate, July-December, 1982, p. 2.

⁵¹⁵ Interview with Ali Wepkeh, 66 Years Old, Plucker at the Ndu Tea Estate, July 8th 2014.

workers and were showed how to pluck the tea (two leaves and a bud), in the case of the tea estates, how to select the nuts in the case of the oil palm plantations and how to control the production process in the rubber factory. They were observed for one or two days and were immediately employed when they had learned the required skills⁵¹⁶.

Taking the tea estates as a case study, work generally started with the cultivation of tea seedling with a small labour force recruited from the town. Men and women came in large numbers to till the tea plot on a task work basis. Men usually cleared while the women formed the ridges and gave the finishing touches. The recruitment of unskilled labour was not a problem as the estates were located in an area of abundant labour force. It was in view of such that during periods of low production, most of the unskilled workers were temporarily terminated⁵¹⁷. Most men got voluntary employment. Some were school leavers and again, those who had advanced in their educational level were immediately made headmen. Field assistant were literate and had obtained at least a GCE “O” level. One of our informant revealed that he had been employed on the basis of his qualification. He had obtained his “O” level and upon dropping his application he was taken as a field assistant in the 1980s and as a result of longevity he was promoted to the level of general overseer in the factory⁵¹⁸.

Those who were less qualified and illiterate therefore ended at the level of field workers (pluckers pruners, manual weeders, etc.) while the educated could apply and even climb to the level of managers. Another informant corroborated that, she was employed as a secretary in the Estate based on her educational level. As a holder of GCE “O” level, she was immediately employed to work in the Estate. Her mates who were of high educational standards were equally employed to work in the Estate⁵¹⁹. Lumba Elisabeth started work in 1979 as the first female permanent worker because of her educational level. She gradually rose to the post of accountant (First Female Accountant) because she had gained experience. As one of the highly educated women in the Estate, she was not only noted as the first permanent female labourers in the Estate but equally as the female labourers with the highest position among all the other female labourers.

However, others rose not because of their educational levels but because of their longevity and skills acquired. However, the estates preferred to elevate a male labourer to a higher position

⁵¹⁶ Interview with Juliana Ndamsa, 62 Years, Head Woman at Kakar, August 10th 2014.

⁵¹⁷ Tata “The Socio-Economic History of Ndu Tea,” p. 46.

⁵¹⁸ Koni, August 20th 2014.

⁵¹⁹ Interview with Florence, Ngeh, 59 years Old, Head Woman in the Ndu Tea Estate, Tatum, August 11th 2014.

due to longevity and skills than a female labourer. Our investigations revealed that, there were several head men, foremen, overseers and accountants who had been employed even much more later than a good number of female labourers but they were raised to these positions on the bases that they were men and plantation agriculture was a male issue⁵²⁰. A good number of authors on plantation agriculture like Konings and Delancey have accepted this stand by containing that, the male labourers were generally favoured.

Table 23: The Distribution of Work in the Field at Tole and Ndu Tea Estates

Job Description	Tole					Ndu				
	Male		Female		Total	Male		Female		Total
	N°	%	N°	%		N°	%	N°	%	
Manual Weeding	10	17	35	58	60	10	38	36	61	59
Chemical Weeding	08	80	02	20	10	05	100	-	-	-
Pruning	15	88	02	11	17	12	85	02	14	14
Plucking	11	16	57	83	68	11	20	48	80	60
Spraying for Pest	05	100	-	00	05	03	100	-	03	03
Fertilising	02	20	08	80	10	01	09	11	91	12
Total	51	345	104		252	43	352	97	249	148

Source: Researcher's Field Work, April-July 2015.

More men field workers worked as pruners in both the Tole and Ndu tea estates while women working in the field worked as pluckers.

One of the major problems that confronted tea planting and production was the recruitment of labour. Delancey opines that the need for labour could not be solved within the plantation areas. This was due to the sparse population in these areas and the only solution was to encourage migrant labour from the interior to the coast, for the case of Tole, and to get from the local environment for the case of Ndu⁵²¹. Given these circumstances, the Tole tea estate from its inception experienced many difficulties, one of which was the inability to attract a regular and adequate supply of labour. The estate was located in the heart of Bakweri land and efforts to recruit female labourers initially failed. Many reasons accounted for management's inability to recruit Bakweri women. The Bakweri men for instance, opposed the recruitment of their wives in to the cash crop production. This was because in most traditional African communities just

⁵²⁰ Koni, August 20th 2014.

⁵²¹ Delancey, "Changes in Social Attitudes", p. 92.

like in Cameroon, women were responsible for domestic affairs; particularly taking care of the home and children⁵²².

Bederman and Konings equally maintain that men considered the recruitment of women in the plantations as violating and going against African traditional values of protecting the woman. Rodney adding his voice maintains that, there was division of labour in the pre-colonial African and Cameroonian society. In these societies, men did the “heavy labour” like conducting warfare, felling trees and clearing the land. Women on their part took care of domestic affairs⁵²³. During and after colonisation and with the advent of plantation agriculture, the situation changed as men entered the plantation economy which was the new world economic order especially in the African continent and now women were left behind to do farming to sustain the family. Wage labour therefore became the domain of men and not women giving a good reason for men’s constant opposition to female labourers in the plantations.

By the 1950s the C.D.C started the recruitment of female labourers in the Tole estate as a means of stabilizing its labour force. In 1958 in particular, the estate made it as a matter of policy to recruit female labourers on a large scale to work especially in the field as pluckers.

Plate 17: Female Pluckers in the Tole Tea Estate



Source: Researcher’s Field Work, April to August 2015.

The Tole estate started with the recruitment of a predominantly female labour force especially working in the tea fields as pluckers.

⁵²² Interview with Justine Kwachu 57 Years Old, Executive Director of WAA-Cameroon, Yaounde, February 18th 2015.

⁵²³ Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, London: *Bogie L’Ouverture*, 1972, 248.

With the start of the Ndu Tea Estate on the 1st of January 1957, unskilled female labour force was recruited on contract bases from the various community groups around Ndu, Tatum, Kakar, Kuwar and Ntumbaw villages. A need to till the soil and form the seed beds for the nursing of young tea plant was a call for concern. It was in view of such that management decided to incorporate different communities of women groups in and around the Estate to work on casual bases. According to an interview with Nformi Vivian, it was preferable to incorporate these women from these groups because they were better organized and had a regular meeting house where they met monthly to discuss issues affecting them.⁵²⁴ Juliana Muba corroborates by adding that her mother's group had been incorporated to work in the Estate. Her mother, she said "who was also a plucker in the Estate" had recounted to her that they tilled the soils on several occasions. It was usually a time of jubilation as they would sing songs of victory and development during the tilling process.

These songs acted as an encouragement and they concentrated to attain their task. They were paid according to work done and this encouraged many more groups to take up contracts in the Estate because this money became very useful to the groups. The money gained was most of the time used to acquire a hand grinding mill for the group which was of the general benefit of not only the group that had worked to acquire the machine, but equally for those living in the community⁵²⁵.

To Ngeenge, women gave the finishing touches to the ridges that were formed⁵²⁶. Disparities in job description and assigned task were therefore clearly evident from the start of the Estate. Even though these women were employed only on contract bases, they were still given specific duties and functions during the primary stage of production. They were better when it came to forming ridges. This was because of their traditional position of being food crop producers and bearers and custodians of their husbands and children.

Female labour force in the Ndu Tea Estate was going to increase drastically from 1977. It was in this year that the C.D.C took over the Estate and decided on the employment of female labourers on a permanent basis. Women in the Ndu Tea Estate were therefore determined to improve on their working situation by improving on their educational standards but they generally faced a lot of opposition from the men. This was because the chief rejected out of

⁵²⁴ Interview with Angeline Mumah, 50 Years Old, Ndu Village, Plucker, Ndu, July 7th 2014.

⁵²⁵ Mayah, August 29th 2014.

⁵²⁶ Tata, "The Socio Economic History of Ndu Tea", p. 46.

hand the team's proposal to employ female pluckers on the estate as it might challenge traditional male control over productive and reproductive labour⁵²⁷.

Most women who started work in the estate on contract basis were from Nso, living in Tatum. They faced a tough time on the estate. Several reports mentioned that, male workers engaged in various modes of resistance against their employment. Female labourers did not only come from in and around the Donga-Mantung and Bui Divisions, but a good number of female labourers were transferred from the Tole Tea Estate to work in the Ndu Tea Estate. The Tole Estate was among the few capitalist enterprises during colonial rule that gave preference to female labour over male labour. The rationale for this preferential demand was the managerial belief that compared to men; women were naturally more suited to performing certain tasks. This managerial demand which formed a direct threat to customary male control over female labour, proved more successful on the Tole Tea Estate because capitalism had a more disruptive effect on the social formation in the South West Region than on those in the North West Region⁵²⁸.

Plate 18: The First Female Contract Labourer in the Ndu Tea Estate



Source: Photo Negative, Bongfen, December 11th 2014.

Asana, who was almost getting blind by the time of our investigation, revealed that she started work as a Weeder but was later employed as one of the first female pluckers. She was retired as a plucker but wished she could be given other opportunities like being a head woman⁵²⁹.

⁵²⁷ Konings, *Gender and Class*, p.104.

⁵²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁵²⁹ Asana, December 11th 2014.

Female labourers were therefore transferred from the long established Tole Plantation dominated by female pluckers to work in the Ndu Tea Estate. Our investigation revealed that most of these female labourers who came from the Tole Estate were given important positions in the Estate. Debora Maju, Nyuh Satoh and Victorine Nkinih were all transferred from the Tole Estate to the Ndu Estate. These women were all assigned special duties and placed especially as head women to lead the other workers. Lumba revealed that the coming of these experience female labourers from Tole encouraged many more women to seek for employment in the Ndu Tea Estate. They were so overtaken by their skills and admired their chauvinism in the production process.

Many widows and single women who had been idling around immediately went for employment in the Estate. Others came in from Tatum and gradually the female labour force in the Estate increased. Our informant revealed that it was this spirit of determination that encouraged management to employ these female labourers, our informant could hear them say “I must become a head women like the Tole women”⁵³⁰. The arrival of these Tole women therefore increased the female labour force in the Estate, gave impetus to other women and this led to a drastic increase in skills and subsequently productivity especially owing to the fact that these women shared their experiences with workers of the Ndu Tea Estate.

Interestingly, the researcher found out that these female labourers in the Ndu Tea Estate were of varied status. 50% of them were single women who had children, 30% were found to be widows and 20% were seen as married women. As revealed by one of the former managers of the Estate mostly single women and widows were available because married women had other domestic responsibilities. Most married women began working in the estate when they heard and saw the advantages that were offered by the Estate seen in the medical care and free housing for some head women. These women were equally going to gain from the advantage of gaining skills as they were taught techniques of plantation work. From the beginning, there were trained as pluckers but with time, they were given in-service training and this promoted them to either the level of head woman or they were given positions in the factory to work as Tea test attendants. Some left for further education and came back to occupy better positions like accountants⁵³¹.

⁵³⁰ Lumba, July 7th 2014.

⁵³¹ Monde, August 13th 2014.

Gender and Tea Production in the Cameroons

As earlier discussed, men and women were involved in the production process in the tea estate but with more women working in the field as pluckers than men. The production chain began from the clearing of the farm bushes which was most of the times done by the men, and then, seed beds were produced which were later transplanted in the tea farm. Field work, as this process was fondly called finished with the plucking of the tea which was a predominantly female labour intensive activity. The next stage of the production process started immediately the tea was plucked and brought to the tea factory⁵³².

Tea Processing in the Cameroons

The processing was a labour intensive activity in the Cameroons. This activity in the Tole estate just like in the Ndu estate was undertaken by both male and female labourers. Being a delicate activity, the real process started from the time of plucking the tea for as was admitted by one of our informant, “*man di know fine tea na from the way them pluck the tea*”⁵³³. This expression meant that, good tea was determined by the way it was plucked. A lot of time, care and skills were needed at the level of plucking. This patience and care could only be best provided by female labourers. Male labourers seemed to be very impatient with this difficult but most important aspect of tea production. The process of tea production therefore started from the plucking and to the final stage which was the marketing stage. Particular job descriptions were ascribed to male and female labourers in these tea plantations.

⁵³² Interview with Peter Ndumbe, 51 Years Old, Factory Worker, Tole, July 14th 2015.

⁵³³ Ndamsa, August 10th 2014.

Plate 19: Weighing of Tea in the Huts in the Tea Farms



Source: Researcher's Field Work, August 2014.

Generally speaking, before the plucked tea got to the factory, some weighing was done in the tea farms and during this process, some illegal buying and selling of plucked tea was done between the labourers. Our investigations revealed that some buying and selling of bags of tea usually took place illegally during such moments between the labourers. Those who were usually in serious need of money could sell at a lesser price to those who had money. One of our informants informed us that he was a chief man in the selling of plucked tea before it was taken to the factory. He used to work so hard and worked overtime but because he could not wait for payday, he sold his tea at 25 frs for 60kg of plucked tea.

The buyer was sure to gain more than 10 frs given that he was going to record such tea after weighing at 35 frs for 60kg of plucked tea⁵³⁴. Such illegal selling of plucked tea was a phenomenon that was only common amongst male labourers. Female labourers were more careful and managed their resources so well that they needed not to hurry to dispatch of plucked tea at a cheaper rate. A good number of these female labourers worked so hard that they often came up with so many bags of plucked tea. With their multiple tasks over the years, these women had generally developed skills on how to quickly, swiftly yet correctly use their hands in working in the field. They therefore added such skills and experience in the plantations and greatly excelled in the performance of their assigned task⁵³⁵.

⁵³⁴ Wepkeh, July 8th 2014.

⁵³⁵ *Idem*.

Plate 20: Plucked Tea Ready for Processing



Source: Researcher's Field Work, August 2014.

Tea leaf processing could be summarized in four steps; withering, rolling, oxidation and drying. Tea processing was the method in which the leaves from the tea plant, the *camellia sinensis* were transformed in to dried leaves for brewing tea⁵³⁶. The tea was generally plucked by women, thanks to their delicate hands who wear baskets over their shoulder in which they collected the tea leaves. The rule, two leaves and the bud was strictly followed. This rule, just from the word stipulated that particular leaves of the tea plant should be harvested. Our interview with one of the head woman revealed that, that was the general rule that was adopted in the tea plantation and that the main reason was to ensure quality tea⁵³⁷.

The plucked leaves were examined at the collection point. This examination involved sorting which was generally a female intensive activity where female labourers again took time to go through the plucked tea just to ensure that some unwanted leaves were not found in the harvested tea leaves. Konings makes some pertinent conclusions about the role of female labourers in the tea estates by postulating that:

Women who are heads of households are more prone to develop a stronger commitment to their work role because they become the principal bread winner for their family. They cannot agree to regard their work roles as temporary or secondary as do most of the married women in the shanty town... Women who are the sole support of their families are more likely to develop class consciousness than women who are still primarily dependent on men to support them⁵³⁸.

⁵³⁶ Nji, July 7th 2014.

⁵³⁷ File: CUP/aw/83, Ndu Tea Estate Records of Minutes of Staff Representatives Preparatory Meeting, 1981-91.

⁵³⁸ Konings, *Gender and Class*, p.8.

These conclusions suggest the important role female labourers played in the plantation. Their patience as house keepers, child bearing and child care givers made them to be ready to do some jobs in the factory that needed a lot of patience. One of such jobs was tea sorting that required a lot of dexterity, patience and skills and this was mostly provided by the female pluckers. Our interview with one of the male pluckers left us with the vivid impression that men dreaded such jobs in the plantations⁵³⁹. Sorting was therefore one of those activities in the factory that was considered by many as “women’s job” and was attached very little attention whereas, such jobs could only be done by women because of the special care and patience needed, which could only be provided by female labourers but such special and unique qualities were not taken in to consideration because these women were not paid any extra remuneration because of their peculiar inputs.

The Process of Tea Collection

Tea was collected under the supervision of the various head men and women from various points in the estates. This collected tea was put in bags and transported to the production center ready to be processed. At the level of collecting the plucked tea, both male and female labourers were involved as they made sure that all the tea plucked was brought out of the farms to the collection points. It should be noted that, each labourer took note of the number of bags he or she had because these labourers were paid following the quantity of tea plucked. The head men and women did a lot of work at the level of tea collecting. They had to be very vigilant and at the same time, do a lot of mental arithmetic because a lot of bags were available. They had to be very vigilant because of some unscrupulous labourers who could submit two bags and later insist that they submitted four. This was a common practice in the Tole and Ndu tea estates, where the head men found themselves at times wanting given that they reached the factory and upon calculations realized that they were lesser bags than the actual statistics per plucker. In such situations, these head men and women had no particular person to blame, than to pay for the deficits on pay day. The end result was a call for these gang heads to be more vigilant.

⁵³⁹ Ngeh, August 7th 2014.

Plate 21: Tea collection and weighing point in the Ndu Tea Estate



Source: Researcher's Field Work, August 2014.

The plucked leaves were examined on the collection point and weight before the actual processing started. Labour at this point was generally not intensive and mostly male labourers took charge of this sector in the production process. At this level, all the tea to be produced was put in bags for weighing⁵⁴⁰. Our interview with one of the labourers revealed that it was generally very important to weight tea because the weight of the tea at the beginning of the production process helped to approximate production statistics especially in terms of quantities. This was because they supplied tea internationally as there were times of low yield which led to shortages thus such production statistics was to help inform those buying on whether or not there was going to be tea available within a certain period. Weighing therefore helped especially the managers to forecast production quantities even before the final product was ready⁵⁴¹.

Our investigations equally revealed that, sometimes, the plucked tea was loaded in weighing bags and finally the process was not done, either because the tea was too much, or because it was time to go home. Work undone was just instantly abandoned to be continued the next day. In some cases during such instances, the plucked and sorted tea that was left in bags would be discovered having some problems the next day or having a strange smell. This situation was

⁵⁴⁰ BNA, File: N W/Qb/a/1982/2/BK, Industry, Ndu Tea Estate, 17-18th August, 1982.

⁵⁴¹ Mbeng, August 8th 2014.

usually and most of the times noted during the rainy reason. In such cases, these loaded tea bags were taken off the parts towards the production room, and again sent to the sorting department for sorting to be done so as to maintain the quality of the tea⁵⁴².

Plate 22: Weigh Bags Moving Towards the Production House



Source: Researcher's Field Work, August 2014.

Many bags of weight tea moved through a well-constructed part to the production house where the actual process started. Mostly male labourers were found to be controlling this part of the production process. Though not labour intensive, we investigated that there was a controller at this level because some bags sometimes cut off from the fastened ion so there was usually a permanent male labourer to check in case of any eventuality⁵⁴³.

⁵⁴² Ngeh, August 11th 2014.

⁵⁴³ Wepkeh, July 8th 2014.

Plate 23: Withering process



Source: Researcher's Field Work, August 2014.

Here, the thick and still immalleable leaf was rid of approximately 30 percent (%) of its humidity. There were two methods, the natural withering where the leaves were spread-out on lath which was covered with gutter wire or nylon nets. The withering time took, depending on the weather and humidity content of the leaves, between 14 to 18 hours. The meteorological center was therefore very vital in a tea plantation center for it determined the weather conditions which had an effect on the tea production process⁵⁴⁴.

This part of the production chain just like others equally had a leader who was called Head Man of the Withering Department. His role was simply to ensure that the right quantity of the tea leaves were put in the machine and equally that the machines were well lubricated so as to ensure a continuous withering process⁵⁴⁵.

The withering was done in large trough of a length of 25-30 meter which was covered with wire grid and was ventilated with large ventilators. These could also be used to worm the leaves, should it be necessary to reduce the withering time to 8-12 hours. Green leaves plucked were usually sorted and weighed and there was a checker who was a male labourer who

⁵⁴⁴ Member, December 11th 2014.

⁵⁴⁵ Nfor, August 14th 2014.

recorded the workers out put against his or her name⁵⁴⁶. During our field work, men and women carrying plucked tea in basket could be seen standing on long lines waiting for their turn so that their tea could be weighed.

The green leaves were put in bags and loaded to the tractor and a male driver who was part of the labour process transported to the factory where he met with off loaders who off loaded the tea once it was at the factory for withering. Withering refers to the removal of all surface moisture and about 30% of the constituent moisture of the green leaf to provide optimum leaf condition for the other stages. The thickness and spread in the troughs was important. The trough capacity was determined by considering 25kgs of green leaf per square meter⁵⁴⁷. The aim of withering was to reduce the moisture content of the leaf by about 30%. This process of withering took about 14 to 18 hours⁵⁴⁸.

Our investigation revealed that, mostly male labourers were employed in this section in the Tea Estates with a head man controlling the withering process. Female labourers were however employed but were given menial jobs like sweeping on the floor to gather the tea leaves that had fallen on the ground. Our informant said with a lot of emphasis that “sweeping is the best job here for women”⁵⁴⁹. Gender disparities in assigning task were therefore very prominent in the tea estates.

Plate 24: The Rolling Process



Source: Researcher's Field Work, August 2014.

⁵⁴⁶Njeck, *Concise Note on Quality Tea*, p.1.

⁵⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p.12.

⁵⁴⁸ Bederman, *The C. D. C. Partner in National Growth*, p.52.

⁵⁴⁹ Nfor, August 14th 2014.

Generally speaking, there were two methods of rolling tea. We had the orthodox method and the C.T.C (Crushing Tearing- Curling) method. The C.T.C method was the one adopted for the tea plantations in Cameroon. With this method, the rolling machine did all the work and internally took care of all the mechanical works needed to complete the rolling of the tea.

The orthodox method started with the help of spindles or rollers, where the still green leaves were cut open and the released cell fluid reacted with the oxygen in the air (equal to oxidation). This process took 30 minutes each and was repeated three times. The damp and lumpy, now dark green leaves were scattered with the help of a sieving machine. Once rolled for 30 minutes, the entire leaves were turned in specially constructed torn drums. The stems and leaves ribs were separated as far as possible and only the torn “meat” of the leaves was processed further. This simple processing gave much higher yield compared to the classical production method. Due to the large internal demand, this method was used in India⁵⁵⁰.

This section of production was less tedious because the work was generally done by machines. Male labourers were however involved because they had to be present during the rolling to ensure that the machines were rolling well and the fact that these machines could be lubricated at a certain moment. Our investigation equally revealed that this section of the production process was male labour intensive because of the intensive heat that came from tea rolling. This heat was very harsh for the female labourers and so, they could not be allowed to be involved in this section of the production process⁵⁵¹. Male labourers called upon to work in this section were usually very happy because their work mostly consisted of observation. They most of the time even had to seat after standing for a very long time. Some labourers who had worked in the rolling department confirmed that the process became so monotonous to the extent that they wished that they could be changed to be field workers, partly because of the health repercussions of the heat emanating from this section of the production chain⁵⁵².

Only energetic men were needed in this sector as energy was needed to carry, split and transport the wood. They therefore worked from morning till evening as they needed to continuously add fuel to the machines. While some were found in the fuel bushes, a majority of the wood men were found in the factory because there was a lot of division of labour in this sector as some were constantly pleading the wood, others were parking in store houses and the majority

⁵⁵⁰ Mukiibi, *Agriculture in Uganda*, p.118.

⁵⁵¹ Nfor, August 18th 2014.

⁵⁵² Koni, August 20th 2014.

of labourers in this section were found by the machines to ensure a constant flow and supply of wood to the machine that ensured a steady supply of energy for the tea processing⁵⁵³.

The Climax of Tea Processing

The climax of tea processing came at the level of fermentation. It was this process that gave the colour and the fragrant. A lot of care therefore needed to be taken at this level. Well fermented tea led to high quality tea while tea that was poorly fermented led to low quality tea. A lot of labourers were therefore required at this stage to ensure that the right temperature in the fermentation process was assured.

Plate 25: Tea Fermentation



Source: Researcher's Field Work, August 2014.

The oxidation and fermentation process already started when the rolling process was going on. The leaves were spread out on large boards in 10 to 15 Centimeters(CM) thick layers in a special room with room temperature of 40° C (Centigrade) for two and a half hours. There was a constant and additional sprinkling with water so that the leaves could take up its colour to brown and then, start to unfold its unique aroma which could be found again when the tea was infused. The correct fermentation was very important for the final quality of the tea⁵⁵⁴.

⁵⁵³ Monde, August 13th 2014.

⁵⁵⁴ Researchers Observations Done During Field Work, Ndu Tea Estate, July-August 2014.

Female Labour in the Fermentation Process

Our investigations equally revealed that, this part of the production process was mostly female labour intensive. It was realized that the fermentation process needed constant use of water and within a couple of days and equally, needed a lot of observation to see and be sure that the fermentation course took the right procedure. More female labourers were therefore employed to do the constant sprinkling of water and constant turning of the tea after sprinkling. This process was fondly called “watering” especially by the female labourers who had developed another technique of sprinkling the water. Some used a small wooden bucket with holes and with a pan, they collected the water from a basin which they had initially filled with water and then the wooden basket with holds was placed on the tea leaves and as the water was poured from the pan through the wooden basket, it formed a watering container and they did the process continuously and then used their hands or a well prepared stick to turn the tea after watering. This process was repeated for several hours till the desired results were obtained⁵⁵⁵.

The importance of this process of fermentation is corroborated by Mukiibi who concludes that, “Tea fermentation is one of the most important process in tea production... the tea loses its taste and value if fermentation is not well done”⁵⁵⁶. Our observation during field work gave us a vivid impression of the importance of this part in the production process. Worth noting was the fact that male labourers were not very present especially during “watering” as this was again tacked “women’s job” most probably as confirmed by one of our informant because of the patience needed during the process of fermentation⁵⁵⁷.

⁵⁵⁵ Nfor, August 18th 2014.

⁵⁵⁶ Mukiibi, *Agriculture in Uganda*, P.120.

⁵⁵⁷ Monde, August 13th 2014.

Plate 26: Tea Drying



Source: Researcher's Field Work, 2014.

Once tea was fermented to its highest point, it was passed to the next process which was drying. The tea was dried for approximately 20 minutes with hot air of 80 to 90°C which made the cell fluids stick to the leaves and gave it its dark brown to black colour. The final humidity of the tea usually stood at between 5 to 6 %⁵⁵⁸.

Plate 27: Tea Sieving/ Sorting



Source: Researcher's Field Work, August 2014.

⁵⁵⁸ Researchers Observations Done During Field Work, Ndu Tea Estate, July-August 2014.

The finished tea was sieved and graded following different qualities; Simple Leaf (SFT) was usually 6%, Small Leaf (FP, PEKOE) 20%, Large Broken (FBOP) 15%, Feine Broken (GBOP) 20%, Fannings (BOPF) and Dust (PD). These grades of tea as described above were parceled following the quality and the prices varied following the various grades and quality.

Plate 28: Tea Packaging



Source: Researcher's Field Work, August 2014.

The sorted tea was loaded in bags and this job was generally done by women who covered their nostrils with a face mask due to the pungent smell produced by the tea especially when on a heap and in large quantities⁵⁵⁹.

⁵⁵⁹ Abba, August 2014.

Plate 29: Tea Storing in Ware Houses



Source: Researcher's Field Work, August 2014.

The sorted and parceled tea was stored in ware houses and this was usually male labour intensive.

Plate 30: Tea Testing



Source: Researcher's Field Work, August 2014.

The dried tea was allowed to cold on tables and large trays and it was put in containers or bags and weighed to know the production of the day, before sorting. Sorting was meant to separate different sized particles according to marked demands. The Middleton stalk extractor was used to separate the fine tea from the coarse one and mixed with the second fine tea to have broken mix. The first fine was sorted into different graded using the Trinick Machine. The jumbo-pre-sorter was used to remove fiber off the tea. The grade types coming out of the Trinicks included

mix dust (Dust land pekoe dust), pekoe fannings 1, pekoe fanning, broken orange, pekoe, broken pekoe and broken mix⁵⁶⁰.

A specialist taster tasted the tea from the driers every hour to determine any fault and if there were any, they were promptly corrected so as to continue with quality production⁵⁶¹. Bederman contains that, the last grade of tea which was labeled Red Label was that sold in Cameroon and enjoyed great popularity. Each grade of tea was stored separately and was also packaged and packed separately. All locally sold tea was first packaged in metathene bags of several sizes (100 and 250 grams were the most popular). All exported tea was shipped, the rest were assembled and labeled in the factory⁵⁶². The tea from the Cameroons had gained ground in most world market because of its quality. It had a natural flavour and had an attractive colour⁵⁶³.

Tea Marketing

The marketing of Tea was the direct responsibility of the commercial department which had its headquarters at Douala. Customers had to pay and only collect as per their invoice from the plantation. A majority of the Tea was carried to the North of Cameroon⁵⁶⁴.

Quality tea cultivation was a strategic business which did not have only the local market, but also an international market. Our investigations revealed that the Cameroon government had taken a lot of disposition to ensure the study of the Cameroon tea markets by experts and this was only going to be possible after the government had studied the possibility of improving tea production. It was in view of this quest for a tea market that a letter was written to the minister of state for such possibilities⁵⁶⁵. (See appendix 12)

According to the C.D.C annual reports from 1977, tea production statistics greatly increased even though there was a corresponding increase in taxes. (See statistics on tax and income below). In 1977, the total output for the Tea Estates stood at 140,324kgs of tea and it was sold at 356.4CFAF million with crop gross profits of 41.1million CFAF and amortization⁵⁶⁶. By, 1978, the tea production stood at 1.710 with 1.113.1 net sales. Crop gross profit before charges was 454.1⁵⁶⁷. From 1979 to 80, production stood at 1.950.3 with net sales of 25.2, crop gross

⁵⁶⁰ Njeck, *Concise Note on Quality Tea*, p.14.

⁵⁶¹ Randi, August 16th 2014.

⁵⁶² Bederman, *The C. D. C. Partner in National Growth*, p.52.

⁵⁶³ NAB, File: NW/QC/a1976/1/Bk, Report of Tour of Agricultural Projects in the North West Province of Cameroon, October, 1976, P. 18.

⁵⁶⁴ Njeck, *Concise Note on Quality Tea*, p.14

⁵⁶⁵ N A B, File: QC/a/1971/1.no P1651, Prime Minister's Office, NduTea Estate, 21st January 1971, pp.1-6.

⁵⁶⁶ C D C Annual Report and Account for the Twelve Months Ended, Bota, Cameroon, 1977, p.24.

⁵⁶⁷ C.D.C Annual Report and Account for the Twelve Months Ended, Bota, Cameroon, 1971, p.20.

profit after charges was 283.5. Note is taken of the fact that by 1981, a completed agro meteorological station was opened to monitor the weather conditions for tea production⁵⁶⁸.

From 1981-82 production stood at 2,130.7 sales at 1,702.6, crop gross profit before charges at 527.9 and after charges at 469.5. All these statistics were represented in the following table.

Table 24: Ndu Tea Crop Production Report

Year	Total production	Sales (In Million)	Gross profit before charges	Gross profit after charges
1977	140324	1.113.1	41.1	25.8
1978	1.710	25.2	5005	454.1
1979-80	1.9503	1.702.6	338.8	283.5
1981-82	2130.7	1.421.5	527.9	469.5
1983-84	1,801.1	2.625	275.1	200
1985	2,299	3.214	1.034	937
1986	3.206	1.855	1.097	924
1987	2.797	1.782	262	436
1988-89	14,90,0	1.499	3.28	8.59
1990-91	1.200.3	1.751	286	597
1992-93	1,573	1.701	337	459
1994-95	1,889	1.734	228	8.82
1996-97	1,89,4	1.785	1.34	5.91
1998-1999	1,80,3	1.5.42	1.89	4.89
2000-2002	1,750	1.542	1.57	456

Source: C.D.C Annual Reports from 1977 to 2002, Bota, Cameroon.

Ndu Tea production and output grow at an alarming rate. In 1979, there was a drastic increase in production. More labourers especially females were employed to work in the Estate and equally the number of people living for the coast to obtain jobs had drastically reduced due to the creation of this new plantation. The 1990s equally saw a drop in the crop production due to the introduction of multiparty politics in Cameroon⁵⁶⁹.

⁵⁶⁸ C.D.C Annual Report and Account for the Twelve Months Ended, Bota, Cameroon, 1979-80, pp 7-18.

⁵⁶⁹ C.D.C Annual Reports from 1977 to 2002, Bota, Cameroon.

The Ndu Tea Estate had to pay a variation of taxes on the tea. This was because it became the main export company in the North West Region exporting tons of tea yearly.

Table 25: Component of Tax Paid in the Ndu Tea Estate

Components of tax	1977	78-79	80-81	82-83	84-85	86-87	88-89	90-91	92-93	94-95	96-97
Company tax	62.2	272.3	40.79	97.6	162.3	40.79	61.4	261.4	98.2	72.4	89.28
Export duty	107.7	108.2	120.0	125.9	125.1	120.0	114.7	181.2	104.1	108.2	124.7
Turn over tax	154.3	190.0	214.9	364.5	358.9	211.8	141.8	191.2	138.3	144.3	214.3
Inspection fees	1.3	2.8	3.2	1.1	2.7	2.4	2.3	2.8	2.9	1.6	2.2
Business license	13.6	8.1	6.6	7.9	9.3	7.3	10.7	8.9	2.7	11.9	11.1
Stamp duty	1.1	3.5	2.2	2.6	1.6	1.3	1.8	2.9	1.6	1.9	1.3
Import duty	25.6	11.9	21.4	.5	36.3	20.8	22.0	18.5	20.6	23.8	12.4

Source: C.D.C Annual Reports from 1977 to 1997, pp. 5-11.

The Ndu Tea Estate spent a lot of money on the company tax, export Duty turnover tax, inspection fees, business license, stamp duty and import duty from 1977 to 1997 as has been elaborated above. The impact fell on the female and male labourers who were lowly paid due to insufficient money as part was used for taxes⁵⁷⁰

Conclusion

The manifestation of gender disparities in the tea plantations in the Cameroons was very evident as a lot of practical examples were recorded in these plantations seen in the disparities in labour conditions, job description and employment requirements. There were equally a lot of male and female labourers involved in the production processes of the plantation crop. With specialization, men and women could be found in almost all the sectors of the production process, processing the tea. This product was further marketed and the production process continued as a circle. However, our investigations revealed that, though men and women were employed as labourers in the plantations, there was a general tendency to ascribe mean jobs in the plantations to female labourers. This was seen in the fact that the efforts of these female

⁵⁷⁰ C.D.C Annual Reports from 1977 to 1997, pp. 5-11.

labourers were unnecessarily undermined as they were given mean jobs like picking, gathering weeding, watering and sweeping, unlike the male labourers who were given jobs like factory managers and general overseers.

CHAPTER FOUR

GENDER DISPARITIES AND SOCIAL FACILITIES IN PLANTATION LABOUR IN THE CAMEROONS

Introduction

Plantation life and the development of a capitalist economy in the Cameroons greatly shaped the life of the labourers and even transformed the environment through recreational facilities. For administrative purposes, article 2 of the League of Nation Mandate gave Britain the responsibility for the maintenance of peace, order and good government of the territory of the Southern Cameroons and for the promotion to the utmost of the material and moral wellbeing and the social progress of its inhabitants⁵⁷¹. It was therefore incumbent on the plantation management to protect its workers and provide for the material and social wellbeing which was done through the provision of recreational facilities.

These facilities were seen in the construction of camps for the workers and these camps were grouped into different categories depending on the level of the worker. We had the senior service camps and the junior service camps. Generally, most of the camps were single roomed and it usually accommodated the entire family. The labourer's diet was usually a monotonous type of meal and was mostly cooked in the evening after work. Another aspect of recreational facilities was clubs.

There were a lot of clubs for the labourers to relax especially on weekends. Every plantation had a club for the benefit of the workers. Indoor games were a pertinent part of plantation life where these workers sat in small groups and as they discussed company issues, they relaxed on those games. There were also dance groups that animated the camps and there was usually competition between different camps and equally, between the female and male labourers dance groups.

Football and athletics greatly brought labourers from far and near together in inter camp competitions and a football team for plantation workers was even formed. The health care service with a reasonable number of hospitals were made available to cater for the health of these plantation workers and there were equally educational facilities seen in the construction of mostly elementary schools to take care of the education of the children of these female and male labourers. Recreation was therefore part and parcel of plantation life with both men and

⁵⁷¹ Ngoh, *Cameroon 1884-Present*, p.145.

women involved as will be further analyzed. However, it is important to first analyse the female and male labour process in the rubber and palm production process.

Disparities in the Palm and Rubber Plantations

Gender disparities were visible in the palm and rubber plantations just like in the tea plantations in the Cameroons. Our investigation equally revealed that gender disparity was equally very much seen in the production process of palm and rubber in the Cameroons.

The palm and rubber plantations started with a recruitment of a predominantly male labour force. Our informant maintained that the palm plantation began by employing a predominantly male labour force because the work was considered tedious and it required plantation workers who were physically strong especially given that plantation workers from the beginning had to trek for very long distances to the palm bushes⁵⁷². There were many palm bushes in places like Bota, Debundscha, Benoe, Mondoni, Mungo, Illoani and Idenau but Idenau estate was the first estate in the world to be planted with the hybrid tenera in 1952. The Idenau plantation was a small estate situated to the North of the Bibundi village. It is on the seacoast southwest of the Cameroon Mountain and about sixty kilometers West of Victoria⁵⁷³.

The Tiko rubber bushes just like the factory equally started with a recruitment of a predominantly male labour force. Female labourers were however employed but mostly to work in the factory and in the various sectors. Available records, which date as far back to 1947. Show continuous and steady increase in both hectares and production of rubber in the Cameroon development corporation. These reveal yields and hectares ranging from 1,606 tons (5,969 Ha) in 1951 to 19,279 tons (20560 Ha) in 1996.

⁵⁷² Interview with Martin Bisong, 58 Years Old, Clerk at the Tiko Factory, Tiko, August 5th 2015.

⁵⁷³ C.D.C Archives, File:2, Statistics of Estates, 1980, p.1.

Plate 31: The Idenau plantation on August 29th 2015



Source: Researcher's Field Work, August 2015.

The Idenau palm plantation began by employing a predominantly male labour force by 1952 but female labourers were soon part of plantation workers in the various sectors.

Table 26: Statistics of labourers in the palm and rubber plantations in 1980⁵⁷⁴.

Section	Male	Female	Total number
Factory	254	18	172
Engineering	36	-	36
Office	39	09	48
Clinic	5	15	20
Field	825	37	863
Total	1.159	79	1229

Source: C.D.C Archives, File:2, Statistics of Estates, 1980, pp1-6.

Generally speaking, the palm and rubber plantations from the table above employed more male especially in the offices and in other sectors but for the clinics that had more women than men.

⁵⁷⁴ C.D.C Archives, File:2, Statistics of Estates, 1980, pp1-6.

These plantations therefore concentrated on the employment on more male labourers than female labourers. The only sector with no female labourers was the engineering sector.

Plate 32: Engineering Sector of the Idenau Palm Factory



Source: Negatives of researchers taken during field Work from April to August 2015 at Idenau.

Gender in the Palm Production Process

Gender disparities were greatly visible in the production process of the palm and rubber plantations. Specific task were assigned to men and women in the production chain but with a tendency for women to be assigned arduous jobs because they were considered not to be part of the plantation market economy⁵⁷⁵. Men therefore generally occupied most of the lucrative positions in the production process while women were assigned less remunerative jobs in the process.

⁵⁷⁵ Interview with Joseph Fuh, 58 Years Old, Worked as a Palm Harvester, Idenau, August 20th 2015.

Palm oil is an edible vegetable oil derived from the monocarp of the fruit of the oil palm. The oil is used in food manufacturing, beauty products and as biofuel. It account for about 33% of global oils produced from oil crops. The oil palm started bearing fruits two or three years after planting and bared fruits throughout its life span of about 25 to 30 years⁵⁷⁶. The production process began with the harvesting of the palm nuts or fruits from the thick bushes once the tree was mature. Our investigation revealed that, from the beginning of palm oil plantation in the Cameroons, harvesting was mostly done by men. There were male climbers and harvesters and women were mostly involved in collecting the palm fruits after harvesting⁵⁷⁷. By the 1990s, women got involved in the harvesting process. This was because these women continuously showed a lot of interest in the production process and so did informal training in the field where they copied from what the men were doing and so equally started harvesting⁵⁷⁸.

There was however generally more male harvesters than women in the palm plantations in the Cameroons. To harvest, the harvesters use a long sickle to remove it from the palm tree. Palm fruits which were ready to harvest could be easily identified due to the bright red-orange colour of their palm fruits. Oil palm were able to produce fruits for harvest within 4 to 6 years of planting and their life expectancy ranged from 28 to 30 years on average at which point they were usually 40 feet /12 meters high and it became too hard to harvest the heavy fruit bundles using extension poles.

Plate 33: Mature Palm Tree Ready for Harvesting



Source: Researcher's Field Work, August 2015.

⁵⁷⁶ Mukiibi, *Agriculture in Uganda*, P.119.

⁵⁷⁷ Fuh, August 20th 2015.

⁵⁷⁸ Interview with Cicilia Tatom, 56 Years Old, Worked as a typist in the Palm Plantation, Bota Limbe, August 5th 2015.

The palm fruits were generally harvested by men but women did the picking and the collection of the fruits. These women equally moved around and gathered the fruits together on a particular spot ready for collection to the factory for the processing. At the level of the palm farms therefore, there was gender division of roles because about 80 % of men concentrated in harvesting the palm fruit while only about 20% of women were later involved in the aspect of harvesting. Further investigation revealed that 99% of women employed in the field concentrated on collection and gathering of the nuts in preparation for transportation to the factory. These women were also involved in weeding especially the young palm nursery.⁵⁷⁹.

After harvesting, palm fruit bunches were transported to the factory by trucks. The fresh fruits arrived from the field as bunches of loose fruits. They were received and threshing or removal of the fruits from bunches was done⁵⁸⁰. Threshed fruits were divided in to different groups to check their quality. The ripeness of the oil palm fruit was one of the most important factors that determined the quality of the oil.

Plate 34: Threshed Palm Fruits to be processed



Source: Researcher's Field Work, August 2015.

This was another sector in the palm production process which was female labour intensive. Most of the female labourers were employed to do the selection and sorting of the palm fruits

⁵⁷⁹ Interview with Bibiana Audu, 59 Years Old, Field Worker, Tiko, August 11th 2015.

⁵⁸⁰ Fuh, August 20th 2015.

in to different qualities so as to assure high quality production. Our investigation revealed that this was an important part and even one of the most important part of the production chain because any mistake done at this level led to poor quality oil. Sorting was therefore generally done by women because of the patience and their traditional gender roles, they took their time to select the nuts in to different categories and equally took time to remove the nuts that were already getting bad and which could spoil the oil by giving it a bad smell. During field work, our informant revealed that all labourers employed in this sector were female. Management actually preferred employing female labourers because they had in the past tried to employ male but they were unable to do the work⁵⁸¹.

Plate 35: The Sorting Process



Source: Researcher's Field Work, August 2015.

⁵⁸¹ Interview with Njoma Mary, 50 Years Old, CDC School Teacher in 1989, Bota Limbe, August 21 st 2015.

The next step in this journey was the treatment of the fruits with steam to eliminate any bacterial and put a stop to enzyme activity. In this way, the degradation of the fruit was brought to an end⁵⁸². In the meantime, the steamer softened the oil palm fruits, which in turn helped to relieve the natural oil. After this steam treatment, the fruit masses which contained water, oil, fibers, palm kernel were treated to separate all components.

Plate 36: Natural Squeezed Oil under Pressure



Source: Researcher's Field Work, August 2015.

This natural fruit was then put under high pressure to squeeze out the oil and water. The pulp of a mature fruit typically contained 56-70% of edible oil. Palm oil was extracted from Fresh Fruits Bunches (FFB) by a mechanical process⁵⁸³. As a result, a water oil mixture was produced. As water and oil do not mix after some time, the palm oil formed an oil layer on the top. In this way, the oil was extracted from the water after which, processing, clarification and purification was done. There was also drying of oil and storage of kernel recovery.

Until recently little was known about gender dynamics surrounding oil palm processing because concentration was focused on the production side which was dominated by men.. One therefore concluded that, the inclusion of gender specific policies in the oil palm operations

⁵⁸² Interview with Mukunje Isaac, 57 Years Old, Palm Collector in 1988, Idenau, August 29th 2015.

⁵⁸³ Fuh, August 20th 2015.

could cover the violence and structural patriarchy though these women in the palm plantations were still given what the plantation economy world refer to as “women’s work”. The extent of exploitation and discrimination of women within the palm oil industry become difficult to deny. Women turned to be restricted to low-paying arduous and demeaning tasks, including the spraying of pesticides, weeding, collection and gathering. Gender inequality in agriculture is widely recognized as an issue that must be addressed urgently and globally in the palm oil industry. Although women have contributed significantly to the work and operations on oil palm operations, employment has long been male dominated. Women were often seen as primary caregivers who didn’t need to be involved in training.

Gender in the Rubber Production Process

Just like in the tea and palm estate, the rubber plantations in the Cameroons equally began by employing a predominantly male labour force but with the increase in the demand for rubber in the world market, there was an urgent need to employ female labourers though their efforts were undermined. Men and women worked in the rubber plantations from the beginning of harvesting to the processing of the rubber in the factories. Our investigation revealed that there was a constant and permanent opposition to female labourers by the male labourers who regarded them as housewives and so their place was to be in the kitchen.

A good number of female workers suffered discrimination and maltreatment not from the management but particularly from male labourers who regarded the women as not fit for the job⁵⁸⁴. Some of these female workers working in the rubber plantations and especially in the factory revealed that they were usually isolated by the men and left on their own simply because of male opposition to female labour in the rubber plantations.

⁵⁸⁴ Egoh, August 6th 2015.

Plate 37: Natural Rubber from the Field

Source: Researcher's Field Work, August 6th 2015.

The rubber once tapped mostly by male labourers was gathered in bigger buckets for onward transportation to a warehouse in the factory. Hips of natural rubber had to be made available and this could take about 2 to 3 weeks for it to reach the quantity ready for processing⁵⁸⁵. The process of tapping was male labour intensive but the process of gathering the tapped rubber was female labour intensive. Our observation revealed that, these men got up very early and went to the field for taping while the female field labourers came later to gather the tapped rubber from the various point to a convenient spot where the vehicle could easily transport to the factory.

⁵⁸⁵ Interview with Ejanga Bah, 48 Years Old, Factory worker at the Tiko Rubber Factory, Tiko, August 6th 2015. Researcher's Field Work in July 2015.

Plate 38: Rubber Mastication



Source: Researcher's Field Work, August 6th 2015.

Natural rubber was made by extracting a milky liquid sap, present in either the latex, vessels (ducts) or in the cells of rubber producing plants. For the case of the C.D.C rubber plantation which is our area of study, the specie of rubber tree was the *Hevea brasilliensis* tree. Harvesting was done when the trees attained the age of 6 to 7 years, when the trees were considered mature and had attained a girth circumference of 45cm at the height of 150cm from the ground. Natural rubber was extracted by a method called tapping, by making incisions in to the bark and collecting the fluid in to vessels attached to the rubber tree.

The liquid was sticky, milky and required a couple of steps before it could be sold as natural rubber. Rubber processing consisted of four basic steps. We had mastication. This was usually carried out in batches. The operation was done either in large enclosed mixing machines or on rubber mills. When the elastomer was sheared and the molecules were broken down, it gave easier flow⁵⁸⁶.

⁵⁸⁶Interview with Egoh Emmanuel, 57Years Old, Factory Engineer and the Tiko Rubber Factory, Tiko, August 6th 2015. Researcher's Observations During Field Work, August 2015.

The Peak of Rubber Processing

The peak of rubber processing came at the level of mixing. In order to produce uniform rubber cakes, it was pertinent that the rubber be well mixed. Rubber elasticity and quality therefore arose as a result of good mixture. To ensure that this process was well done, the labour force of this section was as intense as the machines needed to be controlled and with the continuous process, the mixture was done with labourers controlling the speed of the machine.

Plate 39: Mixing of Rubber



Source: Researcher's Field Work, August 6th 2015.

Mixing was usually carried out immediately after mastication. Mixing was carried out on machines similar to those used in mastication and this was done immediately after softening. Reactive materials, fillers, oils and protective chemicals of various kinds were incorporated in to the base elastomer by a combined shearing and mixing action and after some time, the compound was then sheeted out, created with a release soap to prevent sticking and stored⁵⁸⁷.

⁵⁸⁷ Researcher's Field Work, August 6th 2015.

Plate 40: Shaping of Rubber



Source: Researcher's Field Work, August 6th 2015.

Shaping of the viscous mass in to desired form took place in several ways. Extruders were used to produce long continuous product such as tubing, tires and wire coverings. They were also used to produce various profiles that could later be cut to length⁵⁸⁸. Shaping of the rubber cakes was generally done by male labourers.

⁵⁸⁸ Interview with Mah Hilary, 49 Years Old, Audit Clerk in the Tiko Rubber Factory, Tiko, August 5th 2015.

Plate 41: Curing of Rubber



Source: Researcher's Field Work, August 2015.

Curing was carried out in pressurized steel molds, which were heated by steam or electricity to temperatures at which the interlinking reaction took place. Curing was done to ensure the smoothness of the rubber cakes and to render it easy for storage⁵⁸⁹.

⁵⁸⁹ Interview with Francis Japmuh, 45 Years Old, Factory Worker at the Tiko Rubber Factory, Tiko, August 16th 2015.

Plate 42: Packaging of Rubber



Source: Researcher's Field Work, August 2015.

Pagaging rubber cakes in the Tiko rubber factory were mostly female labour intensive. This task was best suited for women as revealed by one of our informant because a lot of care was needed to pagage the rubber cakes so female labourers and women in general were seen to be very patient and careful. Management therefore insisted on female labourers to do the pagaging⁵⁹⁰.

The process of becoming a rubber worker and adapting to the new way of living added new roles and responsibility for women and at the same time, it undermined men's values and reshaped gender relations both within and outside the home.

Tapping rubber as already mentioned was a male dominated activity. However, female tappers soon entered the scene of tapping. Our investigations revealed that Atanga Florence was one

⁵⁹⁰ Interview with Mboka Marie, 42 Years Old, Factory Worker, Tiko, August 5th 2015.

of the first female tappers who started work at 25 years. She was said to begin work at 3:30 AM with house hold work and then started tapping at 6: AM and she was able to tap 750 trees a day unlike most men who tapped the average of 500 trees⁵⁹¹. This female tapper had therefore broken the bounds of tapping in the rubber estate. Women could therefore be employed in every sector of the rubber plantation and they would conveniently work though a very minimal percentage was employed as tappers. Contrary to this investigation was the fact that, most male labourers dreaded and escape from some sections of the rubber plantation like the gathering sector with the general view that it was a “female job”⁵⁹².

Plate 43: Female Administrative Staff of the Idenau Palm Plantation



Source: Researcher's Field Work, July 29th 2015.

The Idenau oil plantation began by employing a predominantly male labour force but management soon saw the need to employ female labourers especially with the increasing demand for labourers and equally the continuous male refusal to do picking of nuts. These female labourers were mostly employed to work in the nursery or to pick nuts but a very insignificant percentage of the women were employed as clerks to work in the offices⁵⁹³.

⁵⁹¹C.D.C Publication, Inside C.D.C N°003, Bota, Franklin Ngoni Njie, 2015, p.15.

⁵⁹² Japmuh, August 16th 2015.

⁵⁹³Fuh, August 20th 2015.

Gender disparities and division of roles was vividly exposed in the technical sector. Technical here refers to labour connected with practical knowledge, skills or methods. These technicians were seen in labour provided by mechanics, break layers, carpenters, plumbers and electricians, who had specific task and role in the plantations. Our investigation revealed that there was no single female labourer in the technical sector. Ebot maintained that. “That one is for men”⁵⁹⁴.

In the Mechanical sector, there was a foreman who was at the head of the garage. This garage was constructed in as soon as the factory was constructed. It was immediately equipped but the tractors soon entered ruin especially because there were no experts to maintain the vehicles. New trucks and tractors were bought in to revamp this section. The mechanical sector was not only responsible for maintaining vehicles but machines that were used in the factors equally needed the services of these mechanics who could be called up by the general overseer of the factory to check and correct a technical fault with one of the machines in the factory. The foreman therefore had a lot of authority in his hands given that he was the controller of all the other mechanics in his sector. Some could be called up to travel for long distances if a tractor had a problem in one of the plantation sites. They were therefore ready at all times to be called to work when the need arose. The Idenau plantation employed a total of 8 mechanics who worked in shift⁵⁹⁵.

Amongst them, the most skillful was the fore man who took off time to educate the others especially during field work on technical issues. One of the mechanics maintained that he was simply a garage boy in the Idenau Town and because he was well known for his hard work, he was recommended by some labourers in the plantation and simply incorporated in to the Idenau technical staff. Under the fore man who was the most experience, he had developed a lot of skills and became a fulltime mechanic who could work on his own without the assistant of the foreman. He had therefore acquired skills through in-service training and was one of the best mechanics in the plantation⁵⁹⁶. In the history of the Idenau plantation, there had never been a female mechanic. This role was therefore particular ascribed as that belonging to men.

The Break laying department was also part of the technical staff of the Idenau plantation. This department was particularly responsible for construction of ware houses and repairs. The department was equally set up soon after the construction of the factory. It constructed ware

⁵⁹⁴ Interview with John Ebot, 61 Years Old, Technician at the Idenau Factory, Idenau, July 19th 2022.

⁵⁹⁵ Interview with Ebenezer Ebong, 58 Years Old, Mechanical Foreman, Mechanical Garage, Idenau Plantation, July 19th 2022.

⁵⁹⁶ *Idem*.

houses where picked nuts ready for processing could be stored awaiting the actual process. Such ware houses were equally used to store firewood which was used in the factory. They were equally responsible for the construction of senior staff quarters and were directly under the tutelage of the general overseer of the factory. This department was equally headed by a headman who had a lot of authority and was responsible for distributing task to the other members of that department. There were all together 6 break layers in the Idenau plantation⁵⁹⁷. Gender disparities were clearly illustrated in this department as seen in the fact that there was no female break layer.

Plate 44: Technical Department of the Idenau Palm Plantation



Source: Researcher's Field Work, July 2015.

The technical department was dominated by male labourers who most of the time worked over night in order to ensure that the machines were at work or to be available if there was a problem. This was particularly during peak periods when production had to be done at all times. Our investigations revealed that a good number of female security guides at the Idenau plantation were used to considering themselves as a technical staff because they worked overnight together with those technicians especially when they were called up for special duty. These female labourers would join the technicians to do repairs⁵⁹⁸.

⁵⁹⁷Interview with Noel Munki, 56 Years Old, Head of Building Department, August 17th 2014.

⁵⁹⁸ Interview with Naomi Japonge, 46 Years Old, Security Guide, Idenau Oil Plantation, July 19th 2022.

Comparative Study of Labour Recruitment in the Tea, Palm and Rubber Plantations

Our conclusions on the gender roles in the tea, palm and rubber plantation revealed that, there were generally more female labourers in the fields of the tea estates working as pluckers than men. These women were equally seen in the factory but the jobs and task they undertook were mostly sweeping and gathering of tea whereas few men worked in the fields as pluckers but a majority of these men were seen in the administrative and factory sector of the estate

As regards palm plantations, there was a mark difference in gender labour recruitment. There were more male labourers working in the field and doing the specific job of harvesting the nuts while there were fewer women in the field who did jobs like picking the nuts and carrying the nuts to the area convenient to be transported to the factory for processing. There were a reasonable number of female labourers in the palm factory as compared to the situation in the tea factory; these female labourers in the palm factory could be seen in every stage of the production process. The only area that had very few female labourers was the administrative bench which was dominated by male labourers.

The rubber plantation equally presented a different picture from the tea and palm plantations. Very few female labourers were involved in plantation work in the rubber fields during harvesting. This was because harvesting of rubber was traditionally done very early in the morning and so most of the women could not undertake the task because they had to finish up with their domestic duties before coming to work so it was a job better fitted for men who were not involved in domestic chores and child care⁵⁹⁹. There were more women in the rubber factories than in the tea and palm factory. Our informant revealed that this was because men were escaping from the pungent smell of rubber so most of these men preferred to work in the fields and in the offices than to work in the factory⁶⁰⁰.

Aspects of Socials and Plantation Labour in the Cameroons

When the plantations were taken over by the British in 1916, a lot of recreational facilities had already been provided by the former plantation owners seen in especially camp houses. Our investigations revealed that, the main instrument which the Germans employed for the development of their Cameroon protectorate was the creation of large plantations in the territory. Lewins concluded with regards to this that, “the flag follows trade”⁶⁰¹. These German

⁵⁹⁹ Audu, August 11th 2015.

⁶⁰⁰ Interview with Mukete Agnes, 56 Years Old, Factory Worker in the Tiko Rubber Factory, Tiko, August 24th 2015.

⁶⁰¹ Evans Lewins, *The Germans and Africa*, London, Vantage Press, 1939, p. 152.

planters therefore did everything possible to maintain these plantations. The inclusion of recreational facilities in plantation life was therefore inevitable for this was going to help keep the labourers so that their economic objective could be met. The British therefore followed in the footsteps of these Germans and continued with the provision of recreational facilities by even adding some aspects that the Germans did not envisage, and also modified those that the Germans had envisaged. The war had however left a lot of devastating effects on the plantations, like wise on the recreational facilities that had to put the new plantation masters in an uphill task of repairs.

Camp houses were destroyed and this rendered a lot of labourers homeless. There was a need to construct new camp houses to be able to bring back these labourers who had all escaped as a result of the Great War. Just like in the area of labour recruitment and revamping the plantations that had also been affected by the war, the area of recreational facilities was equally going to undergo serious renovations and innovations given that it was an important aspect of plantation life.

It was generally acknowledged that the management had as function to provide recreational facilities to its workers. Men and women in the plantations were involved in plantation work and so they were provided with health care services for the welfare of the workers⁶⁰². The area of health care services was particularly of keen interest to these capitalist economists because labourers needed to be in good health so as to provide good labour; they needed to do everything for the men and women working in the plantations to be comfortable. Credit Union facilities and sporting activities were therefore going to be part of recreational life. Workers participated actively in all these areas. The level of recreational activities increased in the plantations especially from 1947 when the C.D.C took over. This new way of life was especially welcomed in the Idenau plantation, Tiko, Tole and in the Ndu Tea Estate that was found in the grassfields. This was because some workers who had worked in the Tole Estate were transferred to the Ndu Tea Estate and they brought with them a notion of Senior Service Club which served both the senior staff and the rest of the labourers as a whole. The clubs provided, sporting, indoor games, dining, drinking, football and generally sporting activities where men and women working in the estate occasionally met to relax.

⁶⁰² Abba, August 2014.

Map 8: An Illustration of Social Facilities in the Plantations



Source: Adopted from, Epale, *Plantation and Development in Western Cameroon*, p.22⁶⁰³ Modified by Researcher during Field Work, 2014, 2015, and 2021.

The illustration above gives a vivid description of the situation and development of recreational facilities in the plantations. The number of schools, hospitals, golf course clubs, staff quarters and a reasonable number of camps had developed around the communities where the plantations were located. The highest recorded recreational facilities in the plantation history were seen in the provision of camp quarters which were over 200. This was because, 90% of labourers in the plantations were housed in these camps and it was generally the policy of management to construct these camp houses not too far from the plantations so that the labourers will not strain to go to work. As the population increased, there was a need for more recreational facilities given that more labourers were employed in the plantations.

⁶⁰³ Epale, *Plantation and Development in Western Cameroon*, p. 22.

Evolution of Camp Quarters

There was greater reflection in the social life of the plantation workers. Housing was strictly stratified. The general labour force lived in labour camps, which were usually constructed in an orderly manner but with not so much space separating one from the other. Another peculiarity of these camp houses for labourers was the fact that they were generally very small in size and just one was provided for the labourer irrespective of the size of his family. Labourers with larger families therefore had to suffer a lot under the tied air houses. Junior staff who were the next in terms of ranking in the plantation hierarchy was lodged in junior service houses. These sets of houses were generally found in staff quarters and had a better standard than the camps for the labourers.

These houses generally had two rooms and were a little bit more advanced than those in the general camp. We equally had the intermediate staff in intermediate service houses and senior staff in senior service houses⁶⁰⁴. A variety of types of worker's houses were inherited from the Germans, but most of these houses were substandard, when the plantations were taken over. Substandard probably because the German rule in the territory was generally very cruel and the colonialist concentrated mainly on their trade. Lewins opines that, the major activity of these colonialist was trade and with the availability of the land and labour, they undertook to plantation agriculture as their highest economic investment but did very little as far as caring for the human resources was concerned.

Camps consisted of houses in rows each containing a number of one-room quarters, one beside the other with small kitchens behind. The materials for such structures were fairly easily obtained locally. The carraboard were typical of the coastal towns of the Cameroons. These were roughly split planks which were nailed overlapping each other on a wooden framework to form a weather-boarding surface. The relative slowness of termite action in the volcanic soils made this type of structure possible and it was a form of wide spread housing in the native area⁶⁰⁵. This type of structure however had a lot of defect as was confirmed by one of our informant who postulated that the carraboard were not very comfortable. These type of accommodation were still very common in the Tiko plantation area but needed a lot of repairs. We cannot over emphasis the fact that, carraboard houses were the earliest form of camp houses

⁶⁰⁴ C.D.C Commemorative Publication, Golden Jubilee, 1997,p.42.

⁶⁰⁵ Ardener E., et al, *Plantation and Village in the Cameroons*, p. 93.

which were constructed by the Germans and taken over by the British when they took over the territory after the First World War⁶⁰⁶.

Plate 45: Sample Carraboard Camp in the Tiko Plantation Area



Source: Researcher's Field Work, July- August 2015.

Generally, the most usual camp houses as a whole was the white-washed carraboard and palm-mat-roofline. The carraboard camp houses were mostly singled room and those who occupied these houses were most of the times the field workers or the labourers as they were fondly called. This was the lowest grade of accommodation in the plantations. It was usually occupied by the labourer and his or her entire family. Our investigation discovered that in some camp homes, up to about 8 people could be counted. These houses were very close to each other and so there was usually a lot of quarrelling between the inhabitation of one and the other to the extent that some even went in to fighting. Abusive language could be heard during such occasions like “poor labourer, witch man, Bantu”, all just to inside the population around to join in the fight. Our informant revealed that, fighting and quarrelling was a very common characteristic of these camp quarters⁶⁰⁷.

⁶⁰⁶ Audu, August 11th 2015.

⁶⁰⁷ Interview with Julius Kougang, 76 Years Old, Quarter Head in Tiko, Tiko, August 8th 2021.

Surprisingly enough, a majority of female labourers and their families lived in these carraboard houses. This was because; a majority of these female labourers were field workers and widows. These accommodations were reserved for these field labourers. Our investigations equally revealed that, these singled room camp houses were equally reserved for those who were single and our demographic statistics of labourers in the plantations revealed that, most female labourers were either widows or single. In view of these two factors, the tendency was for these houses to be occupied by female labourers.

In contrast to these were the modern housing sites which were mostly constructed when most of the plantations were taken over by the C.D.C in 1947. Modern houses came in to the limelight to fulfill Rudin's earlier predictions about the territory when he said that, by 1950, Cameroon would only be compared to the Portuguese, Dutch or English⁶⁰⁸. The most typical form of accommodation was the cement block with a galvanized iron roof and metal door and window fittings. This was usually known as the "Contains". In addition, some camps had housing constructed of other permanent materials such as brick and tiles in places like Missellele and Ikange⁶⁰⁹.

The Ndu Tea Estate staff quarters was constructed in 1973 with the capacity of two separate camps of about four structures each. Statistics revealed that out of all the administrators living in this senior service staff quarter, there were more men than women. The manager, the assistant manager, the factory manager and the field assistants all lived in the senior staff quarters while the only female administrator living there was the head nurse⁶¹⁰. However the existence of the estate had led to the creation of an urban landscape, construction of houses by both male and female labourers and the development of a senior service staff quarter which presented a good touristic site for visitors.

The estate by the 1980s and the 1990s was visited by national and international tourist to enjoy the ever green tea dotted with beautiful houses and to see the factory and landscape. Our informant revealed that visitors came from Holland, Germany, France, Britain, Nigeria and Kenya to enjoy the scenery of the estate. Visitors had to present themselves at the gate where they gave in their identification papers to the security guides who consulted with the manager. After a careful study of the identification papers, they were asked a few questions on their purpose. They were handed to a senior field assistant who knew all the corners of the estate to

⁶⁰⁸ Rudin, *Germans in Cameroon*, p.285.

⁶⁰⁹ Ardener, *Plantation and Village in the Cameroons*, p. 93.

⁶¹⁰ Lumba, July 7th 2014.

take him round. Some of these visitors rented hotels in Ndu from where they stayed and visited the estate site. The Ndu Tea Estate, just like the Tole and other plantations like the Idenau were therefore interesting beautiful sites to visit and enjoy the ever green tea leaves and wonderful palms dotted with a few houses where the senior staff lived⁶¹¹.

Plate 46: Staff Quarters at the Ndu Tea Estate



Source: Photo Negative, Researcher, August 2014.

The Ndu Tea Estate staff quarters unlike those of the Tiko rubber plantations were generally more modern. This was because, there was no inheritance of camp houses from the Germans but rather, the C.D.C engaged in constructing the houses when it took over the estate in 1977. Management saw this new site as a new innovation and realized the need to construct a complete set of modern senior service houses for its workers. Furthermore, management thought it wise to use bricks because of the extreme cold weather of the area. Ndu happens to be the coldest place in Cameroon, and the second in West Africa. Cold could be a stumbling block to plantation work especially given the fact that it was a new estate and the first set of labourers had to be transferred from the already opened Tole plantation which was found in the coastal area, with a hotter climate. The only way to bring comfort to these new plantation workers was to construct the houses with cement blocks, so that the workers could be comfortable. Some of the houses therefore had chimneys though not all the workers could stay in the camp house⁶¹².

⁶¹¹Labu, August 20th 2014.

⁶¹² Lumba, July 7th 2014.

Plate 47: Staff Quarter in the Idenau Plantation



Source: Researcher's Field Work, July-August 2015.

The camp houses in the Idenau plantations were equally made up of carraboard but had undergone some modifications with some parts constructed with bricks. Carraboard made houses were very common in the coastal plantations. Our investigation revealed that, the vegetation in the area made this very possible because of the presence of savannah wood which was used for construction⁶¹³. However, Most of the Idenau camp houses were still the ones that had been inherited from the Germans.

This was particularly the houses where the labourers in the field occupied. It is however pertinent to note that, the C.D.C had improved on the state of these houses by panting and transforming most of the one-room to two rooms⁶¹⁴. Though still grossly insufficient for an average plantation worker who most of the times had an average of six children, it is pertinent to note that these camp houses had been improved upon, mainly as part of management's effort to ameliorate the living conditions of its workers.

⁶¹³ Epale, *Plantation and Development in Western Cameroon*, pp.7-21.

⁶¹⁴ Interview with Emeka Chinedu, 87 Years Old, the Oldest Business Man in Idenau, Idenau, August 15th 2021.

Plate 48: Senior Service Quarter in the Tiko Rubber Plantation



Source: Researcher's Field Work, July to August 2015

Among all the camp houses investigated in the plantation sites, those of the Tiko area were the highest that were constructed with carraboard. Our informant told us that, the Tiko camps were among the earliest camps that had been constructed even by the Germans. These camps and the environment was more advantages to the planters, given that it was closer to Douala from where most of the produce from the Cameroons were shipped to European countries⁶¹⁵.

The Tiko rubber plantation site had many senior service quarters. This was equally so because most of the German planters had inhabited the area and when they handed to the British, they continued in those houses and by the time of our investigations, the quarters had been innovated and were inhabited by the administrative staff of the Tiko rubber plantation⁶¹⁶. Given that a majority of these senior service staff were mostly the male workers, these accommodation centers were therefore mostly occupied by men. Unlike the junior service houses, these senior services houses were well constructed and well-spaced out.

In all the camps visited for the sociological inquiries, workers were asked if they had any complaints concerning their housing. The question was weighed towards eliciting complaints in order that quite trivial defects could be mentioned. The majority of complaints as were to be

⁶¹⁵ Afambon, August 8th 2021.

⁶¹⁶ *Idem*.

expected concerned the older housing of which there were three chief types; carraboard with mat roof, German cement houses and very old carraboard houses. More than 80% of labourers living in these camp houses complaint that the roof were leaking and needed repairs. Another popular type of complaint was the fact that the floor was rough and the aspect of overcrowding in camps carried the day as far as complaints were concerned⁶¹⁷.

The aspect of overcrowding in camps had brought a lot of repercussions on the labourers and even on the plantations. High crime wave became the order of the day where thieves from the non-plantation sites could easily mingle with plantation workers and commit various kinds of crime ranging from stealing to rape. The female child of one of our informant had been raped when she joined the labour force of the plantation and the child was traumatized by that incident that she entered in to depression and other consequences followed. Another consequence of this overcrowding in camps was the poor hygiene and sanitation that developed around the living environment. The long run effect was the diseases that developed and this easily spread and became an epidemic.

This was typical of the Tiko plantation site where most of the camps visited were in a very poor sanitary state as seen in one of our plates above. These camps again were often mosquitoes infested. Rats and snakes were virtually living in the homes of most of these labourers⁶¹⁸. Lack of pipe borne water and electricity were amongst the numerous problems in the camps that were investigated. A few labourers complaint that they were having sleepless nights as a result of bad dreams⁶¹⁹.

A long lasting consequence of overcrowding in camps was prostitution which had become the order of the day in most of the camps visited. The widows and the single female labourers were most often than not involved in prostitution. Our informant reveal that this was mostly because of the low wages they received and given that they were the once to take care of their children, these women were left with the choice of engaging in prostitution to make earns meet. An interesting episode was told about a certain Susana whose prostitution life had led to a song that was widely song in the plantations in the Cameroons in the 1970s in these words, "Nkumnkum massa ha nkumnkum time e no day oh nkumnkum. We go for pay oh ha Susana left for house ho ho nkumnkum. For seka waiti ha, because e di wait yi Johny oh oh nkumnkum.

⁶¹⁷ Interview with Maloba Esther, 57 Years Old, Field Worker, Tiko Plantation, August 5th 2015.

⁶¹⁸ *Idem*

⁶¹⁹ Ardener E., et al, *Plantation and Village in the Cameroons*, p. 93.

As Johny e came oh ha, Susana luck am for house oh oh nkumnkum. They beging for chop oh ha one time massa enter ho nkumnkum”⁶²⁰.

The song was interpreted as a recollection of the activities of one Susana who was specialized in taking other people’s husbands in their absence. The song revealed that, married women were equally involved in prostitution in the plantation area. All these social ills therefore developed because of the living conditions around these plantations. Similarly, management had no choice than to employ many workers especially with the high need for more labourers. Unfortunately, there was an increase in the employment of more labourers without a relative increase in the number of camp houses. The end result was the social and economic problems that developed first of all around the plantation area, then radiated to the communities which adversely affected the economy. It is pertinent to note that, the song “Nkumnkum Massa” has stood the test of time and by the time of our investigation, the song was still being song in the plantation camps of the Cameroons.

Overcrowding in camp houses was not a very popular phenomenon in the Ndu tea estate of the grassfields. Our investigations revealed that, most of the indigenes had constructed their houses before the start of the plantation and so a majority of these natives who were labourers in the estate were living in their houses. The C.D.C however constructed some staff quarters but these were mostly for the senior service staff. Furthermore, unlike the plantations along the coast that had the problem of land, this was not a problem with the Ndu tea estate. The problems of overcrowding in the plantations were therefore mostly seen in the plantations in the coast⁶²¹.

The problem of providing sufficient housing was well known by management and in the various sections, it was generally recognized that the housing of two men or one man and his wife and children to each one-roomed quarter was the only standard reasonably attained at that time. Even this limited objective was not achieved as often as might have been hoped⁶²². It was very common to see an average of ten to eleven people in one-roomed house where there was the labourer, his wife and about eight children. In other cases, the labourer was with his family and another labourer who was singled was added to his household. All these revealing circumstances about the living conditions made life in the camps extremely difficult.

A few hard working labourers managed to construct their private residences and moved away from the crowding accommodation. Our investigation revealed that, those who succeeded in

⁶²⁰ Interview with Mbiba Japhet, 76 Years Old, Quarter Head, Tiko Plantation Site, August 24th 2015.

⁶²¹ Lumba, July 7th 2014.

⁶²² Ardener E., et al, *Plantation and Village in the Cameroons*, p. 97.

such a venture were mostly those who had acquired chop farms and had hard working wives who worked these farms and sold the proceeds, then did a lot of savings. That notwithstanding, those who succeeded to construct such houses generally went in for carraboard but the difference here was the fact that, theirs was spacious and they had succeeded to escape from the overcrowding environment found around the camp houses⁶²³.

Camp lay-out was improved and modernized as the years passed by. The camp houses in the 1960s were different from those in the 1990s though these houses generally still left much to be desired. Some of the new permanent camps often seemed less well planned than some of the more attractive of the old carraboard lines built round an open square of grass. The reaction of workers to the camps was not always logical. Often, they complained that the camp was bad and hunted and that people had bad dreams and heard noises. Complaints equally came about the fact that these camp dwellers were being hunted and killed by a “mammy water” or water spirit which was said to howl in the camp at night. It was however maintained by the medical department that deaths were not usually frequent. Real factors such as dampness, relative isolation and overcrowding contributed to this state of mind⁶²⁴.

Table 27: Authorized Occupants of Five Camps

Camp	CDC Workers	Wives	Children	Total	Average N°. of Persons per Room	Average N°. of Persons per Quarter
A	159	66	68	293	4.9	5.0
B	133	63	70	266	2.7	2.8
C	206	63	67	336	2.1	2.2
D	212	117	109	438	2.6	2.8
E	150	100	106	356	1.8	2.1
Total	860	409	420	1,689	2.5	2.7

Source: Ardener E., Ardener S., and Warmington W.A., *Plantation and Village in the Cameroons*, p. 98.

The workers camps were overcrowded and this affected the health of the labourers and consequently, the general output of the plantation. The table above reveals that, the workers lived in one-roomed houses with their wives and children. A majority of these workers equally

⁶²³ Interview with Lobe Micheal, 72 Years Old, Quarter head, Ideneau, August 21st 2015.

⁶²⁴ Ardener E., et al, *Plantation and Village in the Cameroons*, p. 97.

had their relatives who had come to live with them. This situation made the living conditions to be extremely poor. This devastating situation led to complaints from the workers on very regular bases.

Information on the diet and nutritional standards of male and female in the plantations was by no means complete. It was clear that diets were generally insufficient and the deficiencies were in some cases very serious. The most common basic food eaten by plantation workers were plantains and cocoyam, and this was especially among single labourers and those that came from Nigeria. There was also garri which was very popular in most households of the plantation area. Some maize, beans and yams were also among the foods eaten but these once were mostly eaten by the class of the senior service⁶²⁵. Rice was eaten only by a minority because it was considered by the labourers to be too dear for regular use. Palm wine was widely drunk and beef, pork and chicken were eaten occasionally but those of the higher class ate meat on a regular bases.

The normal diet of many of the men was deficient. The appearance of the better nourished men who started higher than average expenditure of food was often markedly different, especially as regards skin condition from that of the majority. Labourers and especially men with higher earnings and higher food expenditure per head tended to have a greater variety in their food and to buy for instance some beef and rice fairly regularly and more fish and vegetables than the average. Some of these labourers bought tinned fish, milk, ovaltine, biscuits, sugar and similar goods regularly from the worker's shops. It was however not always easy to get especially the food items that were to be bought from the shops. To obtain satisfactory standards of nutrition especially among the unskilled labourers was very difficult. This was because wages were generally paid in cash and most of these labourers were not used to buying food at home and did not realize in their original calculations how dear it was or how much of their cash income it could take up.

They therefore tended to resent every penny they had to spend on buying food from local farmers and traders. It became clear too from the study of their working life that many of them looked on the terms of work as likely to be fairly short and many of the plantation labourers especially the single male workers probably intended to spend only a year or two in the area before returning home for some months at least. While in the plantation site, they had to be very economical so as to get some money saved and to buy as many cloths and other goods as

⁶²⁵ Interview with Solange Monenge, 67 Years Old, Plucker, Tole, December 10th 2021.

many as possible because every purchase of food reduced the amount of money they could save for their goods. As a result most of them preferred to sacrifice their diet so as to get much money⁶²⁶.

The situation of dieting of female labourers was a little bit different from that of male labourers. These women whose wages were generally low had within their years of employment developed other means of surviving. More than 70% of female labourers had farms on which they farmed basic food stuff like cassava, plantains, yams, vegetables and cocoyam. These women therefore substituted their diet from food that came from their farms. Wives of male labourers were also very instrumental because they were the once who farmed the chop farm portion of their husbands and helped to add to the food stuff⁶²⁷. It was equally investigated that, it was very difficult for these labourers to keep money in their pockets for more than a few days especially after pay day. Any money which was not immediately spent on essential needs or to pay debts or even put in a savings club tended to be quickly frittered away on inessentials, palm wine or cigarettes.

Generally, for more than half a month, food purchases were less than the labourers would have loved, principally because money was always short. Most of the purchases after some days of receiving wages were done on credit especially from the workers shops that were under the control of management. These purchases were usually done at higher prices than would have been done if they were being bought directly with cash. Part of the next month income was therefore committed before it was received. Thus, there was a variation from week to week in the type of food that the labourers eat which corresponded with the cash they had in hand or to their credit worthiness⁶²⁸.

Of note was the fact that, some especially male labourers spent their money on drinking and smoking especially on pay day. This was a big contrast to female labourers who got theirs and struggled to buy especially dry fish so they could be able to store and use for several weeks before the next pay day. It was very common to see a good number of male labourers drunk on pay day in the plantations but this was not the case with female labourers who rather got their money and went to the market for food stuff and items that they could not get from their farms⁶²⁹.

⁶²⁶ Ardener E., et al, *Plantation and Village in the Cameroons*, p. 118.

⁶²⁷ Interview with Anita Wingoh, 86 Years, Former Plantation Labourer, Buea, December 12th 2021.

⁶²⁸ Ardener E., et al, *Plantation and Village in the Cameroons*, p. 119.

⁶²⁹ Wingoh, December 12th 2021.

There was the long period during each day when many labourers went without food. Most of these plantation workers seemed not to eat anything during the mid-morning break from 9 to 9; 30 a.m., either because they were working too far from their homes to be able to return for a meal, or for other reasons. Generally, many labourers worked right through the break period and the main reason was to get their task finished and get home earlier given that they each had a daily task and a majority was remunerated following the task labour input. A good number of labourers greatly suffered from hunger after mid-day.

Some labourers especially of the sectors with no task labour assigned one of the labourers to cook food around the plantation site contributed by a hand full of labourers. With this, they were able to feed themselves during the mid-day break. The effect of poor dieting therefore was malnutrition which equally affected the productivity of the plantations⁶³⁰. The effect of shortages and high prices of food were intensified by the fact that the plantation labourers originated from so many different areas and that the staple food of their home area varied considerably. It was very difficult for a man coming to work in the plantations to make the necessary change in his staple food. A lot of complaints came especially from the Ibo workers about the difficulties of adopting themselves in the local diet of plantains and cocoyam. Labourers from the Bamenda grass field also complained of the local diet but seemed to adopt themselves to the changes⁶³¹. In view of these differences in home staples, any scheme which aimed to improve the supply of basic foods in the plantation areas had to take in to consideration the supply in large quantities of cassava, maize and yams at reasonable prices. There was also an allied problem of improving the variety of diets by making available other less important foods like meat, fish and rice at cheaper prices.

Table 28: Market prices of Various Foodstuffs in 1955

Commodity	Unit Quantities	Victoria	Tiko	Buea
Beef	1b	2s. 5 ^d .	2s. 0 ^d .	1s. 11 ^d .
Bonga Fish	1b	-	1s. 10 ^d .	1s. 10 ^d .
Stock fish	1b	3s. 3 ^d .	1s. 0 ^d .	1s. 0 ^d .
Plantains	Dozen	11 ^d .	1s. 6 ^d .	3s. 9 ^d .
Cocoyams	Dozen	1s. 0 ^d .	1s. 5 ^d .	1s. 1 ^d .
Yams	3 Tubers	7s. 7 ^d .	6s. 9 ^d .	9 ^d .

⁶³⁰ Ardener E., et al, *Plantation and Village in the Cameroons*, p. 120.

⁶³¹ *Ibid.*

Gari	3 cups	6 ^d .	7 ^d .	-
Palm Oil	Gin Bottle	11 ^d .	1s. 0 ^d .	6 ^d .
Groundnut Oil	Gin Bottle	-	3s. 3 ^d .	1s. 2 ^d .
Cry Fish	Cig Cup	4 ^d .	3 ^d .	3. 2 ^d .
Dried Papper	Cig Cup	5 ^d .	4 ^d .	4 ^d .
Salt	Cig Cup	2 ^d .	2 ^d .	5 ^d .
Egusi	Cig Cup	5 ^d .	6 ^d .	2 ^d .
Onion	Six Small	1s. 4 ^d .	-	8 ^d .
White Beans	Cig Cup	3 ^d .	3 ^d .	2s. 0 ^d .
Groundnuts	Cig Cup	4 ^d .	3 ^d .	3 ^d .
Rice	Cig Cup	4 ^d .	5 ^d .	5 ^d .
Maize	Cig Cup	7 ^d .	7 ^d .	5 ^d .
Maize Heads	Each	2 ^d .	1 ^d .	-
Banana	Dozen	3 ^d .	6 ^d .	3 ^d .

Source: Ardener E., Ardener S., and Warmington W.A., *Plantation and Village in the Cameroons*, p. 135.

The table above shows the official records of market prices collected regularly by the Department of Labour. This was the record of a selection of the most important food items consumed by the labourers. The prices varied in the Victoria, Tiko and Buea area which were the places inhabited by a majority of the plantation workers⁶³². Our investigations revealed that, vegetables were mostly harvested by the plantation workers from the nearby bushes, especially bitter herbs and huckleberry popularly known as “njamanjama”. Because of the fertility of the soil, it grows naturally in every bush so labourers could easily harvest. However, some female labourers farmed vegetables and they could even occasionally sell to their fellow labourers.

Club Life in the Camps

Club activities in the plantations in the Cameroon could be summarized by the adage “the proof of the pudding is in the eating”. The British administrators left a legacy in the plantations seen in club life and activities. By the time of our investigations, there were still signboards and the presence of the clubs with the notice, “staff club-for members only” This inscriptions and many

⁶³² Ardener E., et al, *Plantation and Village in the Cameroons*, p. 135.

more acted as a uniting force for the labourers who came together after a hard day's work to discuss issues affecting their job. The clubs indeed provided a time for relaxation.

All the labourers enjoyed club life at their different levels. There were labour clubs for general workers, intermediate clubs for supervisory staff and senior staff clubs for management staff. Although some of these clubs through poor management extended their membership to persons who sometimes regrettably displayed less than impeccable behaviour, the club nevertheless remained a very valuable amenity to plantation workers⁶³³.

The notion of creating social clubs was introduced in the plantations by the British planters. The first club was established in Bota in 1951, Tiko in 1952 and Ekona in 1954. They provided a much needed retreat for planters and other British administrators who were serving in the Cameroons. As the plantations expanded, more clubs were established and the naming of some of them was done following their historical past. We had the fire burn club at Idenau; the name fire burn because the eruption of the mountain in 1919 left some solidified lava around the area where the club was located. We had the Austin club at Moliwe named after Austin Motors, the sole representative of the British in the Cameroons and the volcanic club at Ekona which derived its name from the volcanic flow from the Mount Cameroon eruption of 1959⁶³⁴.

The club idea became so popular that, by the 1990s, above 36 clubs existed in all the areas of operation. The clubs offered the workers and their families with a lot of facilities. For the management staff, the club in Bota and Tiko provided opportunities for swimming and games like tennis, table tennis, snooker and gulf. Friends who were sponsored could also use these facilities. For the intermediate clubs in Bota and Tiko, facilities existed for tennis and table tennis. The Limbe River Club was well noted as a popular venue for the enjoyment of its renowned spiced chicken. Here, membership rules existed only on paper. Senior, intermediate and lower grade workers and even non-members all patronized the club daily to relish the chicken and "cool down" (The expression of drinking a cold drink after a long day's work). The club in general, provided a forum for staff to meet after work to relax, discuss their common problems, celebrate successes and gossip. Most of the club halls were later equipped with televisions and music. It was equally a venue for parties, marriages, fund raising events and at times lunches for senior staff members and their families. The other side of the coin revealed the club as a comfortable, quiet and discreet venue for business appointments as well

⁶³³ Bisong, August 5th 2015.

⁶³⁴ C.D.C Commemorative Publication, Golden Jubilee, 1997, p.44.

as fertile ground for gossips on internal affairs like promotion, dismissals, recruitment and transfers affected by management⁶³⁵.

By far, the most eagerly awaited festivities for the club members were at all levels those that took place at the end of the year. This period was characterized by parties and dances. For the children of the plantation labourers, it was real fun. Games and quizzers took up most of their party time. Delicious meals were served and at the end of the day, Father Christmas visited them to distribute gifts. The children therefore enjoyed their own world in the plantation clubs at the end of the year. For the adults, the success of celebrations depended on the level of profits made by the club management during the year. In recent times, the standard practice was to provide labourers with a good quantity of meat given that it was expensive and one of the food items much loved by especially the male labourers⁶³⁶. They could also be provided with a life chicken or prepared according to the choice of the members, and drinks. Some clubs even provided its members with a carton of beer. In management staff club, the best party recorded in recent years was in Bota club where each member was treated to a bottle of table wine in addition to a sumptuous dinner⁶³⁷.

Aspects of Games in Plantation Life

Different types of games were played by plantation workers ranging from football, hand ball, athletic and even dance competitions in some of the estates. These were all aimed at adding pleasure to the workers and then given these workers means to rest after hard work.

Football was one of the interesting games among plantation workers. From the beginning of plantation life in the Cameroons, there was a need to create healthy and active bodies and this was identified as one of the priority by management. By 1949, 22 recreational football fields had been created. In 1960 a football league was put in place with 38 teams, participating on 28 playing grounds. Transportation from one location to another provided a keen competitive attitude in addition to providing healthy interactions between participants and fostering a family spirit. A labourer transferred from one unit to another ceased to be a stranger. At the same time, a championship shield was inaugurated and competed for in a knock-out basis. A turn for the better was taken early in 1949 with the appointment of Sir Ralph T. Stoneham K. B. E. as director of welfare and social services⁶³⁸.

⁶³⁵ *Ibid.*, p.45.

⁶³⁶ Bisong, August 5th 2015.

⁶³⁷ C.D.C Commemorative Publication, Golden Jubilee, 1997, p.44.

⁶³⁸ C.D.C Commemorative Publication, Golden Jubilee, 1997, p.45 .

Divisional football leagues in ancillary services increased to 52. By 1954, the “Cameroon Amateur Football Association” was formed. This team won the United African Company Cup and the “Commissioner’s Cup”. Worthy of note was the fact that most of the players were part of the former West Cameroon team that played with neighboring territories. In 1961, Tiko United, a team made up of plantation workers from the Tiko Rubber Plantation and other plantations, played the finals with the famous Buea P and T team for the Commissioner’s cup. It was Tiko United again that played the finals of the Cup of Cameroon in Yaounde. During the celebrations marking 30 years of the DC, a trophy was donated. The Olympics started in 1994⁶³⁹.

The Ndu Tea Estate equally provided welfare services to its members in the form of sport, housing and dance groups. In the field of sport, the Ndu Tea Estate sponsored a football team known as the Ndu Tea challengers. This team that started in 1979 was performing very well as it participated three times at the national inter pool matches. In 1982, the team won the C.D.C. worker’s cup and it equally participated and won in other matches played with teams like the Kumbo Strikers. These matches played acted as incentive for both labourers and the entire Ndu Community. Labourers in the estate had extra sponsor and money they gained especially when they had to go out. Business men in the Ndu Tea society constructed small hotels and restaurants and whenever there was a match; spectators came from Nkambe town, Tatum and Ndu to use these recreational facilities⁶⁴⁰.

The Ndu Tea Estate challengers that was formed in 1979 went for inter pool to Yaounde in 1981, 1984, 1985 and 1986. Even though they failed in all their endeavors as they were defeated, the male folk of the estate had however put up the flag of the Ndu Tea Estate challengers by going out of the division to the capital of the country⁶⁴¹. Closely related to Interpol was the cross country where both male and female labourers in the estate succeeded and went for competition to Bamenda. Among the few recorded, there was Nkong samba, Njinti Uniwoh, Kongnyuh Joseph, Ngwang Catherine. It should be noted that the winners of the Mount Cameroon Mountain race of 1997 in the persons of Kongnyuh Joseph and Ngwang Catherine who all came first had served as workers in the Ndu Tea Estate. Other sporting activities organized by the estate included football within estates teams “talc of war” within

⁶³⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴⁰ Tata, “The Socio Economic History of the Ndu Tea”, p.114.

⁶⁴¹ Koni, August 20th 2014.

members where these labourers came together to compete amongst themselves and that was their own way of distraction⁶⁴².

Plantation women social club activities in the Cameroons started as a recreational club in 1981 with the first president being Elizabeth Ngu who was the wife of the then manager of the C.D.C. There was a need to bring together wives of the plantation workers so they could discuss female issues in a bit to enhance the development of the plantations. They equally came together because they wanted to create a forum to discuss their common problems, know each other and find common solutions to their problems⁶⁴³. The major objectives of this association had therefore been stated and to effectively realize these objectives, the social club was structured in to four zones, namely, Bota, Tiko, Ekona and Mukunje. By 1997, membership had risen to 120.

These zones made up the regions of these clubs but the seat was found at Bota. Meetings were held once a month at zonal levels and quarterly at Regional levels. Under the leadership of Musonge, since 1988, the club carried out several economic and social activities within and out of the association with funds coming from, registration fees, monthly subscription, fund raising activities, and from gifts and donations. Within the club, social activities included moral and financial assistance to members in moments of joy and sorrow. Educational activities were also undertaken by this association seen in the Organisation of educational talks on health, home management, child care, marriage counseling and athletics. Members of this association participated in workshops and seminars on women in developmental issues organised in Limbe, the pre Beijing conference held in Yaounde, the income generating project in Buea and many others that were held all over the national territory⁶⁴⁴.

In the area of economic activities, these women participated in several seminars on soap production, skin lotion and floor polish. These activities helped to improve the standards of living of members and their families. This women's group equally gave a lot of financial assistance and moral support to groups and institutions like, the government hospital, Mbonge clinic, Ephrata Center Kumba, Limbe Camp Day Care Center, Cottage Hospital Tiko and many other areas of assistance. They were equally involved in providing gift of various kinds and especially during Christmas to especially physically challenged children and other vulnerable cases in the community. Though this group of women faced a lot of financial challenges, it

⁶⁴² *Idem*.

⁶⁴³ Interview with Ngweme Anne, 76 years Old, Wife of a senior Service Staff, Bota, December 9th 2021.

⁶⁴⁴ C.D.C Commemorative Publication, Golden Jubilee, 1997, p.41.

goes without saying that they contributed tremendously to the economic and social growth of the plantations in the Cameroons⁶⁴⁵.

The wives of plantation workers in the Ndu tea estate equally came together to begin an association in 1989 with the help of one of the first female labourers in the estate. She saw the plight of female labourers in the plantation and decided to initiate an association made of female labourers and wives of male labourers in the association. The main aim of this association was to offer a forum of discussion between female labourers and the wives of male labourers and to facilitate direct contacts between these women, to provide mutual helpfulness, mental and moral improvement and rational recreation, to carry out to some extent charitable acts around the community and to help each other to do group farming which was the main activity of the wives of male labourers⁶⁴⁶. From little beginnings these women came together and before long, they began achieving their aims.

They were able to help each other in times of need but the most important achievement of these women was in the field of economic where they farmed large portions of agricultural land cultivating especially beans which they sold to other tribal groups like the people of “Banso” (meaning Nso people) who came on weekly bases especially on market days to buy. The impact of these activities cannot be over emphasized as a good number of these labourers were able to improve on their standards of living from the proceeds coming from these farm products⁶⁴⁷.

Occasionally hand ball matches were organised between the wives of the male labourers and the female labourers in the plantation. Such moments was usually times of reuniting the various families and apart from the fun of the game itself, there were usually exchanges in especially the social and economic domains that went a long way to improve on the livelihood of plantation workers. Our investigations revealed that, in most of the cases, the wives of plantation workers were always victorious in the games. An interesting episode of such moments was the fact that different villages from the environs came around the plantation area to watch these games. The end result was inter-state relations which had far reaching consequences on the social life of the community. This was seen in the fact that, a good number of couples working in the plantations are said to have met during sporting activities organised by the plantation labourers⁶⁴⁸.

⁶⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

⁶⁴⁶ Lumba, July 7th 2014.

⁶⁴⁷ *Idem.*

⁶⁴⁸ Interview with Celine Winteh, 52 Years Old, Wife of a factory Worker at Tiko, Tiko, December 10th 2021.

There was an athletic team which was made up of both male and female plantation workers. This team featured prominently and won second and third places while the high jump local record of 5' 8" was set by a plantation female labourer in 1957. During the Southern Cameroons amateur athletic association created in March 1957, the local long jump record of 20' 7" was equally set by a female plantation worker. The Tiko nurses school also entered for the Cameroon Women's Amateur Athletic Association and performed very well. Facilities were also provided for cricket and the Bota and Tiko field were avenue for all sporting activities⁶⁴⁹.

Plate 49: The First Female Plantation Labourer to Win the Local Long Jump Record in 1957.



Source: C.D.C Commemorative Publication, Golden Jubilee, 1997, p.45.

The plate above gives a vivid description of an athletic scenario in the 1950s. High jump became very popular amongst the labourers with female labourers getting more and more involved in this type of sport. It was usually a time of joy and merry making with other plantation workers gathered around to support the one who had singled out as the best. Such cheers as revealed by our informant gave a lot of enthusiasm that led to victory⁶⁵⁰.

Like other African women in wage labour, these plantation women believed in doing some work to sustain the family. This was the situation of these female labourers who found a possibility of adding up to the little remuneration they were receiving from plantation

⁶⁴⁹ C.D.C Commemorative Publication, Golden Jubilee, 1997, p.45.

⁶⁵⁰ C.D.C Commemorative Publication, Golden Jubilee, 1997, p.45.

agriculture. More interestingly was the activities of the wives of plantation male labourers who had a lot of influence on the developmental process of the plantation by working closely with their husbands to continue in their traditional duty of being the bread winners of their families.

Apart from the different forms of sporting activities under taken by men and women in the plantations in the Cameroons, there were also involved in dancing where there were particular dance groups for women and others for men. The Ndu Tea Estate workers *Samba* group was particularly for men. Closely linked to it was the *Mbaya* group which became so prominent that in the 1980s, they went to Lagos for a competition and won a trophy. By the year 1991 some women were integrated into the *Mbaya* group and that created a lot of attraction given that the group had been noted as a male group.

The “*Njuh*” dance was particular for women. They came out in their numbers especially on labour days to show their strength and styles to the Ndu public. It is therefore important to note that these dance groups acted as a source of attraction and many more people sort for employment in the estate⁶⁵¹.

The plantations in the coastal area of the Cameroons equally had a lot of dance groups championed by both male and female labourers. These dance groups usually showcased their prioress on special occasions where they came out in their different and beautiful regalia to perfume. It should be noted that the plantation sites in the Cameroons was a melting pot for must cultures given that, workers came from all over the territory. Cultural dance groups could therefore be seen of plantation labourers from the Cameroons, Littoral, North, Center, South, North, East and many other interior parts of the Republic of Cameroon.

There was equally provision for the Ndu Tea Estate canteen that was constructed in 1985 to supply basic necessities like sugar, soap, bread, rice, match and kerosene. The workers canteen was advantageous because goods could be taken on credit and paid only on “pay day”. “Pay day” was an important day in the history of the plantations. It was even considered more important than market days⁶⁵². Pay day in the plantations was usually an exciting moment for workers, especially pluckers who formed the bulk of the labour force in the plantations. Generally such days were particularly set aside for remuneration with each labourer eager to get money; it usually came on the 3rd of each month.

⁶⁵¹ Edward, August 19th 2014.

⁶⁵² *Idem*.

Men women could be seen standing on very long lines in front of the administrative blocks to receive pay. Some with market bags to buy after pay given that a lot of people brought food items and articles to sell, some rather carried bags made of traditional material with cups inside to drink palm wine and corn beer “*Sha*” as it was popularly called. This attitude was peculiar with the men who felt that the “truth lay in the cup”⁶⁵³.

Debtors were not exempted from the scene. Our informant revealed that there was a book in his store with names of Estate labourers who were debtors. To him, his money could only be available on pay day were he also looked for his own table to sit very close to the pay master. He then trapped down the debtors with a lot of ease given that some were ready to escape from their debt if they could. He was therefore a very good friend to the estate management and was well known. Any recalcitrant debtor was reported to the authority who was warned. It was usually an existing day for labourers.

Female labourers after receiving their pay, bought food items like rice which was a delicacy. Savon, salt and kerosene were also important house hold articles to be bought while the young girls concentrated on clothes and shoes given that it was a day of jubilation and rendezvous with their boyfriends. Some female labourers on this day brought food items like corn, beans, potatoes, yams and groundnuts which they had farmed to sell. Most of them therefore got a lot of money on pay day and went back home with very heavy pockets⁶⁵⁴. Pay day was a very busy day for both male and female labourers. Buying, selling, eating drinking and marry making was the order of the day.

Our investigations equally revealed that while others were judicious in the use of their money, other on such days spent their time in the bars. A vivid example was the case of one Edward a worker in the Ndu Tea Plantation who could drink from morning to evening. It was very usual to get statements like “I fit kill man pay”(Meaning, I can kill you ,then pay for it) and “if you joke, I go buy you with my money”. (Meaning, he was capable of using the money received from payment to buy a human being) This was particularly when he had received the balance of his money after paying his debt.

He could be heard singing with no money in his pocket. During field work, the researcher witnessed his scene and investigations revealed that he had been like that for over 20 years. He was always seen with a cup given that he was a very faithful person when it came to paying

⁶⁵³ Edward, December 12th 2014.

⁶⁵⁴ Ntalla, August 10th 2014..

back debts. He was therefore a very good customer to “*mimboo*” (A traditional drink locally made) seller and was well loved for his comic relief.

Plate 50: Male Labourer on Pay Day



Source: Photo Negative, Researcher, 3rd August 2014.

Drunkards brought a lot of comic relief to the male and female labourers on pay day⁶⁵⁵. Their songs were sometimes very provoking and revolutionary especially pointing to the ills of the administration. The latest gossips in town could easily be gotten from the mouth of drunkards on pay day. There was therefore a tendency for people to run away when they saw these drunks because it was normal for such to see an individual and start revealing all he ever knew about any one that he saw. Nothing could be done to such labourers for they could not be avoided.

Indoor games were part and parcel of recreational facilities and plantation life. It was very common to see two labourers stay in the club for hours concentrating on indoor games that sometimes could even lead to a fight. Some of the popular indoor games included, “lodo” and “draft”. These games were mostly played by the male labourers.

One of our informants informed us that lodo playing even started while the labourers were still in the field. As they worked, they argued on the last game and the loser of the last game promised hell to his co-player at the end of the day’s work. Such argument equally caused the

⁶⁵⁵Edward, December 12th 2014

labourers to concentrated and work hard and fast so as to go for the long awaited encounter. The encounter was organised in such a way that, from the beginning, the players played as individuals but later, they formed teams. Playing indoor games was usually accompanied by some palm wine or even beer especially when it was the senior service staff. Generally, field workers went with palm wine because it was cheaper and easier to get. The games were played in turns and it could go on for several hours⁶⁵⁶. It was equally played in sets and those who succeeded in set one were legible to go in for set two. The indoor games were also a crowd puller because there were many labourers who acted as spectators and even had those that they were supporting. It was equally investigated that, a common place amongst labourers to settle some of their skulls was on the lodo or draft.

It was common place to here talks like, “you no fit win me for all thing. I go put pepper for your eye on top lodo”. (Interpreted as, you cannot be more than me in every aspect. I will win you very well in this one) Two labourers could have an issue and the best place to settle the issue was on top of their indoor came. It showed how much wisdom a labourer had over the other. It was therefore common to see a physically strong male labourer being defeated by a very young labourer. Another interesting characteristic of indoor games was that, it was a “clean” game as most labourers postulated. They did not need to go to a field and put on sport wears but seating on the sport in a clean environment, they were able to gain satisfaction just like others who went out to the field, They therefore had the satisfaction that they had also taken part in recreation⁶⁵⁷.

It was investigated that, indoor games could generate in to a fight especially when it was a team playing against another team having a feeling of superiority and did not want to accept defeat from a team which she deemed to be inexperience. When the reverse became true where such a younger team defeated the older and experienced team, it led to arguments and at times degenerated in to fighting among the labourers.

It is therefore very difficult to talk about games in the plantation without mentioning indoor games because just like other games, it had a positive effect on plantation workers and on plantation life as these workers were relief from the stress of work, refreshed after such games and went back with a greater determination to work even harder the next day. Thanks to these indoor games, a lot of labourers soon discovered their talents in the various field and some of

⁶⁵⁶ Mokunje August 29th 1915.

⁶⁵⁷ *Idem*.

them were determined to go back to school given that the games could be played mostly by the wise. Some became champions in the various fields of athletics.

As the plantations expanded its activities after 1960, it continued to create or revamp a number of recreational facilities for its workers as well as the general public. For example, the Likomba Golf Course and Club were established for lovers of the game of golf. The course was an 18-hole beautiful lawn situated at Likomba, Tiko. The Golf facility was a popular destination for tourists and golf lovers. During the dry season major golf tournaments were organized there. Given that the equipment for the game were said to be very expensive, mostly top management personnel and well to do non- C.D.C workers and tourists took part in the tournaments. However, the competitions attracted a cross-section of the Tiko and Mutengene populations who went in as spectators to catch some fun⁶⁵⁸.

The labourers in the plantation equally enjoyed a lot of social amenities seen in the provision of health services and educational facilities to the labourers. These social facilities were very vital in the life of the labourers as it helped to improve on their social life and consequently, their standards of living.

Gender and Health Care in the Plantations

According to the UN Commission report on health, it revealed that 80% of third world countries were suffering from poor health condition. This revelation pointed to the fact that health is one of the most important aspects of human dignity and existence and needed to be catered for⁶⁵⁹. It was the management of the plantation's desire to ensure a good health situation for its workers. The objective of the medical service was to offer basic medical care comprising both preventive and curative treatment to its workers, their dependents and non-planters.

Before World War Two, each large estate of the former German property had its own hospital. When the plantations were taken over by the C.D.C in 1947, it set its own medical service with a chief medical officer, three medical officers, seven nursing sisters and one pharmacist, as well as a medical store keeper who was also a qualified optician. In 1949, a nurse's training school was opened in Tiko and 42 students; all of whom were plantation staff were in attendance. By this time, there were five area hospitals around the plantations; Likumba hospital, a cottage hospital in Tiko for senior staff, Ekona hospital, Mukonge and Bota

⁶⁵⁸ Damian T. Akara, "Agro-industries in Cameroon and Welfare-related Services to Non-labourers in Operational Neighborhoods: The Case of the Cameroon Development Corporation and the *Societe Camerounaise de Palmeraies*, 1968 – 2019" in *Cross Current Int J Peer Reviewed J Human Soc Sci*, 7(6), 2021, p. 121.

⁶⁵⁹ Report of the U N Commission on the Health Situation in Africa, 1980, p.3.

hospitals. There were also subsidiary hospitals, housed in improved German hospitals premises in Mbonge, Moliwe, Missellele, Molyko and Tombel, and dispensaries in Idenau and Mabeta⁶⁶⁰.

By 1950, the medical officers increased to six and the nursing sisters to nine and some were even trained outside the Cameroons thus two candidates were sent to Ibadan, three to the school of pharmacy at Yaba and six men to Aba to be trained as sanitary overseers. Material support was received from time to time from the director of medical services in the Nigerian government and doctors and dispensers were on secondment. The Likomba hospital ward was transformed in to medical stores and new wards were created in the small cottage hospital. Messrs Elders and Fyffes Limited concluded arrangements with the management for improvement in health services⁶⁶¹.

Gender considerations in the medical field were mostly seen in the employment of male and especially female medical personnel to head most of the health services. Men viewed the medical service as female job especially the nursing department where a majority of the workers were female. Female labourers equally showed a lot of desire to work in the nursing department of the plantation. It was in view of this desire that, the Ndu Tea Health Centre was created in 1973 but went operational only in 1977.

The concern shown by the corporation in the health sector was due to the fact that management of the corporation was out to reduce rampant cases of illness which adversely affected the labour force. It therefore had as function to render medical care to the workers, their families and even all the villagers living in and around the estate. Most of these people came for consultation in this newly created health centre given that it was the only one around⁶⁶².

Men resented working in the health centre and mostly women were employed as nurses and mid wives. There was no doctor in the Ndu health center given that it was just a young health centre. Serious cases were therefore referred to BBH and the Catholic Hospital at Shisong which all had stationary doctors and were well equipped. Our investigation revealed that, four women worked as nurses from 1977 to 1985 and by the year 2002, the number of women who worked as nurses was above 10, while only 5 men worked in the health care department from

⁶⁶⁰ C.D.C Commemorative Publication, Golden Jubilee, 1997, p.26.

⁶⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶² G. Kanjo, 46 Years Old, Technician in Bansa Baptist Hospital, Kumbo, August 28th 2014.

inception to the time of the privatization of the Estate. All those who had done midwifery in the health centre were women who had received training in the various fields of specialization.

With an increase in the rate of diseases like malaria, cholera, dysentery and the most recent aids that took away the lives of thousands of Ndu Tea Estate workers, the nurses, ward servants and midwives had to work relentlessly to survive lives in the Ndu Tea health Centre⁶⁶³.

Plate 51: Ndu Tea Health Centre



Source: Photo Negative, Bong, August 2014.

The Ndu Tea Estate Health Centre staff was dominated by female staff who worked day and night to cater for the health condition of its workers and for the rest of the villagers.

There was a head nurse in the estate who started work in 1979. This head nurse was a woman. By 2002, only 3 head nurses had run the health centre. The head nurse had as function to coordinate the activities of other nurses and the rest of the health centre staff. Most of the times, these head nurses were midwives or if it was a man, then he must have practiced some midwifery because these headmen and women were given a special staff quarter. These staff quarters were mostly provided for the senior service staff of the estate. That of the head nurse was very close to the health centre given that she could be called up even in the night to attend to patients who had very serious situations⁶⁶⁴.

Extremely serious cases could be given sick leave of between one and two weeks, depending on the level of disease. Our investigation revealed that, such cases were paid for by the

⁶⁶³ Interview with Pauline Aba, 53 Years Old, Head Nurse, Ndu Tea Health Center, August 19th 2014.

⁶⁶⁴ Interview with Odilia Kibong, 56 Years Old, Head Woman, Tatum Village, August 29th 2014.

management but when the labourer resumed work, all the money was reduced from his salary⁶⁶⁵ (See Appendix 14).

With an increase in the number of deaths in the estate there was a lot of correspondence between the health centre in Ndu and that at Tiko to see to it that the health situation of workers was improved upon. Such letters were meant to give statistics of impatience and the need to improve on the equipment in the centre given that the health centre was poorly equipped⁶⁶⁶. This poor equipment of the health centre was revealed in the fact that from the start, there were only 12 beds, 9 workers under a head nurse with no resident doctor. There were no modern equipment and the drugs were always grossly insufficient. The few nurses were equally not very qualified and were most of the times unable to treat patients with serious cases. Ngeenge contains that, this health centre was poorly equipped to the extent that cases were usually referred to the two mission hospitals; Shisong and Bansa Baptist Hospital while the estate management took responsibility of the bills⁶⁶⁷.

With Ndu Tea Estate being a predominantly male dominated estate more men fell sick than women but there was also usually a drastic turn out in the number of deaths. These men mostly contracted diseases like pneumonia, measles and HIV Aids while most women who were admitted came as a result of malaria, HIV Aids and pregnancy. The health centre however had a van for transporting serious cases. Generally therefore, the health centre was one of the few services in the Ndu Tea Estate with more women than men in the staff. Our informant therefore revealed that “Women are meant to care for men and children and then give birth. They should be working in the hospital so that they can better take care of the sick. Men don’t know how to care for the sick. It is only women”⁶⁶⁸.

By 1952, a nurse’s preliminary training school was created with 36 candidates. After a written examination, three candidates were sent to the school of pharmacy in Lagos. By 1975 the Tiko, Bota and Ekona hospitals were handed to the government but the Tiko cottage hospital still remained under the management of the plantation officials. This hospital became very vital in handling health issues in the plantation area and patients came from far and near because it became the referral hospital for the plantation staff⁶⁶⁹.

⁶⁶⁵ File: N T R h/N W/93, Report on the Health of Ndu Workers, 1993, p.5.

⁶⁶⁶ Letters from the Head Nurse in Ndu to the General Supervisor for Health Services in Tiko, Dated 28th February 1998.

⁶⁶⁷ Tata, “The Socio Economic History of the Ndu Tea”, p.112.

⁶⁶⁸ Interview with A. Nfor, 41 Years Old, Head of Rolling Section, Ndu Tea Factory, 16th of August 2011.

⁶⁶⁹ C.D.C Commemorative Publication, Golden Jubilee, 1997, p.26.

Plate 52: The Tiko Rubber Plantation Health Center



Source: Researcher's Field Work, July to August 2015.

The Tiko Central Clinic became a referral clinic and had a laboratory, a radiological unit, a pharmacy with compounding facilities, a family planning unit, an ophthalmological unit and an outpatient department. The solidarity ward in the Tiko hospital was the brain child of the women's social club⁶⁷⁰.

Table 29: Statistics of Female and Male Staff in the Ndu Tea Estate Health Centre

Year	Female	Male	Female Patient	Male Patients
1977-1980	4	-	576	1044
1980-1985	7	2	2640	4800
1985-1990	8	2	2880	11100
1990-1995	9	3	4800	6060
1995-2000	11	4	4500	5820
2000-2001	11	5	3912	3144
Total	11	5		

Source: File NTHI/NW/93. Report on the Health of Ndu Workers, 1993.

⁶⁷⁰ C.D.C Commemorative Publication, Golden Jubilee, 1997, p.26.

The health centre employed more women to work as nurses, ward servants and mid wives while few men worked in the Ndu Heath centre. However, more men than women were sick given that the estate was a predominantly male dominated labour force⁶⁷¹.

Conclusion

In an attempt to improve on the living standards of male and female labourers in the Cameroons, a lot of recreational facilities ranging from clubs games health centers schools, electricity and water supplies was made available to these labourers. A department of welfare and social services was set up to undertake the organization of this work. Recreational facilities were put in place; about twenty two football and other recreational fields were created and put in to use. Equipment and recreational outfits were provided and association football leagues instituted for both male and female labourers. This created great interest in the games and competition in the various sporting disciplines that gave the labourers a sense of relaxation. The plantation team rose to first division level and even played in the finals of *Coupe du Cameroun* at one time. Lawn Tennis was introduced, as well as indoor games such as table tennis, “lodo”, darts and draughts. Workers in the plantation were equally amused by cinema shows.

A film unit was set up at Ekona and supplied with mobile equipment to provide regular cinema shows. Some labourers were trained to operate the cinematographic apparatus and they did the work in an efficient manner. Community halls and large camps were constructed in all important centers. Adult literacy classes were equally organised for the illiterate workers and equally, sewing, needlework and other domestic science classes were organised for women by the women’s welfare office. Medical facilities were provided to cater for the health of these plantation workers. Electricity and water supplies was equally the concern of management and this was supplied to the plantation workers. However, it was investigated that most female labourers were widows and singled so they occupied mostly the single-roomed camp houses which led to their vulnerability.

⁶⁷¹ File: N T R h/N W/93, Report on the Health of Ndu Workers, 1993, p.6.

CHAPTER FIVE

IMPACT AND DIFFICULTIES OF PLANTATION LABOUR IN CAMEROON

Introduction

Plantation labour had a lot of impact in the Cameroons. This could be seen from the development of social facilities like in the field of education, religion and the birth of an urban landscape. These plantation workers however had a lot of difficulties seen their condition of work. The female labourers in particular faced a lot of resistance from the male labourers. It is pertinent to note that plantation difficulties started even during the German era and agreements had been met between these Germans and the natives for the settlement of these disputes in the court of equity opened in Douala in 1856⁶⁷². It was due to the continuation of these problems that collective actions were taken by these labourers against management. Female labourers equally particularly handled and led some strikes especially in the tea estates. The end result was the creation of workers Trade Unions where these workers could easily express their grievances.

Social Impact of Plantation Labour

Socially, the impact of plantation agriculture could be seen in the area of religion, education and health facilities. It was incumbent for management to develop these facilities so that the children of these male and female workers could be educated.

Plantation Labour and Education

Alongside medical care, the education of especially the children of plantation workers was ensured. Schools opened by the C.D.C flourished in Bota, Tiko and Ekona. However, by 1975, just like some of the hospitals, these schools were taken over by the government but before then, thousands of Cameroonians had obtained scholarships for further studies. There were however some schools left under the custody of the C.D.C that were run for the educational development of plantation labourers and their family members

Our investigations revealed that the first primary school in the Ndu Tea area known as the Kakar School was opened as a result of the presence of the Ndu Tea Estate. This was because there were a lot of labourers who came from other neighboring villages like Wowo, Ntumbaw, Ndu, Tatum and Kuwar to settle in the plantation area. Their children therefore needed to be

⁶⁷² Klotz E. A. and Wildenthal L. (ed), *Germany's Colonial Past*, London, University of Nbraska Press, 2005, p.102.

sent to school⁶⁷³. These schools were opened by the Cameroon Baptist Convention under the Baptist Mission which is the oldest Christian body in Cameroon. This Mission was therefore involved in educating the indigenes. The mission started its work in 1954 and by 1977 when the C.D.C took over the Ndu Estate, there were more than 73 primary schools in the territory and 52 of them were found in the North West while still, the Kakar Baptist Primary school was one of the schools⁶⁷⁴. In 1985 the *Njifar* Baptist School was created, the Presbyterian in the 1980s, *Mukop* primary school in 1990 and 1996 saw the creation of *Njimsah* Primary school all around the Ndu Tea Estate for the education of the children of the workers. Secondary education for the indigenes around the estate could only be pursued in Ndu, Tatum and Kumbo given that no secondary school existed around the plantation area by 2002⁶⁷⁵.

In the coastal plantation area, many primary schools and secondary schools were developed by the C.D.C. a good number of these schools were later taken over by the government. Schools were opened at Ekona, Likumba, Bota, Mukunje, Idenau, Tiko, Tole and in almost all the corners of the coastal region where plantations were found. The children of these plantation workers were educated and a good number equally gained scholarship to study elsewhere⁶⁷⁶.

Generally, boys and girls of the labourers were sent to these schools. With the division of roles amongst female and male labourers in the estate, female labourers soon realized that they could not occupy important and highly paid jobs like managers and assistant managers because of their educational levels. The impact of such was that they were determined to send the girl children to school so as to improve on their educational level for them to occupy better positions and bridge the gap between male and female labourers in the estate. This was made possible by the fact that a majority of female labourers in the estate were either single or widows. They could therefore take decision on their own. Our informant informed us that she was so disgruntled with the type of work that was given to women. She insisted, “I must send my girl children to school so that she can be a big man”⁶⁷⁷. The coming of the estate, the employment of male and later female labourers therefore provoked a situation which pushed labourers to see the need of educating their girls. Statistics gotten from the office files of the first school created around the Ndu plantation site revealed that out of a total of 175 pupils registered in 1977, there were only about 65 girls but by the year 2002 when the tea estate was privatized, the number of girls in

⁶⁷³ Nji, July 7th 2014.

⁶⁷⁴ M. Bolak, “Intra-Cameroon Baptist Convention Conflicts, 1954-2002: A Historical Investigation”, ph.D. Thesis in History, Yaounde 1, 2008, pp.108-110.

⁶⁷⁵ Monde, August 13th 2014.

⁶⁷⁶ Inside C.D.C, 2015, p.16.

⁶⁷⁷ Winteh, December 11th 2014.

the school was more than boys. With an enrollment of 376 pupils 202 were girls. This brought to mind the fact that more girls were being educated⁶⁷⁸.

Plate 53: The First Primary School around the Ndu Plantation.



Source: Photo Negative, Researcher, August 14th 2014.

The Ndu Tea Estate Primary school was created in 1959 due to the presence of the estate. Within the years, it grew from strength to strength. Most female and male labourers in the Estate sent their children to this school. By 1977, the population of the school had increased drastically.

Plantation Labour and Religion

From the religious point of view, the employment of men and women to work in the plantations brought a lot of religious changes. The workers changed their mentality and way of worship due to the growth and development of religious bodies.

The pre-colonial and post-colonial societies in the Cameroons believed in the African traditional religion. They had great respect for their gods and took time to worship them. They had shrines or worship places for all the gods. Worship services were in the form of sacrifices and other activities were conducted by priest and priestesses with both men and women leading in the worship service. The most important shrine and place of worship in every chiefdom was for the highest god. During worship times, only the priest and one or two other elders were allowed to enter the shrine. They went in to offer sacrifices on behalf of the land and people

⁶⁷⁸ Report and Statistics from Kakar Primary School, 1977-2002, Collected by researcher on August 11th 2014.

while the smaller priests equally went in to sacrifice on behalf of the land and people for smaller chiefdoms. Generally, the chief was seen as the religious head. He was seen as the link between the people and their gods and he was expected to personally perform that religious sacrifice. He was regarded as the link between the people and the gods and that gave him a lot of authority⁶⁷⁹.

Generally, in the North West, traditional rulers of centralized states ruled for life and amongst his prerogatives, he was solely responsible for the subjects⁶⁸⁰. This traditional believe was spread and equally practiced around the Ndu Tea area, the Tole tea area the Tiko rubber area and the Idenau palm area. The establishment of the se plantations and the employment of labourers from in and around the communities changed the traditional believe of the people. There was the emergence of new religious bodies like the Baptist, Presbyterians and the Catholics.

These men and women therefore saw the need to abandon their old form of worship and accept the new religious believe which was the Christian religion propagating they believe in Jesus Christ as the mediator between God and man. By 2002, when the study ends, statistics revealed that, there were more than 35 Baptist churches around the plantation areas, 17 Presbyterian churches and 30 catholic churches⁶⁸¹. The creation of these churches came as a result of the creation of the plantations given that there was the birth of an urban landscape in the area. Labourers adhered to the religious teachings of these religious bodies and this helped to reduce the rate of crime wave around the area. A spirit of togetherness and a sense of harmony were promoted between the male and female labourers in the plantation sites.

Other Social Services in the Plantation

Apart from health, education and religion, other social services in the plantations were seen in the fields of water and electricity. Diesel generators were installed in Bota and Tiko because of delays in the completion of a new hydroelectric scheme in 1950. In 1953, an agreement was reached in which the hydro-electric stations at Malala and Luemann Falls were subleased to the Electricity Corporation of Nigeria (ECN) to augment supply of power generated at its hydro-electric station at Yoke. ECN then supplied power through its networks to estates at Ekona, Tiko, Bota and Buea. In 1955, two water turbine generators at Bikili power station at

⁶⁷⁹ Ngarka, *The Wimbun People of Donga Mantung*, pp.39-41.

⁶⁸⁰ W.T. Samah, "Chiefs (Traditional Rulers) in Anglophone Cameroon and Modern Governance: 1961-2000", pp.73-74.

⁶⁸¹ Member, December 11th 2014.

Mukonje were commissioned. The supply of power to various sections of the plantations has progressed since then to the extent that labour camps were covered. In most factories like the Tiko rubber factory, the Idenau oil mills and the Tole estates, a stand by generator was provided to care for the factory but the Ndu tea factory persistently used fuel from wood in its factory by the time of our investigation⁶⁸².

A radio-telephone network was set up with eight stations to facilitate communication with the outlying estates. In 1954, the internet telephone network was extended and improved and direct communication was possible by radio or line telephone between all sections and Head Office. High frequency radio network was established in the early 80s. In recent years, the communication department of the plantation increased tremendously and they were able to communicate through the radio, telephones and wakie-talkie links and equally, lines were installed through the digital exchange in Douala, making it possible to have modern telephones and fax links with the rest of the world⁶⁸³.

Water supply in the plantations was maintained through a vast network of water both for domestic and industrial use. In 1950, major water schemes were implemented at Bota, Tiko and Missellele. Improvements were also made in minor water supplies at Idenau and other smaller stations. The rubber and palm nursery made use of irrigation to keep the department of water supply abreast with modern technology⁶⁸⁴.

Workers Strikes in Plantation Agriculture

The achievement of control over the labour process posed formidable managerial problems. Several recent studies of the labour process in technological advanced western capitalist enterprises showed that workers in Western Societies continued to oppose in various ways the sophisticated managerial strategies of labour control and attempted to preserve a certain degree of autonomy within the labour process. This push and quest for autonomy especially by female labourers was motivated by several factors but also by the fact that the woman generally played an important role in the economic development of her society⁶⁸⁵. Female labourers therefore needed to do all they could to protect their status and legacy in the capitalist economy. According to article 11, of the United Nation's Report of 1990, as concerns employment, states and parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in

⁶⁸² C.D.C Commemorative Publication, Golden Jubilee, 1997, p.33.

⁶⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸⁵ Rachel Nyongkah Tati, "Women in the History of the Bali Chamba of Cameroon, c1830-1958", ph.D. Thesis in History, University of Yaounde 1, 2016, p. 256.

the field of employment in order to ensure equality of men and women⁶⁸⁶ The establishment of managerial control over the labour process in the Cameroons appeared to be even more problematic given that labourers were still more or less rooted in pre-capitalist social organizations and value systems and were not yet fully integrated in to the capitalist modes of production. Plantation workers in the Cameroons were therefore persistently involved in collective and informal actions to protest against their subordination and exploitation and to assert a certain measure of autonomy within the labour process. The managerial strategies of labour controls in the plantations in the Cameroons were therefore greatly challenged through strike actions from female and male labourers that were collective and informal.

The annual report for the C.D.C plantations of 1961 reported on the attitude of plantation labourers towards management and in a few years, in 1964, the report found no improvement in the situation as it reported in these words:

*There were no major disputes, but production nevertheless suffered from sporadic unofficial strikes, mainly over task work. There were over a dozen of such stoppages that were spread over several sections resulting in the lost of 9,986 man days. Increasing absenteeism and failure to complete work were also causes of some concern and operate against the corporation's effort to raise productivity...*⁶⁸⁷.

There was a disappointing set-back in industrial relations marked by an increase in absenteeism to a level exceeding 11 percent of the total time used in productivity. These resistant actions were done collectively where labourers displayed a remarkable degree of militancy. This militancy was manifested through strikes, riots, demonstrations and go-slows. These workers went in to resistance because of their strong feeling of exploitation and subordination in the labour process, their striking solidarity, their increasing stabilization and dependent on wage-labour for their reproduction and their continuing links with the pre-capitalist mode of production. These did not only strengthen their efforts of preserving a certain degree of autonomy within the labour process but also, to protect them against severe managerial disciplinary measures, particularly, dismissals and finally, their occupation of a crucial place in the production process which enabled them to bring production to a standstill at any time. Another pertinent reason and motive was their lack of faith in the worker's union bargaining power and so, the end result was collective action⁶⁸⁸. The resistances in the plantations became very numerous over the years as illustrated on the table below.

⁶⁸⁶ United Nations Report, Assessing the Status of Women, New York, United Nations, 1999, p.28.

⁶⁸⁷ C.D.C Annual Report and Accounts, 1961, p.31.

⁶⁸⁸ Konings, *Labour Resistances in Cameroon*, p.94.

Table 30: Recorded unofficial strikes in the Plantations

Year	Number	Pay Matters	Excessive Task	Managerial Controls	Others
1947	3	3			1
1948	4	2		3	
1949	2	1		2	
1951	3	1	2	2	
1952	3	1	1	2	1
1953	6	3	2	2	
1954	4	2	2		1
1955	9	3	4	3	1
1956	9	4	5	4	
1957	7		2	6	
1958	12	3	8	3	3
1959	7	3	4	2	
1960	11	5	7	4	
1961	13	4	9	6	2
1963	1		1	2	
1964	7	2		5	2
1965	3	1		5	
1967	7	2	2	3	2
1968	19	5	13	5	6
1972	1		1	1	
1973	3	3	1	1	
1974	4	4			
1975	1	1	1	2	1
1976	5		5	2	2
1977	5	5	3		
1978	2	2			
1982	2		2		1
1983	2	2			
1985	2	2			
1986	1				1
1987	1		1		
Total	159	64	76	65	24

Source: Konings, Labour Resistances in Cameroon, p.93.

The table presents the number of strike actions within the plantations from the time of the C.D.C takeover to 1987. Most of them resulted from problems between labourers and management particularly caused by issues on wages, suspension, transfer and dismissal. Due to solidarity amongst plantation workers, they took to collective actions when any one of them got in trouble. A breakdown of the strike issues clearly shows that these strikes were primarily caused by collective labour resistance against management's controlling efforts and exploitation. Most of them resulted from conflicts with management due to increase task work. The key and heart of plantation work was seen in task distribution.

It was very annoying for labourers to realize that there was a steady increase in their task labour in the plantation without an increase in the wages or in the bonuses to get from such an additional task. In cases where the bonuses were given, labourers discovered that it was not commensurate to the additional task labour. Another pertinent difficulty was seen at the level of the extra time that was put in. This aspect of task labour and time was particularly the plight of female labourers who generally had the double duty of working in the plantations and then, taking care of their homes⁶⁸⁹.

One of the remarkable recorded strikes was the incident of 1963 and the strike took place on the 11th of January 1963. Only few workers turned out for work that morning and when those left at home noticed that these few had defied the seat-down strike, they seized their tools from them and sent them back to the camps. The workers gathered in about four groups. Two groups were seated around the camp and the other group went round to ensure no one was at work. Another group tried to gain entrance in to the factory but they were blocked. They carried cutlasses and many other harmful instruments and as the manager saw the gravity of the situation, the engine was stopped and the angry mob retreated quietly to give way for their spoke man. The end result was an agreement sending the workers back to work with the understanding that their problems will be solve⁶⁹⁰.

Another recorded strike action took place in 1976. Labourers were not happy with plantation conditions. Our investigations revealed that;

Labour grievances high turned in April and May 1976 when there was a go-slow resulting in low production from June to August. On 1st October 1976, labour went on strike. Mr. Krishne indicated some of the root causes leading to the present halt of activities... workers have not been paid housing allowances and other benefits in view of the lack of financial support already stated⁶⁹¹.

⁶⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p.95.

⁶⁹⁰ NA B, File Qe/14, Labour Strikes, 1963.

⁶⁹¹ NAB, File: NW/QC/a1976/1/Bk, Report of Tour of Agricultural Projects in the North West Province of Cameroon, October, 1976, p. 21.

Labourers were disgruntled especially with the fact that their allowances and other exigencies had not been paid. According to the report, the demand for tea had dropped in the world market to the extent that the estate was to have an additional cost. The additional burden stood at 3 million. To management, this burden had to be shifted to the labourers and they suffered such through a drop in their wages. The end result was the 1976 strike action in the Ndu tea estate that involved all the labourers of the various sectors of the plantation.

An interesting account of a strike action in the plantation took place on the 3rd of October 1988. This concerned 469 pluckers mostly women who laid down their tools refusing to work. Mostly female labourers because, looking at the gender of workers employed to work as labourers in the field especially as pluckers in the tea estates, the majority were female. It should be noted that, these female labourers faced a lot of problems; firstly, they had to be very careful when plucking tea and the task was tedious but there was a tendency for management to see plucking of tea as the best job suited for female labourers probably giving the impression that the job was easy but these female labourers revealed that, plucking was one of the most tedious and difficult aspects in the tea factory⁶⁹². These female labourers therefore needed to make their voices heard especially after revindicating quietly for some time and such falling on deaf ears.

The only way to resound their plight was to take to the streets. The strike organised by female labourers was even more Sevier than that organised by male labourers. Women came out in their numbers and they respected the time stipulated for the start of the strike. They equally respected hierarchy and started from the plantation ground which was the meeting point of all those striking. There were a few men, but generally, the majority of those striking were female labourers. It is important to note that, female workers of the other sector of the plantation equally joined the female pluckers in their strike action given that as the female folk in the plantations, they all had similar plights and problems ranging from increase in task labour, poor housing facilities, low wages and the general attitude that was displayed against female workers in the plantations. They therefore came out in their numbers to resist management. This situation was described by Konings in these words “They lined up and marched all the way to the Provincial Delegation of Labour at Buea shouting war songs and weaving placards. The workers complained that their daily task had been increased in 1987 from 26 kg to 32 kg of leaves and they were no longer able to complete their task and to earn an 8 hour wage”⁶⁹³.

⁶⁹² Lumba, July 7th 2014.

⁶⁹³ Konings, *Labour Resistance in Cameroon*, p.95..

Generally, managerial inconsistency and differences in policy contributed to strike actions in the plantations. A good example was the case of the Ndu Tea Estate where within a period of 1971 to 1976, five different managers had changed hands in the estate. This situation accounted for the lack of stability at the managerial level, resulting in inefficiency and control which also led to an increase in cost. This situation affected plantation labourers directly because, each manager came in with his own policy and it was difficult for labourers to frequently adjust to the different styles of work by the different managers. As they were struggling to get use to one, the company sooner or later effected changes and again, they did continuously that labourers were tired of such inconsistency. They therefore added this aspect to their list of grievances which culminated to the strike action in the plantation⁶⁹⁴.

A critical analysis of these examples revealed in the first place that, both male and female labourers were involved in strike actions in the plantations in the Cameroons. Secondly through participation in such collective actions, workers experienced and retained a sense of relatively autonomous worker power. New workers soon got to know the history and mythology of militant labour struggles in the plantations and this safeguarded the continuation of the various forms of collective actions against managerial controls and exploitation. These male and female labourers knew and were convinced that they had to fight for their right and better working conditions. No one could do it for them. An important attitude that developed mostly during labour resistance and strike action was the spirit of solidarity and unity.

Once a date for a strike was decided, everybody was there. There were however a few recalcitrant cases but those resisting the collective strike actions were taking note of by the leaders and warned to an extent that, almost all the workers got involved. The sense of oneness and belonging was manifested in the plantations more during strike action.

Male and female labourers in the plantations often reacted in various ways to the problems that confronted them in the labour process. The men, who were generally casted as rational and strong, took the lead in these reactions. These conditions were seen in the forms of low wages and many other poor working conditions. Male and female response to these problems was seen in the forms of strikes mostly directed towards management's exploitation.

Konings concludes that "remarkably, C.D.C workers had never stopped opposing the state and management's controlling efforts. As a matter of fact, they had been engaged in several often

⁶⁹⁴ NAB, File: NW/QC/a1976/1/Bk, Report of Tour of Agricultural Projects in the North West Province of Cameroon, October, 1976, p 20.

“hidden” and covert, forms of resistance against their control and exploitation in the labour process”⁶⁹⁵. This conclusion brings to mind the fact that there had always been unfavorable labour conditions that called for reaction from male and female labourers. These reactions were manifested through informal modes of labour resistance which was usually pursued on an individual or small scale basis and the collective modes of labour resistance which was manifested through strikes⁶⁹⁶. These conditions had effects on the workers and together with other problems, the men and women in the plantations were therefore determined to put an end to all these negative working conditions.

The rationale for the numerous strikes in the plantations ranged from bridging of contract between management and authority, ethnic diversity management policy and especially maltreatment of workers by management especially male maltreating female labourers⁶⁹⁷. The initial contract was often taken at the arrival of a labourer. He or she was given the task and they took a contract which most of the times was verbal. Unfortunately for these plantation labourers, management could within the twinkle of an eye bridge the contract as if nothing had happened. This was particularly during peak periods when there was the need to do more work whereas the labourers were not enough. These periods led to an increase in the task so that workers had additional hours to work. The main reason for female labour resistance in the plantation was therefore as a result of increase in task labour where management postulated that female labourers were very hard working and so increased the task labour and this led to the Tole women resistance.

The first recorded came up on the 11th of January 1963, where the Tole tea pluckers led by female pluckers went on strike after repeated complaints about excessive task work⁶⁹⁸. As earlier noted, for the case of the Ndu tea estate, it was to operate entirely with male pluckers. The agreement between the Fon of Ndu and estate authorities clearly stated that “employment on the estate should be a virtual male monopoly”⁶⁹⁹. When women were finally employed as part of the permanent labour force in 1977 when the C.D.C took over from the estate and agency company, it met with resistance from the men. Male workers threatened female workers in

⁶⁹⁵ Konings, *Labour Resistance in Cameroon*, p.12.

⁶⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.13.

⁶⁹⁷ Tarla, “Workers Strike in the Agro Industrial Sector”, pp.38-40.

⁶⁹⁸ Konings, *Gender and Class*, p.87.

⁶⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p.104.

various ways should they work on the estate⁷⁰⁰. The end result of all these maltreatment was strike action.

There is ample evidence that male workers on the estate supported the chief's negative attitude towards female employment. Most women who started to work on the estate on temporary weeding contracts were not *Wimbum* but Nso, living in Tatum. They faced a tough time on the estate. Several reports mentioned that male workers engaged in various modes of resistance against their employment. The first estate manager lodged a complaint in these words; "Recently, there were many women who reported that they had been threatened in various ways should they work on contracts on the estate... this is not in the interest of the estate. At certain times of the years, work becomes out of hand due to the quick growth of weeds and only the employing contract workers can this be held in check"⁷⁰¹.

Though this action took place in 1962, the situation continued as male opposition to female employment on the estate never disappeared altogether. This was clearly reflected in the minutes of the staff representative preparatory meetings on the 6th of April 1983 where a member wanted to know why male workers are being terminated and not female while still it was remarked that employment of females should be well examined⁷⁰². This situation brought about a conflict between the female workers and male workers. Female workers at times threatened not to work until the situation was redressed.

Though the various strikes that took place in the Ndu Tea Estate ranging from the June 1962 and May 1966 strikes, the 1976 or 49 days" strike, the 1985 problem and the 1991 strike, were variously motivated by different problems, ranging from wages and wage structure, task work, working time, arbitrary dismissal⁷⁰³ and many other reasons. Male discrimination and maltreatment of women on the estate could not be left out.

Though this reason did not feature in the list of grievances, our investigation revealed that female labourers hoped that after the strike actions, their working relationships with male labourers was going to improve given that management was quite aware of the situation and on how such conflicts disturbed the labour process in the Estate.

During the various strike actions that occurred in the Ndu tea Estate, both men and women were however involved. As workers, they wanted to improve on their working conditions and

⁷⁰⁰ Tarla, "Workers Strike in the Agro Industrial Sector", p.41.

⁷⁰¹ Konings, *Gender and Class*, p.104.

⁷⁰² *Ibid.*, p.105.

⁷⁰³ Tarla, "Workers Strike in the Agro Industrial Sector", pp.43-53.

therefore carried out a collective action against management. Our informant revealed that men took the lead in most of the strike actions but women acted from the background and followed all the instructions propounded by the leaders. Together with male labourers, these female labourers joined in a collective effort to fight for their rights and a general improvement in their working conditions⁷⁰⁴. However, some of the mob actions developed from the female labourers. A vivid example was the dispute that developed between the women and the managerial staff in the west section of the estate, about the pro-rata payment for incomplete and unsatisfactory work performance. On 20th August 1983, they protested in a very rowdy way against this treatment and then left the field. Both management and staff representatives condemned this mob action but they agreed that the women should be disciplined rather than dismissed for their illegal strike action⁷⁰⁵.

One draws conclusions from an analysis on strike actions in the plantations that, the major cause of these collective actions was an increase in task labour. Just like in the palm plantations, the tea estates often increased such task on plucking and picking of nuts during peak periods. These were the sectors where a majority of female labourers were employed. Our investigation revealed that these were the most important parts in the production process for poorly picked not could only lead to poor oil quality and poorly plucked tea could only lead to poor quality tea. Management therefore knew and saw that mostly female labourers were hard working and so task labour was usually increased mostly on those jobs. It was in view of such that, the Tole women and women from other plantations resisted in the plantations.

In addition to the collective modes of resistance, plantation workers were equally involved in a series of informal modes of resistance against their control and exploitation in the labour process. These modes were equally seen in other institutions like the Cameroon Baptist Convention where abusive language and fighting had gradually but steadily taken over the religious scene of the churches to the extent that Christian faithful could no longer move freely in their own environment for fear of meeting with someone from the opposing camp⁷⁰⁶. The situation was not very different in the plantations when it came to informal modes of labour resistances as these labourers were determined to have their way in the labour politics in the Cameroons. The constantly renewed managerial strategies to labour controls failed to eliminate all types of informal labour process. The management proved to be incapable of eliminating

⁷⁰⁴ Kibong, August 29th 2014.

⁷⁰⁵ Konings, *Gender and Class*, p.155.

⁷⁰⁶ B. Mark, "Intra-Cameroon Baptist Convention Conflicts, 1954-2002: A Historical Investigation", p.257.

and reducing the rate of unauthorized absences, uncompleted work which was one of the very prominent issues in the plantations and sicknesses. In fact, our investigations revealed that these rates appeared to have increased from the 70s given that more labourers had been employed and they all noticed the discrimination and exploitation that existed⁷⁰⁷.

This increase in informal modes of labour resistance was undoubtedly connected with the post-colonial state efforts to tighten up control over collective and institutional modes of labour resistances for the sake of national development and capital accumulation. With the constraints on collective modes of labour resistances, informal modes were going to become the most frequent and were manifested in almost all the plantations. These informal modes were manifested through insubordination, output restrictions unauthorized absences, fraud, theft, sabotage, job doubling, alcoholism and sorcery as well as witchcraft⁷⁰⁸.

Insubordination was one of the most common modes of labour resistances in the plantations. This was manifested through the refusal of labourers to show respect to constituted authority and refusal to take orders from their immediate superior. Regularly, labourers bluntly refused to carry out a task which they considered too heavy or too badly paid. These labourers disrespected authority as individuals and did not care about the wellbeing of the plantations. A vivid description of such insubordination was seen in the case of one Lucas Che who was suspended from the 10-12 June 1985 for refusing to take instruction as an individual to carry patients to the hospital at night because those particular impromptu hours were not considered. His refusal caused management to take action on him⁷⁰⁹.

Insubordination was often accompanied by insults, abuse and in some cases even physical attack on management. Most labourers were not very comfortable with the supervising staff checking on them from time to time. They became very angry when a supervisory staff that they considered to be less experienced especially given that they were the technicians in the field came to point out their error and most of the time in a very haughty manner. This made them to be very angry and such anger more often than not ended up in physical confrontation. Generally, the spirit of solidarity existing amongst these labourers was always manifested during such situations as they often came around with shouts and claps, calling the name of their fellow labourer⁷¹⁰.

⁷⁰⁷ ACDC B, File: 11, Record of Strikes on the plantations, 1977.

⁷⁰⁸ Konings, *Labour Resistance in Cameroon*, p.97.

⁷⁰⁹ ACDC B, File: 11, Record of Strikes on the plantations, 1977.

⁷¹⁰ Interview with Caleb Che, 87 Years Old, Former Plantation supervisor, Tiko, December 11th 2021.

Another major mode of informal labour resistance was through output restrictions. Managerial strategies of maximizing output continued to be opposed by labour. A good number of labourers never seriously endeavored to complete their task set by management. Irrespective of the size of the task, others resisted managerial efforts of raising the task even if there was a proposal to increase the incentives for the task. These labourers generally complained that the task was too heavy for them and they concentrated in employing a variety of tactics to restrict output including, late arrival at work, go-slows, leaving the field before closing time, and all was in an effort to put pressure on management to reduce the task. These tactics were successful. An example was the case of 1978 where the C.D.C General Manager was compelled to admit that rubber tappers had succeeded to reduce their task below the level of other plantations⁷¹¹.

Unauthorized absenteeism was another mode of informal resistance in plantation labour in the Cameroons. This had a negative effect on the daily programming and execution of work as well as on total output. Aggravating the problem of unauthorized absenteeism was the aspect of high sickness rate. The rate of voluntary absenteeism from work varied from one plantation to the other in 1979, an International Labour Office report observed in this respect” In the rubber plantation of the South West, the rate of voluntary absence varies from 3.2 percent to 20.8 percent... seasonal variations are very important”⁷¹².

The managerial chances of solving this problem appeared to be rather slim. Workers seemed to enjoy taking from time to time some unauthorized absences. This enabled them to escape from the daily control and hard work in the production process and to decide for themselves how they were going to spend their time; either to take some rest or to work on their chop farms, or to visit some friends and relatives. Forced to work seven days a week during peak periods, rubber tappers in particular were often inclined to take a day off during the week in spite of the loss of a day's wage and a penalty of FCFA 200. It was always assumed within managerial circles that there was a strong correlation between the supply of chop farms and the rise in voluntary absences. This therefore usually displayed a rather ambivalent attitude towards the supply of chop farms to its labour force; it strongly believed that the allocation of such farms could give rise to an increase in the rate of both labour stabilization and voluntary absence⁷¹³.

⁷¹¹ Konings, *Labour Resistance in Cameroon*, p.98.

⁷¹² *Ibid.*, p. 100.

⁷¹³ Konings, *Gender and Class*, p. 97.

Fraud, theft, sabotage and job doubling were equally among some informal modes of labour resistance in the plantations. Plantation workers had always been involved in a good number of activities that were usually perceived as violation of the county's legal code and the internal rules and regulations in the plantations. A good number of workers looked at these activities as justified modes of labour resistance against the unequal distribution of power and income in the labour process rather than as legal and moral offences. The workers were regularly involved in fraudulence deals such as bonuses, cheating and false declarations, often in collaboration with the administration and especially the supervisory administrators. The illegally acquired supplementary income was shared among themselves in a way previously agreed upon.

Our investigations revealed that, most of the informal modes of labour resistances were undertaken by the male labourers in the plantations. It was very uncommon and shameful to get news that, a female labourer for instance was involved in fraudulence activities or theft. Mostly male labourers got themselves involved. Theft was particular with the oil palm plantations where labourers stole some palm fruits and sold to local oil mill owners at a much reduced price. Some of these plantation thieves could be caught but most of the time, they did it intentionally to proof their dissatisfaction with the labour conditions. Just like theft, alcoholism was another serious informal mode of labour resistance which was equally gender sensitive. Excessive drinking was often a marked characteristic of labour communities in Cameroon, Africa as elsewhere in the world. Goheen postulates that, the use of excessive alcohol in such communities was probably at the same time an expression of a form of psychological protest against an unrewarding work experience and monotonous camp life as well as a moment of exorbitant relaxation and enjoyment⁷¹⁴.

Some of these labourers not only drank heavily during leisure time, but were sometimes also drunk during working hours. Some of them were unable to complete their task and even felt asleep while still, others disturbed the production process and even became very rude and aggressive towards their immediate superiors. One of such was a report on a labourer who disturbed public peace due to drunkenness and when he was called to order, he blasted his superior and even insulted him in front of all the other workers⁷¹⁵.

One of the major effects of strike action on female and male labourers in the plantations was that many of them lost their jobs. The management at one point considered the dismissal of its

⁷¹⁴ Gordon. R. j., Mines, *Masters and Migrants: Life in a Namibian Compound*, Johannesburg, Ravan Press Ltd, 1977, p.205.

⁷¹⁵ File 23, Complaints of worker on the C.D.C, 1984, p.33.

workers as punishment for their strike action. In most cases, those dismissed were those considered ring leaders of the strike or those perhaps who refused to resume work on particular days on the bases that the resolutions were not satisfactory and convincing. Upon the C.D.C takeover of the estate, the management immediately tried to reassert control over the workers. It hoped to achieve this by promising to uphold cell contractual rights of the workers and was determined to implement on the estate the disciplinary measures that prevailed on other C.D.C estates. This was evident from the manager of the Ndu tea estate's speech which read thus;

C.D.C has taken over this estate with all its personal. Your contractual rights under the management of Estate and Agency Company Ltd will be protected and paid as they fall due. Arrears of pay as well as occurred leave will be calculated and notified to each worker and eventually these rights will be paid or leave granted as the case may be. Your condition of service is continued and you are now part of the C.D.C personnel. C.D.C has over 15.000 employees in the South West province. In order to employ and utilize with efficiency such large labour force, orderly conduct by workers without exception is indispensable. Hence great importance that we attach to discipline. C.D.C does not countenance indiscipline and I would like to receive early reports that you are as disciplined as the rest of the C.D.C workers⁷¹⁶.

A critical examination of the speech of the general manager above revealed that the management was determined to do everything within its reach to react on the strike action of female and male labourers in the estate. Management had therefore heard the cry of these labourers and the effect was that they took measures to redress the situation.

Another effect of the strike action on workers was the fact that those who were considered ring leaders were dismissed. Tanyu was sacked on August 23rd 1977 because he was one of the organizers of the April 1977 strike; who were called on April 20th 1977 to give an account of the action. The management after listening showed no leniency but dismissed him on the spot together with 79 other workers⁷¹⁷.

The years 1991 and 1992 equally witnessed a series of dismissals. 18 workers were dismissed for failing to resume work on the 17th of June 1991 after the 4 days strike from June 13 to 14th, 15th and 17th 1991. 8 ring leaders and 10 others were dismissed⁷¹⁸. Dismissal of ring leaders and workers in the plantations was therefore one of the effect of the strike action on the male and female labourers and on the production process in the plantation.

Konings postulates that, the transfer of workers was equally a ramification of the strike actions in the plantations. Workers were often transferred to other plantations, where they soon got dismissed because they were unable to cope with the unfamiliar work. One well-known

⁷¹⁶ Konings, *Gender and Class*, p.150.

⁷¹⁷ Tarla, "Workers Strike in the Agro Industrial Sector", p.74.

⁷¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.75.

predicament of some workers who were transferred to coastal estates frightened their previous colleagues on the Ndu Estate. Little wonder then that staff representatives were warned of implementing a policy of “transfer to eliminate”. Amongst the transferred workers, there were also a number of staff representatives and trade union leaders. Staff representatives were sometimes transferred without the management having sought prior authorization from the labour inspector⁷¹⁹. Dismissing workers therefore was an effect of strike action in the Ndu estate.

Other repercussions of strike actions in the plantations on male and female labourers included loss of wages, maltreatment of fellow workers, military arrest, psychological effect and change of workers status. Their status changed positively especially given that management was determined to do everything possible to maintain a good working environment with its labourers in the plantations⁷²⁰.

Trade unionism was an instrument of labour resistance in the plantations in the Cameroons. African workers appeared to have gradually become aware of the limitations of individualistic, informal actions and spontaneous, localized and collective actions in their struggle against control and exploitation. They had therefore often fought for the right to establish Trade Union organizations that could permanently defend their common interest versus the employers and the state⁷²¹. Trade Unionism was inevitable in the plantation life of labourers in the Cameroons. They had to come together and with a common goal stand out very strongly to fight for better working conditions so as to improve on their lively hood in the plantations⁷²².

Plantation workers in the Cameroons started making a lot of efforts to create a trade union way back in the 1940s. The government and management realized that, trade unionism might pose a problem and a threat to the maximization of capital accumulation and the achievement of state hegemony over civil society. It was equally thought that, a trade union might challenge the unequal distribution of power and income in the labour process and mobilize the rank and file for collective action against management. There was therefore an effort to control trade union activities and to co-opt the union leaders as intermediaries or brokers in the control structure over labour⁷²³.

⁷¹⁹ Konings, *Gender and Class*, p.154.

⁷²⁰ Tarla, “Workers Strike in the Agro Industrial Sector”, pp.75-80.

⁷²¹ Daviers I., *African Trade Unions*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966, p.26.

⁷²² Ayuketang Divine, “Labour, Unionism and Social Welfare in the Cameroon Development Corporation Coastal Plantations, 1947-2005”, A Dissertation in History, University of Yaounde I, 2008. P.75.

⁷²³ Hyman. R, *Marxism and the Sociology of Trade Unionism*, London, Pluto Press Ltd, 1971, p 38.

According to Warmington, the first attempt to establish a trade union on the plantations took place during the Second World War when the plantations were still managed by the Custodian of Enemy Property and inspired by the intense trade union activities going on at the time in Nigeria⁷²⁴. Some of the senior plantation workers approached management for its views on the possibilities of forming a trade union but they were discouraged on the grounds that the workers were not yet ready to embark successfully on such a scheme. The Custodian's refusal constituted only a temporary set-back to trade union formation on the plantation. There were at least two factors that were conducive to the eventual introduction of a plantation union; First of all, there was the lack of state and management control over the growing militancy of the large plantation labour force. By the end of the Second World War, plantation workers had become quiet dissatisfied with their low remuneration and resorted to a series of collective strike actions. It should be noted that, the 1945 general strike of the Nigerian Public Service Workers greatly challenged the Nigerian colonial government for six weeks and this ended with labor's extraction of considerable concessions from the state and extended to the Cameroons⁷²⁵.

The Nigerian example showed the plantation workers of the Cameroons an example of how they should organise themselves to better fight for improved working conditions and better wages. They were able to visualize the potential power of organised labour and this spark off two fairly long work stoppages on the plantations; the first from the 11th to the 19th of July 1945, involving directly 1500 workers and 200 others indirectly and the second from 7th to 17th August 1945, involving 7,900 workers directly and 4,600 indirectly. This frightened the management especially with the decree of violence used by the workers during the strike⁷²⁶.

An attempt was made therefore in November 1945 to form the Tiko Workers Union (T.W.U) but given that the majority of the leadership was based in Bota, they eventually founded the Cameroons Plantation Workers Union (CPWU) which was registered in July 1947. Before long, the C.P.W.U which was larger than the T.W.U transformed its name in to the Cameroon Development Corporation Workers Union (C.D.C.W.U) with an estimated membership of 10,850 which was about 68 percent of the total labour force in the plantation. This trade union grow rapidly that by 1952, it had succeeded in gaining some measure of recognition on the part

⁷²⁴ Warmington. W.A, *A West African Trade Union: A Case Study of the Cameroons Development Corporation Worker's Union and its Relations with the Employer*, London, Oxford University Press, 1960, p.22.

⁷²⁵ Ananaba. W, *The Trade Union Movement in Nigeria*, Benin City, Ethiopian Publishing Corporation, 1969, p.19.

⁷²⁶ Konings, *Labour Resistance*, p.108.

of management. Its membership was 19,700 and could be considered the highest numbered trade union in West Africa at that time⁷²⁷. It became generally regarded as one of the relatively best organised union and it dominated the industrial scene at the time of the Trusteeship.

From the registration of the C.D.C.W.U in 1947, the labour department instructed the trade union's leadership in the principle of sound trade unionism. It was soon assisted in its educational efforts by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (I.C.F.T.U). The union benefitted from the fact that, the I.C.F.T.U constantly gave its leaders regular scholarship to attend its courses where they were exposed to the idea of free but responsible trade unionism.

Female and male labourers were all part of the process of trade unionism in the Cameroons. There was however a general tendency for the leaders of these trade unions to be the male given that pre-capitalist tendencies was still part of the male workers who believed that they should be in control of every aspect of plantation labour. These men therefore championed every detail of the trade unions. However, a lot of female labourers were registered members especially in the Tole and Ndu tea estates of the plantations. Our investigations revealed that, these female labourers took active part in the trade union activities especially when the union was engaged in a strike action. Just like men, the women carried plaque cards and strikes singing songs of unity. Some very dynamic women even led the strikes. This was exemplified by the 1988 workers strike in the Tole tea estate which was led by women who were all members of the trade union⁷²⁸. It was a general believe among plantation workers that, strikes led by women were generally more fruitful than those led by men. To our informant, women hardly came out for a strike, but when they did, they meant business and generally, management believed that female labourers could persevere a lot so each time these female labourers came out, they were easily given a listening ear and an effort made to solve their problems⁷²⁹.

Other trade unions with great influence came up in the Cameroons, This influence went beyond the interest of the plantation workers to the interest of the entire Cameroonian territory given that it was operating as a federation with a lot of political and economic disparities. For instance, in 1962, the newly created West Cameroon Trade Union Congress (W.C.T.U.C), in a meeting in Tiko dated 7th April 1962, insisted and asked for the harmonization of wages and salaries between the two federated states and the introduction of a prize control board⁷³⁰. The

⁷²⁷ Warmington. W.A, *A West African Trade Union*, p.24.

⁷²⁸ Konings, *Labour Resistance*, p.95.

⁷²⁹ Lumba, July 7th 2014.

⁷³⁰ ANY, Cameroon Times, 13th April 1962.

W.C.T.U.C expressed its great disappointment with the situation of wages in the territory to the extent that it even threatened to call a general strike on the 5th of July 1966 if no agreements had been reached on the issue of harmonizing wages⁷³¹. One will therefore not over emphasize the role of these plantation trade unions in the development of the territory.

The establishment of trade unions in the plantations in the Cameroons had therefore given the labourers a type of model but free and responsible trade unionism. These trade unions pursued a moderate production policy with an ultimate aim of protecting labourers from managerial controls and exploitations. This proved successful as about 90 percent of workers of the plantations were registered in these trade unions thus given them an umbrella and shield from capitalist exploitation of man power.

Difficult Conditions of Plantation Workers

There were equally many other problems related to male opposition to female labourers which included male domination in all the sectors in the estate and male chauvinism that was however encouraged by the traditional authority in the Ndu society. Generally, plantation workers had difficulties and problems in the various domains of plantation life.

General Problems of Plantation Workers

Apart from general issues facing plantation workers as has already been seen above, there were many other problems faced by male and female labourers in the plantations. There was generally a tendency for managerial problems ranging from bureaucracy, authority and hierarchy. The reason for this loophole was because of appointments. Instead of having an elected manager by the board of directors, these managers were appointed. Generally speaking these managers were at times under estimated and disrespected by co-administrators and even male and female labourers. It therefore became difficult for work to be smooth and this attitude affected the estate negatively⁷³².

Another difficulty of male and female labourers in the plantations was that of lack of material resources like raincoats, boots and harvesting baskets. Our informant told us that given the nature of the plantations and the fact that they were far away from the houses of the workers, as they needed to trek for long hours, working boots were therefore not provided and they suffered a lot during the rainy season because of lack of raincoats. Some of them had to pluck tea under the heavy rains mainly because they wanted to meet up with their daily task. It was

⁷³¹ ANY, Cameroon Times, 21st June 1966.

⁷³² Konings, *Gender and Class*, p.104.

the policy of management and plantation roles that working material was to be provided by the labourers. These working material were very vital because the labourers could not deal without them. For instance, a labourer could not survive without working boots especially those of the tick palm bushes. These palm bushes just like the rubber bushes were usually infested with a lot of reptiles given that these were plantations that developed in the forest zones of the territory Cameroon. In addition, harvesting baskets for the Tole and Ndu tea estates were not always available, so labourers needed an extra effort to get their working tools. These and a lot more like Cars to carry labourers to the plantation site were always not available. The effect of these problems was that labourers could not be very efficient at work and this gradually reduced yield and equally affected the quality of tea⁷³³.

There were equally difficulties in the plantations related to cropping. From the collection of seeds through germination, plucking of tea, harvesting of nuts, tapping of rubber and marketing, a series of problems developed. It was realized that these processes were cumbersome and some times, the monotonous nature of the routine gave some labourers a lot of psychological fatigue to the extent that some had personal problems with management because these administrators refused to transfer them to another plantation. These personal problems were numerous and varied from one plantation to another.

There was equally that of ageing plants, because tea, rubber and oil palm occupied the same piece of land for many years, it was difficult to replace when the plants were old. It entailed that most of the ageing plants should be uprooted or cut down for replacement with new ones. Again not all germinated seeds survived and a lot of problems were faced from transplanting to the stage of harvesting. Shortage of water in the nursery was a general problem in the tea, rubber and oil palm plantations. It was therefore difficult to do thorough and continuous watering in the nursery because the water for the nursery was carried by a tractor since there was no water point in the nursery⁷³⁴.

Transporting the products was at times a big problem given that the same vehicles used for transporting raw materials were diverted and used for transporting loads of wood for fuel especially in the case of the Ndu tea estate that used wood fuel for a very long period. Again there was the problem of old worn out and obsolete machines which needed replacement for maximum production to take place. In order to accomplish this task, the estate needed a lot of money for maximum production to take place. Unfortunately, the estates balance sheet was

⁷³³Tarla, August 16th 2014.

⁷³⁴ Ngeh, "Specialization Practical Report Carried out at the Ndu Tea Estate", p.23.

most of the time on a deficit, leading to insufficient income for maintenance and replacement⁷³⁵.

Marketing problems equally arose because of the competition which the products from the plantations faced with other superior brands in the international market. This was exemplified by the Tole Tea which though was a C.D.C plantation just like the Ndu Tea sold the bulk of its tea on the London Tea Exchange, and the Moslem areas of the Northern East Cameroon on the Chad Republic. As most authorities agreed, the tea market in Cameroon as well as in the market in the neighboring countries with large Moslem populations was likely to be far in excess of local production⁷³⁶.

The Tole Tea therefore gained a greater market than the Ndu Estate because of the additional and many brands of tea it produced like the grade 1 (dryer mouth) which was a mixture of all grades, the grade 2 BMF- broken mixed fanning, grade 3 PFI-pekoe fanning grade 5-PD-Pekoe Dust, grade 6- Dust 1, grade 7 BOP-Broken orange pekoe, grade 8-BP broken pekoe, grade 9 BPS-Broken pekoe Souchoung and grade 10-BM-Broken mixed⁷³⁷. This was opposed to the grades produced at Ndu Tea Estate which were fewer and included mix dust, pekoe fannings I, pekoe fannings Broken orange pekoe, broken pekoe and broken mix where mostly the broken mixed known as blue and red labels were sold in the Cameroon market⁷³⁸.

Though majority of Ndu Tea was sold out of Cameroon, it still faced a lot of marketing problems resulting from competition with other tea plantations from in and out of Cameroon. The rubber product equally faced stiff competition from other companies around the world and our investigations revealed that, the rubber from the Cameroons was one of the best in the world market though often beating by the too many fluctuations in prices of rubber in the world market. The oil palm products equally faced stiff competition from other oil producing companies especially that in Nigeria where the oil palm plantation was equally dominating.

Closely linked to marketing problems in the plantations were transportation problems. There were very bad roads especially those linking the plantations and the factory and the factory to the main ring road where the products had to further be transported to the main distribution centre. Bederman therefore concluded on the state of roads in the Ndu Tea Estate by maintaining that “at Ndu, all main roads are unpaved which means that during the rainy season,

⁷³⁵ Ngwayi, “Female Labour in the Ndu Tea Estate”, p.110.

⁷³⁶ Bederman, *The C.D.C. Partner in National Growth*, p.54.

⁷³⁷ Tanyi, “Plantation Agriculture and its Environmental Impact”, p.75.

⁷³⁸ Njeck, *Concise Note on Quality Tea*, p.14.

(which coincides with peak, plucking activity there) the roads were often impassable”⁷³⁹. The problem of poor roads could be noticed in all the plantation sites during our investigations. Visiting some of the sites was quite cumbersome. Moving in to the thick palm bushes in Idenau and the thick rubber bushes at Tiko made the labourers to be most of the times very tied. This was particularly for the lines of palms and rubber trees where vehicles could not penetrate. These labourers were left by a transporting vehicle by the road side for them to continue with their inward journey which sometimes took a couple of hours and most of them got tied by the time they were to start work.

There were equally climatic problems resulting from extremes of weather that was either excess sunshine or rainfall that could damage plantation crops and plants which equally led to low production. Our investigations revealed that these weather conditions were sometimes not very suitable for especially tea cultivation and this became a very big problem as it could even lead to a halt in the Tea processing⁷⁴⁰. The Tole and Ndu tea plantations witnessed a halt due to poor weather conditions.

Generally speaking, the problems and difficulties in the plantations in the Cameroons were summarized in an economic report of North West province in 1982 and postulated that, “on the part of workers absenteeism, late coming to work and low output, inadequate transport facilities, inadequate water supply from December to March, difficulties in having generating plants and machinery repairs”⁷⁴¹. This report brings to mind the fact that the plantations had outstanding difficulties that were recorded at every level of the production process.

Gender Division of roles in the plantations had created a noticeable impact in the social and economic life of the society in general and the plantation communities in particular. The employment of these men especially women led to a lot of efficiency though with vivid disparities in their work description and other aspects of plantation life. This gender employment of labour was not without its own problems emanating from gender relations in the estate to general difficulties that affected the estate as a whole. These male and female labourers therefore reacted promptly to estate difficulties and conditions as revealed in their strike actions which culminated to different ramifications on the workers and this generally affected the plantations especially in its level of productivity.

⁷³⁹Bederman, *The C D.C. Partner in National Growth*, p53.

⁷⁴⁰Edward, December 11th 2014.

⁷⁴¹B N A, File: N W/S a/d/200/29/BK, *The Third Millennium Cameroonian Woman*, 2007.

Problems of Female Labourers in the Plantations

African women had clearly demonstrated a capacity to protect their interests individually and collectively. These female labourers in most African plantation sites had often had very similar problems and so, collective actions to these problems were seen as the best remedy⁷⁴². The main reasons for these plantation problems especially owing to the female labourers was in essence the manifestations of women's resistance against male abuse of power and the increasing loss of female control over the means of production and the labour process during the later colonial period. There were many problems peculiar to female labourers but this discourse will closely examine two major problems; the issues related to task labour and the aspects of managerial domination.

This discourse looked at particularly the case of Female pluckers on the Tole tea estate as a case study. They proved capable of a variety of problems in the plantation. The issue of exploitation and labour controls by the male labourers was no news to these workers. Having perceived that, union leadership and Staff Representatives were neglecting the representation of their interest and had failed to deliver the goods, they resorted to collective action in a bit to solve their plight. It should be noted that, the actions of female pluckers at the Tole estate challenged the initial managerial assumption that women would be more docile than men. The Tole tea estate in fact soon acquired a bad reputation in management circles. Time and time again, the management was forced to admit that the estate was one of the most troubled spot in the plantation area⁷⁴³.

Female pluckers were always inclined to having problems with management because they were always making efforts to raise the level of task work. Most of these female pluckers stressed that, "Women are used to working hard, but they do not want to become slaves. Therefore, we pluckers insist on being treated as human beings in the field." These women were very hard working but they had problems at the level of task work that they were compelled to finish and this task was too much for them to the extent that if they were to finish such a task, then they would have been working like slaves. As a result they were not happy with management for imposing heavy task on them.

These female labourers equally had other reasons for opposing heavy task work; they complained that they were usually left with little or no time and energy to carry out their

⁷⁴² Konings, *Gender and Class*, p. 86.

⁷⁴³ File 9, Industrial Trade Disputes, C.D.C, 1976, p.124.

domestic duties. They also saw that, it raised conflicts among workers themselves as a result of envy and competition and between workers and the supervisory staff especially on disciplinary actions⁷⁴⁴. To better appreciate the aspect of increase in task labour as a major plight of female labourers, it would be pertinent to consider the plucking norms and incentive bonuses in the plantation.

Table 31: Plucking Norms and Incentive Bonuses in the Tea Estates in the Cameroons

Year	Peak Period	Slack Period	Incentive Bonuses
1963	35kg	30kg	F CFA 3 for every 1kg of leaves plucked above the norms
1969	18kg	16kg	F CFA 7 for every kg of leaves plucked above the norms F CFA 10 for every kg of leaves plucked in extra time
1980	26kg	14kg	F CFA 15 for every kg of leaves plucked between 27 and 45 kg F CFA 20 for every kg of leaves plucked between 46 and 55kg F CFA 25 for every kg of leaves plucked above 55kg
1987	32kg	18kg	FCFA 15 for every kg of leaves plucked between 33 and 45kg FCFA 20 for every kg of leaves plucked between 46 and 55kg FCFA 25 for every kg of leaves plucked above 55kg

Source: *Konings, Gender and Class*, p.88.

The table demonstrates that, plucking norms on the estate had not been increased by management in the period 1963 to 1980. A period of 18 years was too much for these female labourers to continue bearing a situation of increase in task labour without a necessary increase in the bonuses to benefit from such task labour.

Another type of problem faced by female labourers was that of managerial efforts to establish control over the labour process. These female labourers had never questioned the hierarchical organization of production because they were habituated to the existence of a hierarchical order both within the household and the society at large. Their actions were rather oriented towards what they perceived as an inhuman or uncompassionate exercise of constituted authority.

These female labourers drew a sharp line between wicked supervisors and nice ones. Most of the time, their anger and problems were with the ones considered the wicked ones. Wicked supervisors were those who treated them as mere objects of production and displayed a large

⁷⁴⁴ Konings, *Gender and Class*, p.87.

measure of insensitivity to the worker's plight. Some were very authoritative and bossy and they turned to shout at their subordinates without taking their opinion and advice into account while others were overzealous in the exercise of their duty and were merely interested in raising output and therefore supervised their subordinates closely uncompromisingly and uncompassionately.

Female labour Methods of Dealing with Plantation Problems

Female labour plantation problems were so glaring and obvious that this class of labourers had to devise means of dealing with their plight. It appeared as if no one was interested in solving their problems. This was seen in an account of one of their plight that after several complaints, they expected the trade union to come to their rescue but this was not the situation. A vivid example of such refusal to intervene in the plight of these female labourers was that corroborated by Konings in these words "The strike began without union's approval. The union's leadership therefore refused to intervene on the striker's behalf.

The strikers subsequently nominated spokesmen for the representation of their grievances with the management"⁷⁴⁵. An analysis of Konings stands gives the conclusion that, even the trade union leaders who were purported to protect all the labourers and cater for their well-being were not ready to help the female labourers in their plight. One shares in this opinion because during our investigations, some female labourers testified that they did not know who to run to with their problems. To them, management believed a lot in the male labourers and so whatever thing they said, had to be verified and in most cases by their supervisors who were most of the times male⁷⁴⁶.

It was within this bad drop that these female labourers had to stand together as one in their collective actions towards managerial process, exploitation and subordination in the plantation process. Collective actions as a solution to their problems were seen through strikes, violence and demonstrations⁷⁴⁷. These female labourers equally took other measures to handle their plight which were informal. Women tend to be stubborn towards wicked supervisors. They regularly bluntly refused to carry out an order given by such supervisors even if they realized that such refusals might lead to serious breakdown in the labour process and the production

⁷⁴⁵ Konings, *Gender and Class*, p.87.

⁷⁴⁶ Lumba, July 7th 2014.

⁷⁴⁷ Konings, *Labour Resistance*, pp.80-120.

process or a considerable loss of output. There were even cases of some female labourers trying to solve their problems by using insulting language and even attacks on the supervisory staff⁷⁴⁸.

Women also played trikes on wicked supervisors or discredited them with their superior with false accusations of bribery, corruption and other vices. A quite common way of stone walling the supervisor was to invoke their authority when they were around but rather turned to ridicule them when they left. A more vicious way of these female solving their problems was to come up with threats of using mystical powers against supervisory staff and it was hard for the later to know if such threats were real or mere methods of instilling fear in the administrators.

The efforts made by female labourers to solve their problems in the plantations challenged the common managerial assumptions that, female workers in the third world were easier to control than male workers. This was clearly seen by the example of female labourers in the Cameroons who did everything to defend their occupational interest independently. Whenever they perceived that the trade union was unable to respond to their plight, their actions to solve their problems be them collective or informal should not be judged solely in terms of their efforts on issues of wages, exploitation and managerial controls but should also be conceived as important opportunity for raising women's capacities for self organization, confidence and especially leadership where if these concepts were well oriented and encouraged in female plantation workers, the capitalist economy would be a mile stone especially in the global experience of improving on humanity.

Because of the high fertility of the volcanic soils found in the Southern portions of the Western Cameroon region, German nationals were encouraged to open up large-scale tropical plantations in the area after a protectorate had been declared over the territory. Vast tracks of land were alienated for the purpose and that part of the territory became a vast sea of plantation estates⁷⁴⁹. The Great War came, bringing in its wake some interruption in the operation and management of the plantations but the return of peace brought with it a new lease of life to the plantations as their pre-war owners had returned to Cameroon to operate their repurchased land holdings. These plantations were later taken over by the C.D.C but by 2002, most of the plantations had been privatized. This mile stone in the economic sector though motivated by European personal interest had gone a long way to improve on the lively hood of the inhabitancy of the Cameroons in particular and the Cameroonian territory as a whole. Although agriculture remained during the last decade of the 20th Century the largest contributor to the

⁷⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p.93.

⁷⁴⁹ Epale, *Plantation and Development in Western Cameroon*, pp1-3.

Gross Domestic Product (G.D.P) and export earnings, there were however, some draw backs to this foreign economic system; first and foremost, problems of the plantation workers and then problems of the plantation owners.

Heavy reliance on one crop made plantations to be vulnerable to frequent changes in prices of primary products in the world market. These falls in prices of agricultural products reached its peak from the mid-1970s and were still at all-time low levels in the early 1990s. As a result, Cameroon in particular and Africa's share of trade fell to its lowest point and this shock of the 1970s hid the continent and Cameroon did not escape this menace⁷⁵⁰. This was especially as the prices were dictated by the importing countries. It was a common phenomenon in the capitalist economy that prizes fluctuated frequently. Once there was a drop in the prices of these plantation products in the world market, it affected the general production chain and especially the labourers who most of the time were the once who suffered the effects of such price fluctuations⁷⁵¹.

There were problems in the plantations relating to labour issues. When the British authorities took over the German plantations, they were immediately confronted with labour problems. The numerous workers and indigenes employed to work in the plantations had all escaped as a result of the war. The forcible method of recruiting labour which had been applied in the territory before the war had developed in the people a negative attitude towards work. Accordingly, work was avoided whenever possible. The labour requirements of the plantation estates were not therefore meet initially. In a report dated 26th April, 1916, the director of plantations complained as follows:

The labour situation is at present difficult, To work the estates in a business-like manner, we require at least 7000 labourers. Last March, we had 7,050 on the books, but of these 1,150 have been handed over to the Director of Post and Telegraphs for communication work, and 1,200 having completed their term of contract have returned to their respective "countries" we require therefore an additional 2,300 labourers to complete with the coming crop⁷⁵².

Recruiting labourers to work in the plantations was therefore a serious problem right from the inception of the plantations. Labourers were soon to be recruited from the Bamenda area and other migrant labourers from neighbouring countries like Nigeria but the situation was not the best. Management resorted to recruiting female labourers especially when the C.D.C took over the plantations but the problem of labour equipment was never redressed. This was particularly

⁷⁵⁰ Liffe John, *Africans: The History of a Continent*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1995, p. 255.

⁷⁵¹ Neba, *Modern Geography of the Republic of Cameroon*, pp.1-80.

⁷⁵² Epale, *Plantation and Development in Western Cameroon*, p.64.

difficult to redress because of the increase demand for plantation products in the world market and this consequently led to the increase demand for labourers⁷⁵³.

The exploitation of the human and natural resource was a principal motive for European colonisation of Africa. This they did without any consideration for the indigenous people. Consequently, the impact of colonial labour dynamics on the economic social and political set-ups of the area from where labour was recruited had a negative effect. The greatest effects were seen in the economic sector because colonisation in general was motivated more by the economic potential of the continent than the social and political factor. Economic coercion was applied against the indigenous communities through the direct application and appropriation of land, the forcible or partly coercive recruitment of labour and the wanton use of indigenous manpower to fortify the colonial machinery which somehow dislocated the traditional set-ups in many ways⁷⁵⁴.

Another detrimental impact of plantation agriculture was seen in the area of labour recruitment. The migration of various categories of people from different parts of the territory to the plantation sites first and foremost caused a lot of casualty on the way to the plantations. Plantation labour required a lot of energy and able humans within the ages 15 to 49. What aggravated the situation was the excessive number of people required to work in the plantations. Chilver estimates that, over 11000 indigenous people migrated for labour purposes. This led to the disorganisation and dismemberment of a well settled region⁷⁵⁵.

Monoculture over large areas encourages quick spread of pest and diseases which destroyed large hectares of crops, e.g. panama disease in banana, cocoa black pot, coffee plight, boll-weevil on cotton and malaria in workers. The oil palm, rubber and tea plant equally had their own types of pest.

Continuous cultivation of one crop quickened soil exertion and erosion. This was worst as it was in this area of tropics where there was intense leaching. This could only be cured by applying expensive fertilizers and planting of nitrogenous plants as cover crops in rubber and oil palm plantations hitherto cleared⁷⁵⁶.

⁷⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵⁴ Adig, "The Dynamics of Colonial Labour in the Bamenda Grassfields, 1889-1961", p.294.

⁷⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵⁶ Neba, *Modern Geography of the Republic of Cameroon*, pp.1-80.

There was the difficulty of clearing and maintaining the plantations due to the dense forest. There were difficulties to maintain weed control due to the rapid growth of weed. The solution was to employ a large labour force that regularly cleared the plantation.

Climatic hazards were frequent. Idle conditions were difficult to obtain as local winds were at times very destructive as harsh Harmattan and violent tropical cyclones. Excessive rain fall, drought and frost usually destroyed plantation plants⁷⁵⁷.

The product of plantation faced great competition in the world market as a result of production of synthetic products e.g., synthetic against natural rubber and the use of vegetable oil in place of cocoa butter.

Old trees produced low yields and outputs dropped thereby reducing the margin of profits. Specialisation on one crop led to over dependence. This affected income of the plantation greatly when prices of its product fell.

There was the exploitation of local work force since the wages were very minimal. For instance, in Cameroon, a plantation labourer earned 800 FRS for working 8 hours a day.

It easily established food shortages because cash crops were grown instead of food crops. The local population in the plantation had to import foodstuff.

The structure and organisation of plantation camps made them to be breeding points of many social ills and this affected not only the plantation workers and the plantations, but the entire nation.

Impact of Plantation Labour in Cameroon

Plantation labour contributed greatly to the economy of the Cameroons. This was seen in the various domains like the introduction of new crops and the development of new skills, the birth of an urban landscape, and the contribution to the economic, political and social development of the Cameroons.

Pertinent to note was the significance of agriculture and especially plantation agriculture in Africa. Before the advent of plantation agriculture however, subsistence agriculture had always played an important role in the lives of the people of black Africa. It constituted the backbone of their economy with at least 75% of the population involved in the production of food crops. The Cameroons was well noted for the supply of rubber, banana, oil palm and tea⁷⁵⁸. These

⁷⁵⁷ Neba, *Advanced Integrated Human Geography*, p.379.

⁷⁵⁸ A Youndeowei et al, *Introduction to Tropical Agriculture*, Hongkon, Longman, 1988, pp. 1-7.

crops which were grown in large quantities mainly for export, increased the export rate of the territory.

Gender division of roles in plantation agriculture had particular repercussions on the society. This was particularly due to the implications brought in by the employment of the female folk in the plantations. Much more than other factors, the employment of female labourers transformed the communities. Female labourers were mostly made up of young girls. While some worked as clerks in the main offices, some did sorting and packing in the factory while a good number worked in the field doing weeding, plucking and caring for the young nurseries. Fako Division and Donga-Mantung Division being the border divisions, the employment of these labourers especially the female folk helped to check the mass migration into the federal Republic of Nigeria, it also prevented rural exodus to Douala, Nkambe and Kumbo towns, consequently, the rapid development of these towns and a transformation in the society as a whole⁷⁵⁹.

Generally, the employment of male and female labourers in the plantations and their presence in Tiko, Bota, Idenau, Tole and Ndu led to the construction of business centers by business men to provide and cater for the need of these workers. The workers themselves became involved in transforming the society by engaging in some economic activities like marketing and cattle rearing. Though the wages were very minimal, these labourers gathered the money through “njangi” groups and the credit Union which was always ready to loan out money to its workers and members especially when the labourer was regular in his monetary transactions in the credit union and had presented a visible project to the board of directors in the union⁷⁶⁰. There were 21 C.D.C Credit Unions in the Cameroons and the main aim was to cater for the financial needs of the workers. Loans were granted and a reasonable number of female and male labourers were able to save some money for the development of their families and their communities as a whole.

Furthermore, there was the development of small markets in towns and villages around the plantation sites. Our investigations revealed that most of those who started the markets were female labourers who were employed to work in the plantations. These women soon realized that their wages were very low given that most of them were employed to do menial jobs. Unable to cope with their economic obligations; they developed a tendency of bringing along with them food crops to sell especially on “pay days”. Food items like groundnuts, bananas, pear “puff

⁷⁵⁹ Ngwayi, “Female Labour in the Ndu Tea”, p.71.

⁷⁶⁰ Koni, August 20th 2014.

puff’ and boiled, cassava were brought. Later, items like beans corn, plantains, yams vegetables and potatoes were added and the markets soon emerged to completely transform the areas. This economic transformation that came through the opening of shops and development of markets soon became a source of attraction to many other job seekers who migrated from other areas like Missellele, Malende, Binka, Nkambe and Tatum to the plantation areas. Their initial intension was to sell especially on “pay day” given that workers bought a lot of items on such days. This initial intention was later diverted and during peak periods when the management of especially the Estates of Tole and Ndu was in need of pluckers, they were instantly employed to help and work only for that period.

Our informant told us that on the sport training at such times was given by the head men and head women. They could be heard giving instructions to on the spot employed labourers saying “top bud and two leaves”. This was given in a continuous rhythm that it soon development in to a song. It was necessary to make it well known to these new comers because good tea started from the plucking. Well plucked tea meant good tea and poorly plucked tea meant bad tea⁷⁶¹. These peak periods which needed the employment of these temporal workers came in April, May and June while the second came from October through December which was the highest peak period. Most of these temporal labourers were employed at this time. The Ndu and Tole Tea Estates therefore helped not only in the development of the society but equally gave employment to those who came in to the village and therefore acted as the main economic backbone.

The development of an urban landscape was evident seen in the largest area that developed known as Buea. Other towns along the coastal area like Limbe, Bota, Ekona, and Idenau equally developed rapidly due to the advent of plantation agriculture. “*Kakar* three corners”, situated between Ndu and the estate became a great business center due to plantation agriculture in that locality. This area became a very lively place with a growing number of shops, bars and restaurants. Most residents were married workers and some lived with their wives and families. There were usually older workers who arrived at a time when land was not yet in short supply. They obtained sufficient land from the local quarter heads to build a house and established food farms. Others lived there without their wives and families. They arrived later when land had become an urgent problem. They acquired a building plot but no farming land. Consequently, they tended to opt for double residence. During the working week, they stayed on their own in

⁷⁶¹ Lumba, August 11th 2014.

the settlement and at weekends, they returned to their villagers of origin, where their wives grow food and they themselves own coffee and cocoa farms⁷⁶².

Even though an urban landscape developed for the male and female labourers, the plantation management equally provided housing facilities to its workers. There were many workers camps constructed in the plantation areas along the Coast, in places like Tiko. For the case of the Ndu estate, very few houses were however available. While the bulk of the plantation workers lived in the villages around the plantation like Tatum, Kakar, and Ntumbaw, most senior service workers (manager, head nurse and factory manager) stayed in a staff quarter around the estate. This was because of the special privilege given them by the C.D.C as the administrators of the estate. Again, there was the need and development of a senior service staff quarter because the services of some staff members and administrators were usually needed at very odd hours.

The services of the head nurse who most of the times acted as a mid-wife were usually needed at night especially when there was a delivery case. She therefore needed to be present at all times for no one could determine when a woman was going to be in labour. Likewise the factory manager needed to be present and be around the factory. This was such that if there was a problem with the quality of the plantation crop, he could easily dictate just by getting the scent at the time in point⁷⁶³.

Apart from the visible social impact of plantation agriculture in the Cameroons, it contributed either directly or indirectly to the economic life of the region. Beckford supports this view of plantation development by containing that plantations were significant agents of development and capital accumulation because they were economically efficient unites of production which benefited from external economies of scale and technical progress. This scholar holds that plantation agriculture made it possible for western capital know how and technology to be diffused to the under developed countries thereby witnessing rapid development⁷⁶⁴. The employment of men and women to work in the plantations in the Cameroons greatly encouraged the development of the capitalist economy.

Though there was disparity in job description between the male and the female folk working in the plantations, there was however, specialization where each labourer concentrated in his

⁷⁶² Konings, *Gender and Class*, p.107.

⁷⁶³ Koni, August 20th 2014.

⁷⁶⁴ G. Beckford, *Persistence Poverty, Under Developments in the Plantation Economies in the Third World*, London, Oxford University Press, 1972, pp.5-10.

/her own sector. Specialization led to efficiently and subsequently the development of the plantations in terms of output. Production therefore drastically increased in all the plantations. The Ndu tea estate production statistics revealed that, production increased from 140, 324 kgs of total Ndu tea production in 1977 to 170,750 kgs in 2002 when the estate was privatized⁷⁶⁵. As a male dominating estate, it was recorded that the labourer worked so hard to improve first of all on their living standards and generally their hard work affected the development of the estate. By the time the female labourers came in, they were mostly employed as pluckers and were very efficient in their activities that the production level of the estate grow rapidly.

Konings agrees that, these labourers displayed a long-standing commitment to their job. According to statistics, 53% of these labourers had been employed on the estate for a period of more than 10 years and 90.5% were able to marry one or more wives which was a clear indication of an improvement in the working conditions and consequently the development of the estate⁷⁶⁶. It should however be noted that the salaries of workers in the Ndu estate were generally lower than those of the Tole Estate. While C.D.C, being a parasitical, tended to follow government wage rates closely. It was not the case with the Ndu Estate given that instead of the CFA 120 agreed and approved by government for the Donga-Mantung Division, it gave its workers 105 FCFA per diem. The management was for a long time deaf to repeated union request for an increase in remuneration because it wanted to keep labour cost low⁷⁶⁷.

However, despite the low wages, the labourers put in a lot of effort and given the male and female specialization, they greatly improved on the output of the estate. Gender in plantation agriculture in the British Southern Cameroons had an impact on the number of men and women employed to work in the estate. There was specialization given that employment opportunities increased and labourers employed had specific duties to perform. As a C.D.C plantation, thousands of people were employed and this employment was evident not only in the field sector, but equally in related services like health, transport, engineering technical and administrative department. The labour force was stratified and divided into four services according to skill, level of education and nature of work done. There existed four categories of workers. The senior service, junior, service general labour and special labour⁷⁶⁸.

⁷⁶⁵ C.D.C Annual Report from 1977-2002, Bota, Cameroon, pp. 1-12.

⁷⁶⁶ Konings, *Gender and Class*, p.111.

⁷⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p.112.

⁷⁶⁸ E. Tanyi, "Plantation Agriculture and its Environmental Impact in the Region of Buea Case Study of Tole Tea Plantation", A Post Graduate Diploma Dissertation in Geography, ENS Yaounde, 2003, p.86.

The senior service workers consisted of the managerial staff having a university education and or long years in the plantation sector possessing specialized skills like engineers and agronomists. Junior service workers consisted of educated white collar workers who performed clerical, technical, agricultural and medical work. General labour comprised of completely unskilled workers while special labour comprised of semi-skill labourers including tea pluckers. These labourers were paid salaries which enabled them to sustain life and invest in other sectors⁷⁶⁹.

Another economic implication was the generating of revenue and capital formation. A large amount of government revenue was derived directly or indirectly from these plantations. The plantation paid company tax import and export duties and transportation tax. All those various taxes helped to replenish the state budget. Employed workers equally paid income tax to the government. According to Sanford, the C.D.C with the Tiko, Idenau, Tole and Ndu Tea Estate being some of the plantations “became one of the major tax payers in the country”. It handled almost all of West Cameroons important export trade through the ports of Tiko and Bota⁷⁷⁰. By the year 2002, the Cameroon government had gained a lot from the C.D.C given that it was the second greatest employer after the government. The revenue of the state increased and thus came from direct and indirect taxes paid by men and women working as labourers in the plantations which were part of the C.D.C⁷⁷¹.

The development of plantation agriculture in the British Southern Cameroons accounted for over 65 percent of the export tonnage goods from the territory in 1958 and 55 percent of the export earnings. In 1953, the International Bank Mission to Southern Cameroons reported that, the mission wished to record its opinion that the establishment and operation of the Cameroon Development Corporation had been of great benefit. It had made available the economic and technical advantages of plantation production and had provided for the social, economic and especially educational welfare of its workers⁷⁷².

The expansion of the plantations brought many economic changes to the Cameroons. The port facilities at Tiko and Victoria were expanded by the plantation owners and a new wharf was constructed for the loading of plantation products. A numerous workers camps, numerous shops, warehouses and office buildings were constructed⁷⁷³. Higher standards of living for the

⁷⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷⁰ Bederman, *The C. D. C. Partner in National Growth*, pp.21-22.

⁷⁷¹ C.D.C Annual Report and Account for the Twelve Months Ended, Bota, Cameroon, 2000, p.5.

⁷⁷² Ngoh, *Cameroon 1884-Present*, p.157.

⁷⁷³ Fanso, *Cameroon History for Secondary Schools and Colleges*, p.242.

local work force through wages obtained and the provision of basic social amenities. It contributes to the national income through its produce which was part of the domestic product. It contributed to rural development through the establishment of a small holder's scheme.

The use of capital as machines, application of fertilizers, pesticides and insecticides and scientific methods of farming raised the quality and quantity of agricultural product (Banana palm oil, rubber tea cocoa coffee and even pepper) in the economy. It encouraged industrial development as there was the growth of agro-based industry to transform the agricultural products for example, BATA for rubber, and many oil and soap producing companies for oil palm. Also the plantations were seats of cottage since most had processing plants. Plantation agriculture greatly contributed to the economic development of the Cameroons and Cameroon as a whole. The mandate period particularly the period beginning from 1925, ushered in a new phase in the development of plantations in Cameroon. During this period, large areas of underdeveloped land were brought under cultivation giving rise to limitless employment opportunities. Employment rose from about 11,000 in 1924 to between 13,000 and 14,000 in 1928, although the world depression of the 1930s applied a brake on this expansion, causing the labour force employed on the plantation to drop to just over 8,000 in 1931.

Economic revivals set in and this gave rise to changes in the plantation business and gave birth to occupations and activities connected with such aspects as port activities at the Tiko wharf. Railways and workshops were developed around the plantation sites and this greatly helped to improve on the living standards of plantation workers, indigenes and Cameroonians. By 1935, employment had rose to about 15,500 and attained an all-time high of 25,000 in 1938 and for the first time since 1916, labour for plantation work became scarce, the scarcity tempting workers from nearby towns of Nigeria to come over to the plantations in appreciable numbers in search of work.

It should also be noted that, in addition to their normal free rations, the plantation workers required supplementary food supply, and a demand for such supply was created in the plantations and this encouraged the development of local food production industry among the Bakweri. Soon, it became a common sight to see Bakweri housewives roll down from their hill encampments to Tiko every Tuesday to sell local foodstuffs to plantation workers and to use part of the proceed to procure fish from Douala fishermen. The plantations thus had a secondary effect of promoting the fishing industry at Tiko and in the adjacent creeks.

Other conditions however such as discipline and the payment of wages left a lot to be desired, since there were hardly more than a dozen British administrative officers in the territory and of those available, none was a specialist in labour administration. At the end of the month therefore, a worker was paid cash only for a part of his total wages. The rest was being paid to him in the form of a “trust book”; He was free to take his trust book to a store owned by his plantation and take goods of his choice to the amount he wanted and so this was deducted from his pay package during payment⁷⁷⁴.

Through the wages acquired by plantation workers, they were able to acquire new consumer goods, which they took home after short spells of work on the plantations and which induced a beneficial demonstration effect in their villages and inspired others in such villages to go down to the plantations and work so that they could also amass wealth similar to that acquired earlier by their co-villagers

Much commercial activities were also generated by the plantations in the Cameroons. This period witnessed the world depression of the 1930s although, thanks to the emergence of the plantation industries, the country did not feel the pangs of this depression to the full extent that other countries did and in fact, recovery was easily incoming. There was a mild recession in 1938 but again, the country did not feel its effects because of the protected German market on which products of the Cameroons were easily sold⁷⁷⁵.

Neba corroborates with Epale by agreeing that plantation agriculture led to a lot of economic development. It was easier to apply scientific techniques on plantations as seed selection, pest and diseases control through the use of herbicides and pesticides, and the use of fertilizers since monoculture was practiced. They enjoyed economies of large scale production due to the large output. This was possible because there was concentration on one crop. It reduced unit cost of production as machines used served time lost when labour alone was used.

Since scientific methods were used, there was improvement in the quality of product so that they remained high and standardised. Since product was processed before export, cost was reduced and they fetch high prices in the world market than when exported in the original state. Plantations provided employment opportunities to thousands of people. Plantation crops like tea and palm oil provided a source of food to many people. They had a secured market and could sell abroad because of large scale production.

⁷⁷⁴ Epale, *Plantation and Development in West Cameroon*, pp. 108-110.

⁷⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, P.112.

This was because they were able to negotiate well organised and reliable markets. The fact that the market was secured fostered the large scale production more. Crops like rubber, oil palm, etc. provided raw material for some industries as the tyre or shoe industry, oil, milling or soap factories and biscuits industries respectively. It encouraged socio-economic development where they operated for example, the provision of amenities like schools, hospitals, electricity, housing, et cetera to workers and communities. Road construction or maintenance was a common feature in plantation sites and this greatly helped in the transportation of plantation products and equally in the free and easy movement of the thousands of plantation workers⁷⁷⁶.

In other that the diet of the workers might be diversified, plantation companies allowed workers to cultivate food on nearby land that was not immediately required for development purposes. Besides, the system of free rations provided the labourers with a source of regular, if monotonous meals and developed in them new taste for such imported consumer goods as rice, salted codfish, and smoked herrings, et cetera. This led later, when the ration system had been abolished to the establishment of profitable lines of import business based upon the demand pattern which had developed under the impetus of the ration system⁷⁷⁷.

Plantation agriculture equally contributed enormously to social development. In order to ensure that the plantation workers were properly treated, administrative officers paid regular inspection visits to the plantations and medical inspection tours were also conducted by government health and medical personnel. The plantation companies themselves employed their own medical practitioners who served the plantation belonging to them. Generally speaking therefore, the health conditions of the workers was much better than it would have been without these safeguards and to the many officials who visited the plantations, the general conditions of the workers appeared good. In addition to medical care, the workers in view of the free rations system they enjoyed were adequately feed. Their health was thus maintained and the effects of congregated conditions to which the earlier generations of workers had been subjected during the German role were mutilated if not completely removed⁷⁷⁸. It helped in the improvement of infrastructural development of the country and the creations of school, hospitals and clubs. There was the creation and maintenance of roads across plantations areas and extension of electricity and building of water supply point around the camps.

⁷⁷⁶ Neba, *Advanced Integrated Human Geography*, pp. 441-442

⁷⁷⁷ Epale, *Plantation and Development in West Cameroon*, p.110.

⁷⁷⁸ Epale, *Plantation and Development in West Cameroon* p.110.

The plantation administration had established many primary schools to cater for the children of workers and non-workers in areas where it operated such as Bota Middle Farms, Ebonji, Ekona, Idenau, Mabanda, Mabonji, Mbonge, Molyko and Tiko. In Molyko for example, the plantations established a primary school which did not only educate the children of the labourers of the Ekona (Molyko section) plantation but also embraced children of non-plantation workers living in nearby villages such as Bokova, Bokwai, Bonduma, Molyko and Muea. Most of these schools were later handed over to the government in the 1980s. By 1987 when the government split the primary school in Molyko into two; Government Practicing School Molyko Group I and II, there were above 600 pupils with close to half of this number being the children of non-plantation workers. Generally, the plantation officials awarded prizes and scholarship to brilliant pupils irrespective whether they were children of workers or not. The essence was to encourage quality performance among pupils.

It is worth noting that most of the primary schools were constructed with made shift wooden material or planks while others were lodged in revamped colonial buildings which dilapidated over time as was the case of the primary school premises in Molyko. Following the government take-over, some of the said schools were reconstructed with modern cement block as depicted by some structures.

In spite of the fact that the plantation officials handed over most of its schools to the government in the 1980s, it remained committed to the promotion of the welfare of youths in the domain of education⁷⁷⁹.

In labour intensive plantation systems, the provision of health care facilities to labourers was an important factor that impacted on qualitative performance and output. The essence here was not to judge the quality of the health facilities but to see how the non-employees of the agro-industries in question benefitted from health facilities that were originally set up because of its workers.

From its inception, the plantation officials accompanied the establishment of estates with the installation of health facilities to cater for its workers and their relations as well as the public. By 1975 the plantations counted over 30 clinics and 42 aid posts. They managed 04 major well equipped hospitals found in Bota, Ekona, Mukonje and Tiko besides 06 auxiliary hospitals. In 1981, the C.D.C Tiko Cottage Hospital was upgraded to a reference hospital. Apart from plantation workers, hundreds of persons from nearby towns such as Tiko, Victoria (now

⁷⁷⁹ Akara, "Agro-industries in Cameroon", p.120.

Limbe), Mutengene, Buea and even from as far as Douala visited these hospitals in order to benefit from the various services provided. Meanwhile, the aid posts and clinics also attended to labourers, their relations and other persons in the areas where they were found (Onya, 1982, p.10).

The plantations provided pipe borne water to its workers especially in camps and other corporation houses. It is important to underscore here that some non-employees enjoyed water supplied by the plantations in some neighborhoods. For example, the people of “Small Soppo “Stranger Quarter” benefitted from a water catchment constructed by the plantation officials in Small Soppo village in Buea which was meant to supply water to the camps of the Tole Tea Estate since the mid-1960s. They were allowed to tap a line from the catchment which helped them gain access to clean water in their self-reliant project. The catchment provided regular drinkable water to over 1,000 persons who were not workers of the C.D.C. The C.D.C and the community took regular turns in carrying out maintenance on the catchment periodically. In addition, the C.D.C Limbe Camp (behind the Limbe District Hospital) had taps to which the people in the area were allowed free access to fetch water from without reservation. At Middle Farms where the C.D.C had taps, the situation was basically the same⁷⁸⁰.

Conclusion

Men and women working in the tea, rubber and oil palm plantations in the British Southern Cameroons faced platinum of difficulties but then, this new form of agriculture brought with it a lot of consequences. These labourers faced difficulties ranging from low wages; housing problems task labour issues and problems of exploitation. In their own way, they used collective and informal modes to fight back and try to ameliorate their working conditions. Female labourers came up with their own methods of fighting against male chauvinism that had become a torn in their flesh and the end result was the formation of women groups where they came together to discuss their common problems. Together in one spirit, these plantation workers especially the women fought for their rights and against the exploitative aspects of plantation agriculture.

They denounced especially problems emanating from remuneration and their working hours which to them, was an encroachment in their human rights. This portrayed the leadership qualities of the female folk in the plantations. The end result of these strike actions and resistances was the formation of Trade Unions where these workers could be able to express

⁷⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 123.

their grievances in an official manner and legally. These Trade Unions were made up of about 95 percent of plantation workers including men and women and together, they fought for the improvement in their working conditions. Generally speaking, plantation agriculture in the British Southern Cameroons had some drawbacks and challenges especially in aspects that affected the plantations directly. Issues of cropping, pest fluctuations in prices of agricultural products in the world market could not be over emphasized. That notwithstanding, plantation agriculture was a blessing to the Cameroonian society as it brought with it a lot of especially social and economic advantages to the people as a whole.

As a result of this new form of capitalist economy, the import and export rate of the territory increased given that large tons of tea, rubber and oil palms were exported from Cameroon to European countries and to the rest of the world. A lot of Cameroonians gained employment as a result of plantation agriculture in the British Southern Cameroons. Worthy of note was the fact that employment of female and male labourers was one of the most important repercussions of plantation agriculture because these men and women, who were employed, were able to send their children to school take care of their health and provide for themselves other recreational facilities. Plantation agriculture brought a lot of modernism and this was vividly reflected in the life style of the people. From a subsistence economy to a capitalist economy, this new form of agriculture ushered in wage employment labour and this remuneration came with other economic aspects like savings. Savings became a very large source of income especially amongst female plantation workers and this helped them to develop rapidly and within a very short period of time.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Our endeavours to undertake an empirical and historical investigation of gender and plantation agriculture in the Cameroons reflected our intellectual curiosity but more importantly, it represented a concrete attempt to unravel issues on gender and plantation labour. The answer to our questions showed that there were positive and negative effects of recruiting both male and female to work in the plantations. A synthesis of the conclusions revealed some interesting points which need further scholarly studies. This study entitled Gender in Plantation Agriculture in the Former British Southern Cameroons was focused on the history and the process of employing male and female labourers in the plantation agricultural sector. The central argument in this study was that, there was unnecessary discrimination in the employment of labour, remuneration, task assignment, recreational facilities and a constant male labour resistance to female labour in plantation politics. The sub arguments in this study were that, there was the employment of more male labourers than female labourers with low remunerations for female labourers, more lucrative tasks and positions were assigned to male labourers, more male labourers enjoyed the recreational facilities than female labourers and the fact that there was female labour resistance to male labourers and a general resistance of plantation labourers to management exploitation collectively and informally. It was anchored on the premise that there was an uncontrolled rate of exploitation of male and especially female labourers in the plantations which led to the establishment of Trade Unions by these workers to cater for their working conditions.

Varied sources were employed to accomplish this task. Primary and secondary sources were employed. Primary sources included oral and face to face interviews with personalities of the plantation sector where there was the use of eye witness account. There was also the exploitation of materials from public and private Archives. Data and letters were analysed, used and interpreted for better comprehension. Secondary sources included published and unpublished sources while still, material was gotten from information and communication technology sources. Our study adopted the qualitative and quantitative research methods. The thematic and theoretical approaches were used to analyse data collected for this research piece. Our findings from the study suggested that, there was male chauvinism in the plantations and a majority of female labourers earned lower wages making them unable to meet up with their daily expenses. This view was corroborated by Whyte who postulated that, women's income did not equate with that of men and this inequality helped to perpetuate women's greater

involvement in contemporary domestic roles⁷⁸¹. Both men and women were employed as labourers but there was a tendency for women to undertake mostly less lucrative and traditionally feminine work in the plantations with almost all the supervisory positions ascribed to men, making these female labourers to be considered as second class in the plantations economic politics, seen in the fact that the efforts of these female labourers were unnecessarily undermined as they were given menial jobs like picking, gathering weeding and sweeping, unlike the male labourers who were given jobs like factory managers and general overseers. Most female labourers were widows and single so they occupied mostly the single-roomed camp houses which led to their vulnerability. There was a constant and persistent male opposition to this new class of labourers and a general resistance to exploitation in the plantations championed by female labourers which portrayed the leadership qualities of the female folk in the plantations.

Plantation agriculture was introduced in Cameroon by the Germans in the 1890s after they annexed the territory in 1884. The new economic dynamics ushered in plantation economy and the Germans embraced this new form of agriculture with a lot of enthusiasm to the extent that they carried out their highest economic investment in Cameroon in the area of plantation agriculture. Concession of *Gesellschaft Nord-West Kamerun* organised on 31 July 1899 and the concession of *Gesellschaft Sud-Kamerun* organised on 28 November 1898 became the German trading concession companies⁷⁸². The Cameroons provided space for the introduction of plantation agriculture and a capitalist economy in the territory. The area was ceded to Britain as a result of the Anglo-French defeat of the Germans in 1916 and the partition of the territory. The geographical map at the beginning of plantation agriculture in the Cameroons presented a total of 4 Divisions; Kumba, Mamfe, Victoria and Bamenda but by 1949, the Divisions had rose to six with plantations occupying particularly the Victoria and Kumba Divisions. This geographical location of study area situated the plantation sites. For the Coastal plantations, we had the Idenau plantation that concentrated on oil palm production, the Tiko plantation on rubber production and the Tole estate which had as main crop tea. For the Western grassfields, we had the Ndu tea estate. Of note was the fact that these plantations employed both male and female labourers to take part in the production process of the various cash crops. The coastal plantation area is located at the point where the long Coast of West Africa turns sharply Southwards towards the Congo and Cape of good hope, and lies between 4° and roughly 7°

⁷⁸¹ Whyte M. k., *The Status of Women in Pre-Industrial Societies*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1978, P.3

⁷⁸² Rudin, *Germans in Cameroon*, p.321.

North latitude, and between 8° and 11° East longitude. Planting different cash crops like oil palm, tea and rubber which were the specific crops under study, the region developed drastically in terms of human and material resources.

Two broad cultures were distinguished under the region of study. The grassfields cultures and the forest cultures. The values, mores, et cetera, of these cultures were important in determining and evaluating and contributions which each made in the economic development of the territory especially in the area of labour supply in the plantations. The plantation areas under study were never a densely populated area. It was only after the First World War in Cameroon which ended in the territory on the 17th of February 1916 that the population could be counted at around 500,000⁷⁸³.

Land was the most important factor and element needed for plantation agriculture. Without the land, there could be no plantation and consequently the men and women to provide the labour force. An agricultural land scape was a culturally harmonised land scape. The cultures of various areas were transcribed to the land to form definite patterns which reflected the environmental conditions of that culture. Farming patterns differed and every farming locality in the world had its own appearance. In some areas, mounds were used. In others, ridges, and in some beds and terraces. This was due to the factors that made up an agricultural land scape such as farm size, field patterns, field boundaries, building material and farm house styles⁷⁸⁴.

Plantation portrayed a very aggressive major form of European intervention in the tropics. It transformed vast areas and introduced techniques and new plants. However, instead of causing the settlement of many Europeans, plantations created human situations which strongly influenced the political and economic situations⁷⁸⁵.

Men and women had distinct roles with regards to the farming systems. Gender differences in rural farming households varied widely across cultures but certain features were common. Women turned to concentrate their agricultural activities around the homestead, primarily because of their domestic and reproductive roles. They played a critical role in food production. There was a lot of division of roes because certain activities were regarded as male activities and others as female activities. The role and responsibility of men and women were differentiated to a large extent in the society.

⁷⁸³ Epale, *Plantation and Development in West Cameroon* p.13.

⁷⁸⁴ Neba Martin, *Advanced Integrated Human Geography*, p.379.

⁷⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

In this enquiry, an attempt was made to examine gender considerations in plantation economy in the Cameroons with keen interest on how the economy of the Cameroons was modernised, thanks to the introduction of large plantations based on capitalist methods of production, and how through the forces of world events, the capitalist nature of these plantations was altered, resulting in the fusion of the previously individually owned and operated plantations in to a giant state owed corporation.

The Germans had concentrated on the use of force labour but with the British take over, they concentrated on voluntary labour but it was found that the supply of labour from local sources was inadequate and so a large number of workers had to be imported from the hinterlands. This in turn caused many Bakweri indigenes to drift off to the new plantation settlements that were found mostly along the coastal villages⁷⁸⁶. It was in view of this new need of men and women to work as labourers in the plantations that Konings stipulates that, the Tole estate created in 1954 was the “first estate to recruit predominantly female labourers”. Although female employment was no new phenomenon, estate work had remained virtually a male preserve. Management in this estate however preferred female labour to male labour⁷⁸⁷. The C.D.C management promoted the recruitment of a female labour force with the hope of addressing long standing problems.

The first was that, there was the constant shortage of male labour especially in some vital but arduous tasks like weeding. There was equally a fluctuation in the supply of labour and in an attempt to complete the process of labour stabilisation; it was assumed that the male labourers would be encouraged to extend their stay on the plantation if their wives were incorporated in the labour process⁷⁸⁸. Kaberry postulates that one of the female labourers told her that, “a woman is an important thing, a man is a worthless thing, indeed, because a woman gives birth to the people of the country, what work can a man do? A woman bears the child, then takes the hoe, goes to the field and is working there; she feeds the child. A man only buys palm oil, men only build houses”⁷⁸⁹.

The politics of migrant labourers to the plantations could not be under estimated as these labourers were recruited in their numbers from the Bamenda grassfields area to come and work

⁷⁸⁶ T.E.M. Robert, and Robin, P., *A History of the Cameroon: New Edition*, England, Longman Group, 1974, p.72.

⁷⁸⁷ Konings, *Gender and Class*, p.27.

⁷⁸⁸ Akara, “Plantation Agriculture in the Former British Southern Cameroon”, p.41.

⁷⁸⁹ Kaberry, *Women of the Grassfield*, p.150.

in the newly opened plantations along the coast of Cameroon⁷⁹⁰. Migrant labourers helped to create the new economy but conditions of work were generally very poor and this led to a high mortality rate⁷⁹¹. Most of the labourers came down from the high, healthy lands of the grassfields to labour in the humid, malarial lands near the coast, where even the diet was unfamiliar. Many died and others arrived exhausted. Epidemics flourished in crowded and insanitary quarters amongst ill-nourished men.

Pertinent issues to note on the organization of work were the fact that, there was gender disparity seen in the task given to men and women in the palm production process. Our investigations revealed that, the plantation officials particularly preferred that women labourers should work in the palm nurseries because this aspect needed a lot of care and patience. They also preferred that male labourers should be climbers because the job was risky for women. There was therefore gender division of role in proportion of what each gender could do best but more of “smaller” jobs like weeding, gathering and picking were mostly reserved for female labourers because they were generally considered docile.

The organization of work in the tea estates of Tole and Ndu was equally of prime importance and was different. There were field workers, factory workers and the administrative staff. The work of the field workers ended with tea harvesting which was usually done mostly by the women. However, of note was the fact that one of the estate, the Tole estate started to employ a predominantly female labour force while the other, the Ndu estate started to employ a predominantly male labour force but by the 1970s, most of the pluckers in the field were female labourers⁷⁹².

The normal working week for all employees was 45 hours made up of five days of 8 hours and one of 5 hours. These hours applied to all day workers but shift workers and such personnel as motor drivers, railway traffic workers and watch men who normally work at different hours from the majority were subject to different and special conditions, for instance, in the case of watch men, the daily rate of pay was calculated to take account of the very long hours worked and no overtime was granted for a normal duty which was 12 hours per day. Rubber tappers who were normally expected to work a seven-day week were nevertheless paid as ordinary day workers but received overtime at times. Statutory public holidays were usually normal work

⁷⁹⁰ Adig, “The Politics of Colonial Labour in the Bamenda Grassfield and its Implications: 1889-2000”, p.56.

⁷⁹¹ NAB, File Qb/1/1930/N° 20, Camp and Statistics, 1930, p.8.

⁷⁹² File: MTIS/DHSI/NK/17, Ndu Tea Estate General Correspondence, Speech of the Fon of Ndu on the Occasion of the Workers Welcome Ceremony, 6th Of April 1977, p.3.

free days and employees got a day's pay for any public holiday which was not worked. Worked done outside normal working hours was paid for an overtime rate for hours actually worked⁷⁹³.

Wages for grades of labour and junior staff was paid monthly and in cash within a few days after the end of the month. The usual system of payment in the plantations was for labourers to line up in front of a pay table and to be paid by gangs in the presence of their headmen and overseer by the Senior Service or intermediate service officer in charge of the section. In the larger sections, names were usually called out by the wages clerk; the money counted by the paying officer and handed to the overseer of the section who in turn handed it to the labourer. The reason for this procedure was that, as the overseer knew his labourers, impersonation was made more difficult on pay days. It was also aimed at increasing the prestige of the overseer amongst the labourers. The management allowed an advance of wages already earned to be drawn by all men who went in on a given day between about the 15th to the 20th of a month. Our investigations revealed that, this system of lining up in gangs was still a practice in plantation agriculture in the Cameroons even up to the year 2002 and beyond⁷⁹⁴.

The labour policies with keen interest on the employment of male and female labourers were examined. The genesis, development, problems, failures, impact and successes of these plantation labourers over time were minutely examined and an analysis undertaken of the contributions they made to the transformation of the structure of first of all these plantations, their individual families and the communities of the Cameroons at large. The labour force of these plantations was generally male dominated from the beginning given that capitalist economy especially in the plantation sector was viewed as a male issue in the world at large. This view was never going to be different when plantation agriculture was introduced in the Cameroons. The labour force continued to witness male domination but soon rather started witnessing male chauvinism when female labourers became part of the plantation economy. This new class of labourers were generally considered subservient, docile and weak. The type of job assigned to them was generally considered as "mean jobs" especially by management who generally considered employing this new class of labourers simply because of the shortage of labour in the plantations. A reasonable number of these labourers were employed but the so called "mean" jobs were peculiar because special skills were needed to perfume this task and such skills could only be provided by female labourers given that their traditional gender roles of house keepers, bread winners through subsistence agriculture and custodians of the family

⁷⁹³ Ardener E., et al, *Plantation and Village in the Cameroons*, p.20.

⁷⁹⁴ Ngalla, August 13th 2014.

had offered them a lot of opportunities to be trained in managerial aspects especially of human and material resources.

Only female labourers had nimble fingers to pluck tea that led to high quality tea, only female labourers could be patient to work in the nursery farms of the oil palm plantations and to pick the nuts which led to high quality oil. Mostly female labourers could withstand the smell coming from the rubber collected and so most of these female labourers were employed as gatherers, a job dreaded by the male folk but then considered as an unskilled job. This labour task in these plantations offered an opportunity for the female labourers to exercise their talents though the labourers who felt in this class of jobs were the lowest paid in the plantations and the majority of women were seen in this section of plantation agriculture as field workers.

Male labourers were the majority in these plantations but there was the general tendency for these male labourers to occupy mostly the managerial positions of the plantations. There was generally a constant resistance and opposition to female labourers by the male labourers which sometimes led to strike actions in the plantations but this did not solve the numerous plantation problems. There were therefore gender disparities in terms of job description, remuneration and task labour policies which naturally led to gender division of roles in plantation labour in the Cameroons. There were particular jobs for male and particular jobs for female but the ultimate aim of management was to reach the peak of profits and to advance the production process of these plantations.

An interesting perspective developed during the study however left much to be desired when one sort to find out if developing the vast tracts of land which the Germans acquired from the natives, through the development path of guided peasant agricultural production, would have been more beneficial in stimulating the overall growth of the territory's economy than had been possible under the system of modern capitalistic agrarian production. One may only puzzle with this question but the investigation gave a lot of revelations as to the role played by these plantations to accelerate the pace of development in the territory and great potential for igniting further development and diffusing its impulses to other sectors of the economy of the region. If development through the plantation system could be vindicated as the more effective of the two alternative development paths, then it would be incumbent upon the country to ensure that, men and women should work in partnership in plantation economy and methods of operation adopted in the plantation sector of the economy should be consistent not only with the objective of profit maximisation but also with the nation's social and economic imperatives. Properly run, and with equal opportunities for both male and female labourers, one can expect these

plantations to be the most effective instrument for the realisation of the noble objectives of the Green Revolution.

There is need for progressive-minded men to create space for women and they should be building coalitions with women. With a nation lock Cameroon with diverse ethnic groups, it is incumbent on leadership to provide a sustainable environment for democracy to thrive⁷⁹⁵.

Another vital perspective developed from this study was the soul searching question on investigating the leadership role of female labourers in plantation economy. The constant and persistence opposition to this class of labourers as revealed by our investigation pushed these female labourers to fight for their rights in the plantation economy. They had tried to no avail that management should look in to their plights. These new class of labourers were therefore faced with the realities seen in the fact that, they were the only one who could solve their problems. They conjugated in groups in the various plantations and developed resistance movement of which they were the leaders. Their success in these endeavours and strike actions seen in management response to the plights of female plantation workers vividly brought out the leadership qualities of these labourers. Their style of leadership could be an area of interest to research on, and such qualities promoted to encourage the female folk to take up leadership positions in the capitalist world and in other sectors of an economic system.

Considering the results and significance of this study, the vital elements that were underlined were revealed in the fact that Gender considerations in plantation labour saw men and women capable of working as partners in the economic process as this could increase yield in the labour process. There is particular task labour suited for men and others for women. This study has therefore helped both men and women to be aware of the various opportunities placed at their disposal in the production process.

Another significance of the study lies in the fact that, the study has brought out the history of disparities in job description in the labour process in the Cameroons with a view of underlining the impact of division of roles and specialization in the production process and the development of the Cameroons and the world at large.

The importance of the study on gender considerations during the British Rule was equally justified by the fact that, the gap in gender disparities in plantation agriculture which was a long established disparity from colonial Cameroon will be bridged as the close examination of gender related issues will reconcile men and women working in the labour process in terms of

⁷⁹⁵ Mokun Njouny, *The Cameroon of Tomorrow*, Douala, Veritas 2013, p.83.

division of labour in plantation agriculture and this will lead to greater economic achievements in the capitalist world and in the global space.

Moreover, the study on Gender considerations in the labour process during the British Rule will ease and add reading on gender related issues with an aim of investigating the impact of men and women cooperating and working as partners in the production process which ties very much with the worldwide economic progress that postulates cooperation as a means of achieving greater success.

Addressing gender disparities in plantation agriculture is essentially to achieve sustainability in agriculture. A high level of inequalities in the agricultural sector makes it harder to increase productivity and reduce poverty and hunger which is Sustainable Development Goal 2(SDG2), which states that there should be food security and improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture by 2030. Countries where incomes are highly unequal have average lower levels of land productivity and are more prone to food insecurity. Achieving agricultural sustainability therefore depends on gender equality in the plantation agricultural sector.

Women have often faced the difficulty of access to landownership, extension services and finance. The way forward seems to be the need to strengthen land tenure rights amongst poor rural farmers. This element is critical to addressing the first layer of inequality. If a woman cannot own land, she cannot be in charge of her own livelihood or destiny. Strategic investment in public goods and projects that benefits marginalized populations like education and health services would greatly give hope and this forms a pertinent strategy of development and poverty alleviation.



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APPENDIX 1: DATA ACQUISITION QUESTIONNAIRE

THE UNIVERSITY OF YAOUNDE I

**POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL FOR
SOCIAL, HUMAN AND EDUCATIONAL
SCIENCES**

**DOCTORAL RESEARCH UNIT FOR
SOCIAL AND HUMAN SCIENCES**



UNIVERSITÉ DE YAOUNDÉ I

***CENTRE DE RECHERCHE ET DE
FORMATION DOCTORALE EN SCIENCES
HUMAINES, SOCIALES ET EDUCATIVES***

***UNITÉ DE RECHERCHE ET DE LA
FORMATION DOCTORALE EN SCIENCES
HUMAINES ET SOCIALES***

**Research Topic: GENDER CONSIDERATIONS IN PLANTATION AGRICULTURE
IN THE FORMER BRITISH SOUTHERN CAMEROONS 1916-2002.**

SECTION A

This section covers type of task labour, sources of labour, labour conditions and employment measures of male and female labourers in the plantations

1. Name _____
2. Age _____
3. Gender _____
4. Occupation _____
5. Place _____
6. Date _____
7. Marital Status _____
8. Level of Education _____
9. Number of Children _____
10. Place of Origin _____
11. longevity in Service in Ndu Tea Estate _____
12. Longevity in service in the Tole Estate _____
13. Longevity in service in the Idenau plantation _____
14. Longevity in service in the Tiko rubber plantation _____

15. Reasons for joining the plantation (Ndu, Tole, Tiko or Idenau) _____

16. When did the plantation start to employ male labourers? _____

17. When did the plantation start to employ female labourers? _____

18. Where were non-indigenes employed to work in the plantations? _____

19. a. If yes, why _____
b. If no, why _____

20. What was the fulfillment for employment in the plantation? _____

21. What was the nature of work offered to men? _____
22. What was the nature of work offered to women? _____

23. Why did the plantation start to employ only male labourers? _____

24. When did the plantation start to employ female labourers? _____

25. List the types of jobs undertaken by most of the female labourers. _____

26. List the type of jobs undertaken by most of the male labourers. _____

27. What conditions were taken to employ labourers? _____

SECTION B

This section covers aspects of gender, disparities in job description, wages and administrative issues in the plantations

28. What proportion of men were administrators? _____

29. What proportion of women were administrators _____

30. How many men and women worked as technicians? _____

31. How many men and women worked as pluckers? _____

32. How many men and women did gathering of nuts in the palm bushes? _____

33. How many men and women tapped rubber? _____

34. How many men and women worked in the processing units of the plantations? _____

35. Were there more or less men or women working in some particular sectors? _____

36. Were there any disparities in job description? _____

37. If yes, what were the reasons? _____

38. If no, what were the reasons _____

39. Were there more men or women in the processing unit? _____

40. What is the most difficult stage of the processing? _____

41. Where there more men or women in the most difficult stage? _____

42. Was there discrimination in job description? _____

43. Was the health care unit run by men or women _____

44. What were the reasons for disparities in this section? _____

45. Was the plantation having a Credit Union? _____

46. What was the composition of the Credit Union _____

47. What were the recreational facilities? _____

SECTION C

This section is based on labour resistance and strike actions, the problems faced by the labourers in plantations and the impact of gender in the socio-economic development of the indigenes, the society and the plantations.

48. Were there strikes in the plantations? _____

49. Which gender dominated the strike actions? _____

50. What were the major reasons for strike actions? _____

51. What was management response to the strikes? _____

52. What was the impact of male labourers in the plantations? _____

53. What was the impact of female labourers in the plantations? _____

54. Was there a development of an educational centre as a result of the plantation? _____

55. Was there an urban landscape _____

56. How did the men and women contribute to the development of the plantation? _____

57. What was their effect on the society? _____

58. What were the changes in the men and women who worked in the plantations? _____

59. What problems were faced by female labourers? _____

60. What problems were faced by male labourers? _____

61. What were the attempted solutions to female labour problems? _____

62. What were the attempted solutions to male labour problems? _____

APPENDIX 2: AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN THE NORTH WEST PROVINCE OF CAMEROON

REPUBLIQUE UNIE DU CAMEROUN
 P. - Travail - Patrie
 MINISTRE DE L'AGRICULTURE
 DIRECTION DE L'AGRICULTURE

NW/QC/a-1976/11 B/c

UNITED REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
 Peace - Work - Fatherland



REPORT OF TOUR

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN
 THE NORTH WEST PROVINCE OF CAMEROON

J.N. GABUIN

OCTOBER 1976

— 10 —

Exchangeable Cations (Mg. equiv/100 gms.)			
Calcium.	0.58	0.24	0.23
Magnesium.	0.40	0.16	0.11
Potassium.	0.17	0.02	0.05
Sodium.	0.05	0.01	0.01
Total exchangeable Bases.	1.21	0.43	0.40
Base exchange capacity.	29.8	17.7	14.4
% Base Saturation.	4.4	2.6	2.8

SABGA (BASALT)

Depth	3"	14"	40"
Clay.	28	50	61
Silt (International)	16	20	24
Silt (American)	20	22	26
Loss on Ignition.	24.3	20.2	20.3
Organic Carbon (a)	5.2	1.9	1.3
pH in Water	5.1	5.2	5.4
pH in M/100 Ca Cl ₂	4.6	4.6	4.95
Exchangeable Cations.			
Calcium	0.52	0.22	0.24
Magnesium	0.10	0.07	0.37
Potassium	0.03	0.04	0.07
Sodium	0.01	less than	0.01
		0.01	
Total Exchangeable Bases	0.67	0.34	0.69
Base exchange Capacity	26.8	12.5	11.5
% Base Saturation.	2.6	2.8	6.2

OKU (TRACHYTE)

Depth	6"	18"	42"
Clay	10	31	28
Silt (International)	20	31	20
Silt (American)	25	39	28
Loss on Ignition	23.7	13.3	11.0
Organic Carbon (a)	7.6	1.3	0.5
pH in Water	6.2 (e)	5.7	5.5
pH in M/100 Ca Cl ₂	5.6	5.3	4.8
Exchangeable Cations.			
Calcium	0.69	1.06	0.56
Magnesium	1.28	0.78	0.21
Potassium	0.13	0.19	0.05
Sodium	0.04	0.05	0.02
Total exchangeable bases.	2.10	2.08	0.84
Base exchange Capacity.	41.8	23.8	18.5
% Base Saturation.	5.4	9.3	4.8

NTEM (ALLUVIUM)

Depth	4"	16"	36"
Clay	26	25	59
Silt (International)	19	9	20
Silt (American)	28	23	24
Loss on Ignition	7.7	5.8	9.8
Organic Carbon (a)	1.6 (b)	0.3	0.3
pH in Water	5.3	5.3	5.9 (c)

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5. INVESTMENTS:

Investment figures for fixed assets from 1957 to 1972 were reported in 1973 (GABUIN) but as mentioned earlier, the figures after 1972 could not be obtained because of the present strike.

SUMMARY INVESTMENTS FROM 1957 - 1972

	<u>F CFA</u>
Plantation	125.935.389
Buildings	50.021.843
Plant/Machinery	66.753.045
Vehicles	30.619.564

TOTAL ; ; .	<u>273.329.841</u>

6. PROGRAMME OF DEVELOPMENT:

YEAR	:	AREA PLANTED (ha).
1958	:	141
1959	:	139
1960	:	118
1961	:	16
1971	:	12
1972	:	4
1973	:	68
1973 - 75	:	102
TOTAL	:	600

Source: J.N. GABUIN: Report of tour 1973 table 2, page 3.

In addition to tea, 600 ha. (1500 ac.) of forest plantation were programmed, eucalyptus for fuel and acacia for extraction of tanning substances. Firewood is about one-tenth of diesel costs.

.../...

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9. OTHER INFORMATION:

Climate: Excellent climate with well distributed rainfall and no severe dry season. The plantation has a life of over 150 years.

Soil: Highly humic, good aeration, pH 5 - 5.5 adequate for tea and roots penetrate deeper than normal. Soil does not need sulphate of Ammonia but Calcium Ammonium Nitrate (C.A.N.) fertilizer.

Pests and diseases: Virtually none compared to other countries where about 35 frs./kg. of tea is used to combat pests and diseases.

Labour force: Engages male workers unlike Tole Tea where women are also employed. Workers' wives grow food crops on estate land and earn additional money for the family.

10. P R O B L E M S:

Some of the major problems critically affecting Ndu Tea Estate are:

- Financial
- Marketing
- Production input costs
- Managerial
- Labour agitations
- Evacuation costs

Financial Problems: Ndu Tea Estate is facing a financial collapse because of lack of internal support. Present exchange rates make it difficult for shareholders to transfer money to Cameroon, for example,

1960	£1	=	700 francs CFA	and wages	=	95F.
1975	£1	=	505	"	"	= 450F.
1976	£1	=	420	"	"	= 550F.

B. Suggestions:

If the import duty on tea (94%) in Tchad were lifted, a warehouse could be set up there and tea sold directly instead of going through middle men and smugglers.

Mr. R.N. KAPUR, the estate proprietor, was expected in Cameroon on 11th October to hold discussions on the future of the tea Estate. It would appear that the share holders had already decided to sell the plantation for 450 million francs. There are a number of open suggestions to make. Government may have to act fast to negotiate a take over and amalgamate with Tole Tea where some experience has been acquired. Some 100 million francs are needed for immediate investments and another 15 million francs to pay workers. Liabilities of about 150 million francs may be deferred for now. This approach may be the best line to take to control an already expensive situation and government action would be in the best interest of development.

In India, Kenya, Ceylon, Mauritius etc. small holder schemes under a co-operative system on family basis of 6-8 ha. are popular. It is premature to make such a recommendation because of the present problems. Such questions as the market, further investments, organisation, membership obligations etc. would have to be resolved first.

The Ndu Tea Manager made other suggestions including subsidies on fertilizers and plywood used for packing, free duty on high speed diesel which costs 33 million francs/year from Nkongsonba./.-

Source: NAB, file NW/QC/a1976/1/BK, Agricultural Development projects in the North West Province of Cameroon, October 1976.

APPENDIX 3: COMPLAINTS OF BAMENDA LABOURERES AGAINST MANAGERS, EKONA-RE

COPY.

No. 763/1/1918. A.

Resident,

Y. u. e. u.

Cameroons Provi.

6th July 1918.

Sir,

I have the honour to enclose herewith a copy of the statements made by some of the labourers who complained to me as to the treatment they had received on the ~~XXXX~~ Plantation at the hands of the Manager in charge and Overseer.

2. I would be glad to have from you in due course a copy of the statement of the Manager and Overseer concerned

I have the honour to be,

S i r,

Your obedient servant,

(sd) P. V. Young.

R e s i d e n c e

Cameroons Province.

The SUPERVISOR OF PLANTATIONS,

S O T A.

COPY.

Statements given by the following Bamenda Plantation Labourers about their ill-treatment received from certain Plantation Employes on Ekona Plantation.

- 1) Tonga a Native of Bali-Kumbat (Bamenda Division) states :

I am a headman on the Ekona Plantation. About 4 weeks ago arrived from Bamenda to Buea, and was sent together with 113 people including headmen and labourers by the Resident for work on Ekona Plantation. One week after our arrival on the above Plantation 4 other headmen by name Sama of Bali-Kumbat (Bamenda Division), Lea of Bali-Gason (Bamenda Division), Sama of Bali-Ga (Bamenda Division) and Tsa of Babadju (Bamenda Division) and myself were reported by a certain Overseer or Clerk whose name is unknown to me to the Manager for laziness. Without hearing us the Manager put us down gave four of us 25 lashes each and Sama 15 lashes. After this I have been whipped once by the above mentioned Overseer I have also been told by several people of my Gang this Overseer said to them that not all of us will return to our Country i.e. some of us will have to lose their lives on the Plantation by flogging before the completion of their contracts. This is the cause of my running away from the Plantation as to complain myself to the Resident.

- 2). Sama a native of Bali-Kumbat, a country man to (1) states :-

I am sub-headman of Tonga (1) on the Ekona Plantation. I was sent there together with Tonga and other labourers for work about 4 weeks ago. About one week after our arrival on the Plantation I was reported with other 4 Headmen by a certain Overseer or Clerk (name unknown) to the Manager, and latter ordered a certain man to give me 15 lashes; this was done in his presence. I have also been whipped once by the Overseer in question. I know this man personally and can identify him.

- 3). Lea of Bali-Gason (Bamenda Division) states :-

I am Headman on the Ekona Plantation. I was sent there by the Resident about 4 weeks ago. About one week after arrival on this

- 2 -

this Plantation I was reported together with other ~~headmen~~ headmen named above to the Manager and he ordered our flogging, and I was given 25 lashes. After this I have been caned yesterday by a certain Headman called Ngango on my body and have received some wounds by this opportunity (this man has one slight wound on his right cheek). My people have been always caned by this headman (Ngango). I ran away from the Plantation owing to this ill-treatment as to complain myself to the Resident.

4). Tisey, labourer on the Ekona Plantation states :-

I am a native of Bali-Kumbat (Bamenda Division) and working under headman Tonga on the above named Plantation. I have been sent to this Plantation by the Resident about 4 weeks ago. From that time up to date we have been flogged always by a certain clerk or Overseer (his name unknown to me) and a headman called Ngango of this Plantation who supervising us, I have been caned once by the Overseer and the Headman Ngango. I have heard both the Overseer and the Headman Ngango several times saying to us that some of us will not see their contries again; they will flog us so long until some lose their lives before the completion of our contracts. Many of us have reported sick to this Overseer and asked him to be sent to the Hospital for Medical Attendance, he is always refusing and using these words that he is also sick himself and has never taken any medicine. On some occasions he use to cane such people. The mostly part of us have been caned this morning again by the headman Ngango this is the cause of our running away from there to complain ourselves to the Resident.

5). Lase, labourer on the Ekona Plantation states :-

I am a native of Bali-Kumbat and working on the above named Plantation under headman Tonga. We were sent to this Plantation about 4 weeks ago. Since our arrival there we have been several times flogged by the Overseer whose name is unknown to me and a certain headman Ngango by name when working (whether you are idle or not). The Overseer has once put myself down and gave me 5 lashes on my bottom. Also the headman Ngango caned me once on my body by which

- 3 -

which opportunity I have been wounded (this man ~~has~~ ^{has} wounds each one on the upper part of his left and ~~right~~ ^{right} hand which are about to heal to scar)* I have seen one day ~~that~~ ^{that} on the report of the Overseer in question my headman and 4 others have been give ~~to~~ ^{to} tions in the presence of our Manager.

- 6). Wonyem a native of Bali-Kumbat (Bamenda Division) states :-
I am a labourer on the Ekona Plantation and was sent there with other Bamenda labourers about 4 weeks ago, and working under headman Tonga. The mostly part of us have been on several occasions caned by a certain Overseer whose name is unknown to me and a headman called Ngango. Latter has caned myself once since my working on this Plantation. My headman and 4 others have been flogged once 25 lashes each on their bottoms in the presence of our Manager after having been reported by the Overseer in question to this European. Headman Ngango began to cane some of us this morning again so we came to complain ourselves to the Resident. Both the Overseer and the Headman Ngango always saying to us that in German time they use to flog many labourers working on the Plantations and by doing so several people had lost their lives. They will also treat us in the same way so that many of us will die here with flog, and will not see their countries again.

Taken by me at BUMA this 18th day of June 1918.

(sd) K. B. BEKWE.

Note :- 3 Headmen and 48 labourers appeared.
19 of these ~~labourers~~ men have slight wounds and scars from the flogging given to them by the before mentioned Overseer and Headman Ngango.

Certified true copy.

6/7/18.
(sd) N. A. GOBBI.

Source: NAB, File Qd/a/1959, Complaints of Bamenda Labourers against Managers, Ekona-Re, 1959.

APPENDIX 4: REPORT FOR THE SUITABILITY OF CROP CULTIVATION BY EDEN.

Archives No. OC/g 1957/2

South West Provincial Archives — Buea

FILE No. Department of Origin

DATE REGISTERED 1957.	
SUBJECT Report on the suitability for Cultivation of Tea of Lands in Bamenda Area Area, Southern Cameroons by Eden & Sc F.R.I.C 1957.	SUBSEQUENT FILES
LIST OF ENCLOSURES IN THIS FILE (Entries to be continued on third page of cover if necessary)	
PREVIOUS FILES	MINUTES OR INSTRUCTIONS

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Southern Cameroons Production Development Board

**Report On The Suitability For The Cultivation Of Tea Of
Lands In The Bamenda Area,
Southern Cameroons**

BY

T. EDEN. D.Sc. F.R.I.C.

**Published by the Southern Cameroons
Production Development Board, Buea
Cameroons Under United Kingdom Administration.**

**Printed in the Southern Cameroons
by
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REPORT ON THE SUITABILITY FOR THE CULTIVATION OF TEA OF LANDS IN THE BAMENDA AREA, SOUTHERN CAMEROONS

T. EDEN. D.Sc., F.R.I.C.

(1) INTRODUCTION.

I was invited in June 1956 by the Production Development Board, Southern Cameroons, to visit the Territory in order to undertake a reconnaissance of the highlands of Bamenda, the object of which was to estimate the possibilities of successful tea cultivation in that area.

I arrived in Lagos on November 22nd 1956, and after preliminary consultations with the Federal Ministry of Trade and Industry, I proceeded to the Southern Cameroons. In Buea I discussed with the Chairman of the Production Development Board and the Principal Agricultural Officer the detailed terms of reference of my mission. They were to report on the agricultural potentialities for tea culture of the undeveloped lands of the highlands and to indicate which areas, if any, appeared particularly suited to the needs of the tea crop.

I spent from November 29th to December 16th in the highlands; details of my itinerary are provided in Appendix I.

The amount of recorded information relating to the geology, soils and climatic conditions of the area is scanty. As regards soil conditions it is non-existent. The absence of any volume of representative data and the time available for the tour have made it impossible to produce a report that could justifiably be called a survey. This report is in fact a reconnaissance with the inevitable limitations of such undertakings. A limited amount of precise data about the potential fertility of the soils concerned has been obtained. These, coupled with the observations made during the tour, have been correlated and compared with the more complete information on conditions suitable for tea in the producing areas of Ceylon and East Africa of which I have experience. These comparisons form the basis of the views I have expressed on the suitability or otherwise of the various regions I have visited.

(2) THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE TEA CROP

Before attempting an assessment of the potentialities of the area it is necessary to consider the nature of the tea crop and the known requirements for its successful establishment.

(a) Climate.

Tea grows to the best advantage in humid conditions at moderate temperatures. These are the circumstances prevailing in the Albizzia forests north of the Himalayan mountains which as far as can be surmised are the original home of the species *Camellia sinensis*. (1) A high incidence of sunshine is not of pre-eminent importance as tea naturally grows under forest shade. There is general agreement that rainfalls below 45-50 inches per annum are marginal, particularly in equatorial regions where low rainfall is associated with long periods of drought. Above the stated marginal value the rainfall range is wide, always provided that high rainfall is not accompanied by low soil and air temperatures. Frost is inimical to good growth, and prolonged cold whether causes a winter resting period. Temperatures in excess of 90 degrees generally indicate the prevalence of drought conditions. According to the circumstances of latitude and elevation rainfalls between 70 and 150 inches will generally produce good cropping conditions.

(b) Soils.

Unlike most cultivated crops tea will only thrive on soils that are quite distinctly acid. In the wet tropics the high rainfall and temperature facilitate the loss by leaching of chemical basic material present in the rocks from which the soils weathered. Consequently soils in the wet tropics are generally acid in their reaction. It follows also that soils sufficiently acid to support good tea are invariably of low fertility as fertility is reckoned in regions of temperate agriculture. This state of affairs is susceptible to amelioration by the use of fertilizers and green manures, and, in general, economic yields of tea are not obtainable over considerable periods of time on typical tea soils without their help.

Good tea soils must be well-drained and of sufficient depth to give the expanding root system of the perennial plant adequate room for development, both in volume and range. The depth and texture of a soil is therefore more important than its natural nutrient content. Any trace of impeded drainage is unfavourable to good growth because tea roots will not tolerate poor aeration, especially if, as is frequent, this is accompanied by an adverse soil reaction value.

Highly compacted soils are disadvantageous because although tea roots grow rapidly in a good medium they have feeble powers of penetration into unkind subsoils. No consideration of soil depth and texture is adequate unless it extends to a depth of five to six feet, since even if no substantial volume of roots is found at this depth, the nature of the soil in this range may well determine the condition of the soil that lies above it, and on which tea roots are dependent.

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The periodic pruning operations that control the growth of tea confer some benefits to soil fertility. Only about half the amount of foliage growth of a bush is harvested during the intervals between pruning operations: the rest is returned to the soil where it functions as a green manure.

(c) Land Configurations.

Since tea soils are naturally only of very moderate fertility it is essential to conserve that fertility as carefully as possible. In the early stages of tropical plantation enterprise no such precautions were taken and much land has deteriorated severely in consequence. For both ease of working and soil protection tea should be grown only on land where the slopes are moderate and where the configuration in general shows that dependable conservation measures such as contour planting can, and will, be carried out.

(3) THE CLIMATE OF BAMENDA.

Rainfall. Published records over a period sufficiently extensive to provide an adequate picture of the rainfall of the Province are not in existence. They are in fact restricted to stations at Bamenda (29 years), Banso (19 years) and Bambui (10 years). There is however some evidence that the variation of total rainfall per annum is not unduly severe. There is also evidence that years in which rainfall is either below or above average run in sequences, and that the period between peaks is about 13 years. (2)

Table 1 gives a summary of climatic data for Bamenda. In this and subsequent tables the seasonal rain year is recorded from November when the drier period begins to set in (i.e. when zero falls are from time to time encountered). This method of presentation makes for easy display of maxima and minima.

TABLE I

BAMENDA

		Rainfall (Averages 29 years)		Temperature (10 years)			
Month	Inches	Highest	Lowest	50% limits		Mean	Mean
				High	Low	Max.	Min.
Nov.	3.0	10.5	0	4	1	80	60
Dec.	1.0	6.0	0	1	0	81	60
Jan.	1.2	5.0	0	2	0.5	81	60
Feb.	2.1	6.0	0	3	0.5	83	60
Mar.	5.9	11.5	0	8	4	81	62
April	8.1	12.5	4	8.5	6	80	62
May	9.0	19.5	3.5	10	6.5	79	62
June	12.8	21.5	8	15	9.5	77	61
July	16.3	27.5	10	19	12	73	60
Aug.	14.7	24.5	7.5	17	12	73	60
Sept.	19.0	29.5	12	20	14.5	75	60
Oct.	10.5	17.5	4	11.5	8.5	77	61
Total	103.6						

TABLE II

BAMBUI and BANSO RAINFALL.

Month	Bambui		Banso (19 years)	
	Inches (10 years)	Days (6 years)	Inches	Days
Nov.	2.1	6	1.8	7
Dec.	0.5	1	0.3	1
Jan.	0.6	1	0.3	1
Feb.	1.6	5	1.2	6
March	4.2	12	4.1	10
April	7.7	15	5.3	17
May	8.4	20	6.7	21
June	11.1	23	7.2	23
July	14.0	26	10.4	30
August	13.6	26	10.9	30
Sept.	17.7	28	13.0	30
Oct.	12.5	24	9.7	26
Total	94.0	187	70.9	202

Source: N A B, File: QC/G/1957/2. N0 12238, Report on the Suitability on the Cultivation of Tea of lands in the Bamenda Area, Southern Cameroon, 1957.

APPENDIX 5: WORKMEN IN PLANTATION LIST BY DIVISION OF ORIGIN

<p>Archives No. <i>Qd/a/1910</i> 9</p> <p>WEST CAMEROON ARCHIVES</p> <p>Department of Origin <i>German file</i></p> <p>FILE NO. <i>None</i></p> <p>DATE REGISTERED <i>c. 1913</i></p> <p>General 2a</p>		<p>Archives Office, Buea</p> <p>From Br Plantations Dept. files</p> <p>1963</p> <p>West Cameroon</p>
<p>SUBJECT</p> <p><i>Lists of Plantation Workmen</i> <i>by Division of Origin</i> <i>1910-13</i></p>	<p>SUBSEQUENT FILES</p>	
	<p>LIST OF ENCLOSURES IN THIS FILE</p> <p>(Entries to be continued on third page of cover if necessary)</p>	
<p>PREVIOUS FILES</p>	<p>MINUTES OR INSTRUCTIONS</p>	

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Eden	Tabasco	Guaymas	San Alvaro	Kr. L. de	Am. de	Rio del Rey	San Felipe
10							
468	-	442	502	-	7		40
471	-	438	408	-			
548	-	366	536	-			
		52	1071		41		
		52	809		10		
		36	715		28	180	
47	2	106	335	2	249		5
46		97	273	4	236		108
648		106	312		271		12
106		105	361		195		108
			22				
			60			437	
			53			350	
			81			380	
		1	153		4	40	
		1	200		9	42	
			192		10	4	
			176		8	1	
			238		5	5	
			168		30	10	20
	Finca 8		290		9	18	
		4	242		9	36	5
					299		9

APPENDIX 6: REPORT ON THE SUITABILITY ON THE CULTIVATION OF TEA OF LANDS IN THE BAMENDA AREA, SOUTHERN CAMEROON, 1957.

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pH in M/100 Ca Cl ₂	4.4	4.7	5.6
Exchangeable Cations.			
Calcium	0.75	0.73	4.67 (d)
Magnesium	0.25	0.14	1.85 (d)
Potassium	0.05	0.03	0.71
Sodium	0.01	less than 0.01	0.07
Total Exchangeable Bases.	1.05	0.91	7.29
Base exchange Capacity.	14.5	7.6	12.1
% Base Saturation.	7.4	12.4	62.5

EAST AFRICA KERICHO (UNCULTIVATED)

	Depth	0"-3"	6"-9"	18"-24"	36"-48"
Organic Carbon		7.5	3.0	2.0	1.2
pH in Water (5:1)		4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2
Exchangeable Cations.					
Calcium		4.7	0.6	0.1	0.1
Magnesium		3.6	1.7	0.5	0.3
Potassium		0.18	0.07	0.08	0.03
Total Exchangeable Bases.		8.3	2.2	0.5	0.6

KERICHO (TEA)

	Depth	0"-3"	6"-9"	18"-24"	36"-48"
Organic Carbon		5.9	4.2	1.8	1.2
pH in Water (5:1)		4.6	4.4	4.2	4.2
Exchangeable Cations.					
Calcium		4.2	2.0	0.1	0.1
Magnesium		2.3	1.4	0.4	0.3
Potassium		0.08	0.05	0.06	0.05
Total Exchangeable Bases.		6.5	3.7	0.7	0.6

CEYLON KANDAPOLA (WET PATANA)

	Depth	0"-14"	14"-25"	25"-32"
Clay		14.4	32.5	44.8
Silt		22.6	16.7	10.6
Loss on Ignition		25.5	15.3	10.8
Organic Carbon		6.3	3.9	1.2
pH in Water		5.3	5.7	6.0
Exchangeable Calcium		0.27	0.26	0.27
Total Exchangeable Bases.		0.44	0.46	0.42

Notes.

- Indicative of organic matter content. Conversion factor X1.72
- The blackness of the surface soil is not an indication in this instance of high organic matter content.
- Rise of pH in regions subject to impeded drainage.
- Rise in bases: a similar reflection of impeded drainage corroborated by pH values and observation of unoxidised iron salts in the horizon.
- The high pH is almost certainly due to ash contamination due to recent burning.

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The same stagnation in exports was seen in palm oil where the quantity was no higher in 1958 than 1953. All the oil exported comes from plantations and is of first quality. Between 1953 and 1958 the output from C.D.C. estates rose 30% but the increase went into local consumption, and exports did not rise. This pattern of increasing local consumption of oil, and stagnant export tonnages is found in Nigeria as well as the Southern Cameroons. Plantation production is still profitable, but the falling prices in the late 1950's have made it less attractive. Between 1951 and 1953 the Marketing Board was offering £75 a ton; and there was no export tax. From 1956 to 1958 the price after tax was only £50. The C.D.C.'s plans include expansion of oil palms; but they do not expect palm produce to be as buoyant as rubber acreage in the expansion of the next decade.

COCOA

In the plantation sector of the Southern Cameroons, cocoa in 1960 is a negligible crop; but it plays an important part in the peasant cash crops of the forest areas. This peasant dominance is surprising, as cocoa was introduced into the country as plantation crop by the Germans about 1900; and in 1914 they produced over 3,000 tons. To-day output is just over 5,000 tons, 95% of it from native farmers, and only 5% from plantations (300 tons). The C.D.C. has rehabilitated a thousand acres of old German cocoa at Tombel; and Cadbury-Fry have started a new plantation, with some 500 acres now planted. Both report favourably on the trees; both have plans for expansion. With the reduction of banana acreage, the swing to plantation rubber and cocoa may well be fast; for both do well and are profitable at to-day's prices. But the plantation acreage of cocoa is small at the moment and the time taken to come to bearing prolonged, so that even by 1970 cocoa will be a relatively minor plantation crop.

TEA

Tea, like cocoa, is a minor but old-established plantation crop. The C.D.C. inherited a former German estate at Tolé near Buea at 2,000 ft. on the slopes of Mount Cameroon. The tea bushes are now being rehabilitated. The present acreage is small - about 160 acres mature, and 150 immature. It is being built up at the rate of about 150 acres a year to an economic 1,000 acre estate. The climate is a little deficient in sunshine and has rather a long dry-period; but the quality of the tea is very good,

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and the yield from mature bushes expected to average over 1,000 pounds an acre. Tole has also supplied seed in quantity for the new Ndu Estate in the grassland area.

The Ndu estate on the grasslands ring-road is situated in rolling highland at about 6,500 ft. The venture has been in existence only for the past three years. It was started in 1957 by Estates and Agencies Ltd., who have experience in India, Ceylon and E. Africa. They leased 4,000 acres for 99 years by agreement with both central and local authorities, after compensating those affected. By the end of 1959 some 750 acres had been planted; the plan is to consolidate at 1,000 acres before proceeding to 2,000 acres, the likely limit of suitable land on the estate. The growing tea looks good; the factory is being built; and the expectation is a yield of well over 1,000 pounds of premium grade tea per acre. The soil is deep and acid, though thin from years of burning the grass. The climate has good sunshine and drying winds, with rather a long dry season. Transport is difficult so far from coast ports, and spare parts and stores are expensive and slow to arrive. But the road programme should remedy this. The Eden Report on the suitability of the Bamenda area for tea growing suggests that there are plenty of other sites as good as Ndu. Other prospective tea planters are considering the area, and there is a chance of considerable expansion. As mature tea needs one adult worker per acre to maintain it, such large-scale plantations would have a major impact on the economy and society of Bamenda Highlands.

SUMMARY - PLANTATIONS

To sum up prospects on the Plantation Sector: The old staple crop, bananas, is under heavy pressure and acreage is being cut back to the best land. Oil palms are expanding modestly. The best prospects seem to be rubber, tea and cocoa, with rubber the main earner in the near future.

The injection of £3m. of fresh capital into the C.D.C. has given new impetus to expansion. There is also fresh private capital ready to come into enlarging the territory's plantations; but the present period of political uncertainty makes decision difficult. Apart from this, the biggest questions are the usual ones about future world prices for each of the crops and doubts about the level of costs. Wage rates have risen by nearly a half in eight years, and taxation on export crops has increased. But the major

APPENDIX 7: NDU TEA ESTATE

Qc19 (1971/1)

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TRANSLATIONC
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Yaounde, 4th January, 1971

J.1657 04/9 1971/1

No. A 71/SG/PRF

The Minister of State, Secretary General

To: The Resident Representative,
United Nations Development Programme
in Cameroon,
Y A O U N D E.

Dear Resident Representative,

Request for an Expert for the Study of
the Tea Market

Amongst the tea producing countries, Cameroon does at present occupy only a very modest place with an annual production of about a thousand tons of black tea which comes from TOLE (near Buea) and NDU (near Kumbo) plantations which total to 800 ha. of area planted with tea plants. Meanwhile there are certain possibilities, of developing the production of tea, notably on the high plateaux situated here and there on the limits between the Federated States, which offer favourable ecological and human conditions for tea cultivation.

The Government, anxious to improve the tea growing potential of the country, has made an important development programme for the cultivation of this crop which provides for the creation:

- of an industrial plantation of 500 ha. with a factory at DJUTITSA, near Dschang;
- of an industrial plantation of 500 ha. with a factory at ESSOSSONG, near the DOUALA-NKONGSAMBA road;
- of an industrial plantation to which family plantations will be put into partnership, of an area of 500 ha. in the MBOUDA-SANTA Region, on the outskirts of the axis of the BAFUSSAM-BAMENDA road;
- of 180 ha. of supplementary industrial plantation at Ndu.

The putting into effect of this programme will be of a cultivated area of 2500 ha., what will allow the attaining of the production in the neighbourhood of 5000 tons of tea in 1985.

into/

notably/

It will not only be a question of putting/effect this development programme which will quintuple the production of tea in 15 years, without assuring the possibilities of selling such a production. During the past years, about $\frac{2}{3}$ of Cameroon tea was sold on the Cameroon market and especially the Chad market, the remaining $\frac{1}{3}$ being put on the European market, mainly that of Great Britain. Taking into consideration the limited absorption capacity of the local market, the Government desires to diversify the outlets of the national tea production, in aiming/at selling on the West and Central African market which seems to offer more remunerative prices than the traditional exportation European markets.

It is indispensable to study the possibilities of the

JP-J 13/3

.../...

-2-

present and future disposal that this market offers. It would be necessary to determine:

- the present consumption of tea, black and green, the qualities sold, the method of frying and the prices of the different qualities;
- the sources of supply and commercialization circuit;
- the probable evolution of the tea consumption within the 10 years to come.

The Government hasn't at its disposal specialists to do such a study of markets. It would appear that an assistance could be obtained in this domain from the United Nations Conference for Commerce and Development and from GATT.

I should be very grateful if you would kindly confirm whether such a possibility exists so that the Government should, in that case, present an official request to this effect.

May you truly believe, Mr. Resident Representative, in the assurance of my high esteem.

(Sgd.) P. BIYA

TRANS: PMO/JNM/MT

9th March, 1971.

*Original sent to
Rural Development*

E. J. C. 03/3/71

P.A.

TRANSLATIONNo.6352/ER

24th December, 1970.

To: The Minister of State, Secretary
General of the Presidency of the
Republic,
Y a o u n d e.

Application for an Expert for the Study of
the Market for Tea

I have the honour to address to you herewith photocopy of letter No.P.1594/139 of 3rd December, 1970 from the Prime Minister of West Cameroon asking that a request be made to the Permanent Representative of the United Nations in view of an assistance for the inquiry into the market for tea.

This proposal is in agreement with my real concern on this matter. Two plantations are actually functioning in Tole and Ndu. Several development projects on the cultivation of tea are in the course of examination and the question of the marketing shall be raised to us by our financial partners, in particular by the World Bank. I am submitting herewith to your high appreciation a letter on the project addressed to United Nations Representative asking for an expert mission in the framework of the UNCTAD/GATT for the study of the market for the tea produced in Cameroon.

(Sgd.): Charles ONANA AWANA

c.c.

P.M. Buea

P.M. Yaounde

PRO

CDC Bota Victoria

Copy

OFFICIAL TELEGRAM

This is to certify that this telegram is on the urgent service of the West Cameroon Government.

(Sgd.) D.T. Atogho
Franking Officer
15/1/71.

ESTATE MANAGER
ESTATES & AGENCY COMPANY LIMITED,
NDU ESTATE, BAMENDA P.O.

Ref. No. P.358/496 x REF. YOUR PM/1/70 x HIS

EXCELLENCY THE PRIME MINISTER WILL SEE MR.
MOLYNEUX TUESDAY NINETEENTH JANUARY 1971 TEN
A.M.

SECRETARY-GENERAL
PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE.

THE ESTATES & AGENCY COMPANY LIMITED

Our Ref: PM/1/70

Ndu Estate
P.M. Bag Ndu
Bamenda P.O.
West Cameroon
Federal Republic of Cameroon

3rd December, 1970.

The Private Secretary to the
Prime Minister of West Cameroon,
Office of the Prime Minister,
B U E A,

Dear Sir/Madam,

We write to advise you that the Technical Adviser of this Company, Mr. P.S.M. Molyneux, will be in Victoria on Monday, 18th January and on the morning of Tuesday, 19th January, 1971. This gentleman would very much like to have a brief audience of the Prime Minister to introduce himself and answer any questions regarding the activities of this Company which the Prime Minister may care to put to him. Mr. Molyneux will be accompanied by Mr. R. J. Murray, the Estate Manager.

Will you please be kind enough to arrange an appointment for either the 18th or 19th January, 1971, preferably in the morning, and advise us accordingly.

Yours faithfully,

(Sgd. R.J. Murray)
Estate Manager

c.c.

Mr. P.S.M. Molyneux,
Estates & Agency Co. Ltd.,
L O N D O N

MJM/JBS:

Source: NAB, File Qc/g/1971/1, Ndu Tea Estate, 1971.

APPENDIX 8: HALF YEARLY REPORT

Archives No. 776

WEST CAMEROON ARCHIVES

Department of Origin *Plantations Department*

FILE NO. *79/16*

DATE REGISTERED *29 9 16*

General 2a

<p>SUBJECT</p> <p style="font-size: 1.2em; margin-top: 20px;"><i>Half yearly and Annual Reports by Managers of Work done</i></p>	<p>SUBSEQUENT FILES</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">LIST OF ENCLOSURES IN THIS FILE (Entries to be continued on third page of cover if necessary)</p>	
<p>PREVIOUS FILES</p>	<p>MINUTES OR INSTRUCTIONS</p>

THIS FILE IS NOT TO BE RELEASED WITHOUT AUTHORITY

ANNUAL REPORT 192

EKONA ESTATE

April 4th, 1921.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit a Report on the above Estate for year ending December 31st: 1920.

AGEMENT:

Mr. A. J. Findlay who was Manager from the 15th April 1919 proceeded on leave the 14th January 1920 and from that date Mr. F. Williams (East Indian) Assistant Manager has been in charge.

RICAN STAFF:

2. The African staff consists of 1 Head Overseer 6 Section Overseers 2 Assistant Overseers 1 Office clerk 1 Hospital Dresser 2 Fitters 2 Blacksmiths 4 Carpenters and 2 Bricklayers.

3. Mr. J. T. Kenny was Office clerk until the 7th September when he was appointed Chief Warder Buea Prisons, his place being filled by Mr. S. O. Haffner. There were several changes among the Overseers. Johannes Overseer of Boanda was transferred to Meanja and replaced by Overseer Arnold. Overseer Mbaraga of Mamu was transferred to Bimbila and succeeded by Overseer Money. Overseer Arnold of Lysoka was dismissed and succeeded by Overseer Richard. Overseer Aduvi who worked on the Estate for many years died at Victoria Hospital and Overseer Abanda was transferred from the Victoria Farms to fill the vacancy.

4. Speaking generally of the African staff their efficiency is poor and conduct fair.

5.

THE SUPERVISOR OF PLANTATIONS

B U E A.

- 2 -

METEOROLOGICAL RETURNS: 5. Rain fell 160 days in the year, August 19th being the wettest day registering 3.88 inches and August and September the two wettest months registering 24.35 and 17.3 inches respectively. The rainfall during the year was exceptionally heavy 95.81 inches was registered, and increase of 12.63 over that of 1919 and 18.63 over that of 1918. The subjoined table shows the monthly record for the year.

Month	Days	Millimetres	inches	Remarks
January	nil	nil	nil	
February				
March	7	125.4	4.93	
April	13	167.8	6.60	
May	14	136.	5.35	
June	17	180	7.10	
July	26	411.6	16.20	Wettest day 19/8/20. 3.88 ins.
August	31	631.4	24.85	
September	24	432.6	17.3	
October	17	230.2	9.06	
November	8	76.6	3.01	
December	3	36.	1.41	
	160	2428.2	95.81	

AREAS:

6. Approximately 60 acres of new clearing were opened up and prepared for planting local crops. The total cultivated area at the end of the year is approximately 2,850 acres.

LABOUR:

7. The labour force was entirely voluntary and was sufficient for the needs of the Estate as far as dealing with the crop and keeping down heavy growth of weeds. Owing to the lack of trained supervision little could be attempted in the nature of systematic cultivation. The number of labourers which increased from 700 in January to 1200 in December consisted chiefly of Yaundes, Bakoko, Balis, Bakossis together with a fair number of Bayanges and Bakweris. In the rainy

months

- 3 -

months the latter worked very irregularly. The average labourer as a rule does not put in ^a full months work nowadays for the reason that he is not under contract and owing to insufficient supervision is free to do as he likes.

HEALTH:

8. The health of the labourers was good. During the year 284 labourers were admitted into hospital and 1,401 treated as Outpatients for cuts and minor complaints. The total number of deaths was 7.

RATIONS:

9. "Chop" farms consisting of plantains and cocoyams were maintained but during the rainy season the excessive rainfall seriously affected the maturing of plantains and resort had to be made to the purchase of cocoyams from the surrounding villages and the establishment of a market on the Estate, also supplies of plantains were obtained from the Mpundo Estate. The transport of the latter however handicapped the work of transporting wet cacao from field to factory.

CACAO:

10. Three thousand and fifty (3050) bags good and eighty (80) bags black totalling 198 tons 11 cwt 86 lbs were harvested during the year. This is a decrease of 80 tons 26 lbs on the 1919 crop. The decrease is attributable chiefly to the excessive rainfall, the continuous spread of disease mentioned on page 5 of last years report, lack of the chemical manures so largely used by the German planters also the continual absence of systematic cultural treatment. The crop has steadily declined during British occupation as is shewn by the following figures.

1916	456 tons 1 cwt 104 lbs
1917	403 tons 10 cwt 77 lbs
1918	220 tons 4 cwt 104 lbs
1919	278 tons 13 cwt
1920	198 tons 12 cwt 86 lbs

COLA:

11. Cola trees gave an average crop and one hundred and eighty (180) bags 14,400 kgs equal to 14 tons 2 cwt 96 lbs were picked and dried. It should be noted however that the Cola grown on this Estate is not the one used by the Hausas but that commonly

- 4 -

commonly known as "bitter cola" (*Gola acuminata*).

KERNELS:
AND O

12. A small kernel cracking machine purchased locally, was used for cracking the palm nuts collected from the labourers compounds and fifty four (54) bags totalling 4060 kilos were thus obtained. Owing to the slump in the produce market work in this connection was discontinued towards the end of the year. Oil was made for local use on the Plantations and a small quantity was shipped to Duala.

EXPENDITURE:

13. Cost of working the Estate during the year under review was as follows:-

	£	S	D
A. Staff wages	585	16	5
B. Labourers wages	4828	12	5
C.(1) Imported Rations	1898	15	6
(2) Rations Locally obtained (includes cattle)	485	5	-

THE YEARS WORK:

14. The main works which occupied attention was the harvesting, curing and drying of cacao and cola, clearing and planting new areas and general cleaning of the Estate.

A good deal of labour had also to be used in minor sanitary field operations such as the burying of black pods and empty shells. Black pods were far in excess of previous years. Cleaning was done throughout the Estate three times with the exception of the Oil Palm (Banga) farm at Ekona which was only roughly cleaned twice.

15. The new clearings made primarily for the cultivation of local food crops provided a large supply of firewood which was brought in and stacked ready for use during the next Cacao season.

16. Pruning was commenced on the Mamu and Mussaka sections but had to be discontinued as the trees started to blossom and weeding work was then confined to the removal of dead branches, moss growth and parasites (*Loranthus* Sp.).

In September about ten acres were cleared on the Ekona section and planted with corn which was ready for harvesting at the end of the year.

17.

Source: NAB, File Qb/a/1979, Half Yearly Report, 1979.

APPENDIX 9: PLANTATION DEVELOPMENT REPORT ON 1916

Archives No. 1916
3

WEST CAMEROON ARCHIVES

Department of Origin Plantations Department

FILE NO. 6/1916

DATE REGISTERED 3: 6: 1916

General 2a

<p>SUBJECT</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Plantations Department Reports on 1916. (Half yearly Jan. - June) (x14)</p>	<p>SUBSEQUENT FILES.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">LIST OF ENCLOSURES IN THIS FILE (Entries to be continued on third page of cover if necessary)</p>	
<p>PREVIOUS FILES</p>	<p>MINUTES OR INSTRUCTIONS</p>

WEST CAMEROON

THIS FILE IS NOT TO BE RELEASED WITHOUT AUTHORITY

CAMEROONS PLANTATIONS,
VICTORIA, CAMEROONS,
WEST AFRICA.

No. 34/6/17.....

(10)

3rd January 1916

Sir,

I have the honour to request you to furnish at an early date a full and complete report on the Properties under your charge for the period Jan 1st to Dec 31st 1916.

2. The report should give staff changes for the year, crop and labour figures, details of income and expenditure, description of plantation buildings, weather conditions etc etc.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

W
Supervisor of Plantations.

The Manager,

Bibundi, Mokundange, Oechelhausen & Isongo, Debundscha
Moliwe, Mpundo & Meanja, Missellele & Tiko, Ekona,
Molyko, Mukonje, ~~Railway Station~~.

F.E./G.L.A.N.

(5)

PLANTATION DEPARTMENT,
BOTA, VICTORIA,
CAMEROONS.

No.....

22nd June 1916

Sir,

In accordance with instructions contained in your letter under date of April 22nd 1916 I visited and inspected the Bavo-Bonge Plantations in company with Mr Anderson the Manager of the Bel Estates, on May 19th - 21st.

2. The plantations are the property of the Deutsche West.-Afrikanische Handelsgesellschaft and are situated on the Meme river to the west of the Kamerun Mountain - two days overland "trek" from Idensu plantation and about thirty hours by canoe from Rio del Rey.

3. According to the German Colonial Commercial Address Book the Plantations were first established in 1896 and floated as a Limited Company in 1903 with a fully paid up capital of 2,500,000 Marks.

4. The Plantations plans show an area of 533 acres under Cacao & Rubber cultivation distributed as follows:-

BAVO.

Rubber (Funtumia)	57 acres	13,000 trees
Cacao	220 "	77,500 trees

BONGE

Rubber (Funtumia)	45 acres	10,000 trees
Cacao	211 acres	40,000 trees

Buildings

~~Buildings~~ (5) There are only three buildings at Bavo, a small Bungalow, ~~factory~~ and a Bush house for labourers, all

- 2 -

all are badly in need of repair and at present ^{uninhabitable} ~~uninhabitable~~.

(6) The Bonge buildings are of a superior type and also in a better state of preservation, they consist of -

(a) A very fine bungalow, Size about 70' x 45' containing 7 rooms, large verandah, servants quarters, bath room, store & kitchen.

(b) Large two storey concrete building, size approximately 40' x 26', Factory underneath ^{and} European quarters above.

(c) Three Factory stores approximately

(1) 40' x 26'

(2) 26' x 13'

(3) 10' x 10'

(d) Two plantation stores approximate size each 57' x 20', divided by open packing shed of same size.

(e) A new building apparently to be used as a store size about 60' x 26'

(f) Cacao drying house size about 45' x 56'

(g) Cacao ~~fermenting~~ fermenting house size about 40' x 13'

(h) Hospital for labourers size about 45' x 16'

(7) A great deal of the furniture from the Bonge Bungalow was removed to the Government House at Rio del Rey by order of the Political Officer. I also understand that tools, bags and chemical Manures from the Bonge & Bavo Stores were sold by the Political Department at an absurdly low figure - I am informed that cutlasses were disposed of at 2d each while Officers of the same Department at Victoria were paying ~~xxxxxx~~ 6d for similar tools of an inferior quality. Chemical Manures which would not ~~xxxx~~ be very useful to the Plantations Dept: were sold at 1/- per bag.

(3)

PLANTAINS (8) Judging from the number of "Stools" there should have been a very substantial revenue from the sale of Plantain. The Caretaker at Bonge informed me that all Cash received from sales was handed over to the Political Officer at Rio-del-Rey but there does not appear to have been any counterfoiled receipts or Cash Books kept.

CONDITION OF PLANTATION. (9) The Plantations since the British occupation have been under the supervision of the Political Dept: and are in a state rapidly approaching complete ruin. The whole cultivated area is in high bush and only here and there can the Cacao trees be seen. In order to examine the trees and get some idea of crop possibilities for this year I had to employ a gang of natives to cut roads through the inter-grown bush.

(10) I understand that the Political Officer in charge of the District had an arrangement with the local natives whereby they were allowed to "squoot" on the Plantations, do exactly what they liked and in return give over to Government half of whatever of the Cacao crop they felt disposed to gather. The present condition of the Plantations offer a very striking illustration of the ultimate end of the Guianese Plantations should they ever be divided up and handed over to the natives or their general control left in the hands of non-technical and non-professional Government Officers.

(11) I regret that owing to the general condition of the Plantations it was impossible to verify the figures given on the Plans, but allowing for the complete loss of 20% of the trees the Cacao Crop for this year should be 35 to 40 tons providing the work of clearing is ^{undertaken} ~~undertaking~~ at once.

(12) Next year the Crop will in all probability be very much less.

(4)

RENTAL. (12) In accordance with your instructions I have discussed the question of leasing the property to Messrs Woodin & Co. with Mr. Stobart and also with the Resident (Mr. Duff) both of whom are of opinion that a percentage of the Crop is an unsatisfactory arrangement and it is suggested that a fixed monthly rental of L50 would be preferable on the understanding that Messrs Wooding & Co. clear the Plantations, care the trees in a ^{husbandman} ~~husbandman~~-like manner and do not allow any further deterioration of the buildings.

B (14) In view of the very bad condition of the Plantations a percentage of the Crop would undoubtedly be of greater advantage to Messrs Wooding & Co. than a fixed rental, although the latter arrangement would be more favourable and less trouble to Government.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

SUPERVISOR OF PLANTATIONS.

Source: NAB, File Qc/6/1916, : Plantation Development Report on 1916.

APPENDIX 10: THE ECONOMY OF THE SOUTHERN CAMEROON UNDER THE
UNITED KINGDOM

*The economy of the
Southern Cameroons under the
United Kingdom of Great Britain
Cambridge, England 1960*



New Arch Books

THE ECONOMY OF
THE SOUTHERN CAMEROONS

By Dr. K. E. Berrill

TEN SHILLINGS AND SIXPENCE

*Berrill, K. E. The Economy of
Southern Cameroons under the
United Kingdom of Great Britain
United Kingdom of Great Britain
1960*

into the possession of more businesslike 'strangers'. A Commission and legislation on the whole matter are planned for the near future.

MAMFE DIVISION

The discussion of expansion in the forest areas has related mainly to Victoria Division and to South and East Kumba. Little has been said about Mamfe Division, which might almost be called the dead heart of the country, sandwiched as it is between vigorous activity to the north and south. It is the most thinly populated Division (23 per sq. mile - half the average for the country) and contains some of the least advanced areas. Until recently Mamfe town was growing reasonably well as an entrepot centre. Goods came up the Cross River from Calabar in the wet season when the water was high, were unshipped at Mamfe, and transferred to lorries for distribution in Bamenda. Now the roads to Calabar and to Ikom and Enugu are so much improved that little moves by river. Lorries have no need to unload in Mamfe, and this has reduced the stimulus to local expansion. Outside Mamfe town there are a few areas in the Division which are promising, particularly along the line to the East through Bakebe to Pontem, which is very well suited to oil palm cultivation. The Widekum area in the north-east is also a good centre for palm produce. But the general immediate prospects in Mamfe Division are not encouraging and it is perhaps as well that so few people live there, and that it is likely to be even more sparsely populated as people move to more attractive areas.

THE GRASSLANDS

Leaving the forest after Widekum, travelling along the trunk-road to the north-east, we climb onto the grasslands and into a novel economy. It is quite well-populated. Bamenda District in the south has 100 per sq. mile, but this thins out further north in Wum and Nkambe Districts. Plantations are unimportant, and the two which exist have been discussed, (Ndu for tea and Santa for coffee). The two sectors are native farmers and Fulani graziers, and these are considered separately.

Villagers have accepted rules on soil conservation in their farming practices. They have formed Women's Corn Mill Societies; and built up Co-operatives to handle the coffee crop. These developments are inevitably patchy; and have not come without troubles and strains. The extra cultivation of cash crops involves rivalry between women's crops and men's crops. *The increase in farmed acreage, and in the number of Fulani cattle, involve trouble between farmers and graziers. The increase in permanent tree crops and the migration to villages near the roads involves conflict with traditional land-tenure practices. The growing strength of Native Authorities and self-help societies tends to cut across the traditional chiefly authority of the Fons and their quarter-chiefs (Faia). Miss Phyllis Kaberry's research on these matters elucidates the problems very clearly.

It is difficult to measure the changes which have taken place in recent years, as there are no statistics of population, trade in local foodstuffs, and so on. We know most about coffee. This is mainly Arabica, as the Division grows all the Southern Cameroons' Arabica and very little Robusta. In the four years 1954 to 1958 arabica exports rose over five-fold (from 230 to 1,260 tons). The 1959/60 figure is expected to be nearly 2,000 tons. This is the fastest growth of any export crop in the Territory. (Because of the sharp fall in coffee prices, it is less impressive in terms of values). In 1956/7 the Bamenda Co-operative Coffee farmer got 4/- a pound for his Arabica, in 1959/60 he gets about 2/-. But as with cocoa, the fall in the price has yet to affect his interest in the crop.

Arabica coffee was brought into the District from the French Cameroons early in the 1930's, but poor communications and the absence of marketing facilities prevented it making much headway until after the Second World War. The Department of Agriculture then started purchasing it from the farmers, as did the United Africa Company; finally the Co-operatives followed suit. As late as 1954/5, purchases were only 230 tons. By 1955/6 the Co-operatives had overcome their initial difficulties, and were expanding fast. That year there were

12 Societies

with 1,000 members. By 1959 there were 70 societies with 4,000 members; and they built storage barns in villages, and a large hulling and storage mill in Bamenda Town. But competition with commercial buyers for the coffee crop is strong; and Co-operatives handle rather less than half the crop. As usual, the farmers have a continuous need for credit; and, as usual, the Co-operatives find it difficult to supply it. But the movement is still growing well. At present it markets coffee and some palm kernels; but it hopes to expand into local foodstuffs, and to improve the cultivation and the quality of the coffee along the lines suggested by the Coffee Adviser.

Mr. Jervis's comments on Robusta cultivation in the forest areas apply equally to the Arabica of the Highlands. Much of the coffee planted in the early 1950's was planted badly and too closely; it gets little mulching or proper pruning, and suffers from competition with the women's food crops, and so on. Similarly, young trees give encouraging yields for 3 or 4 years, and then the yields get thinner and the beans deteriorate.

But Mr. Jervis feels that the Highland coffee suffers from two further handicaps. The arabica tree has been planted in many unsuitable places, and beans are not of good quality or well processed. Robusta is tougher, needs less good soil, and usually more than making up in yield what it loses on the lower price of the coffee. It will not grow well above a certain height; but Arabica does equally poorly in low humid valleys. Farmers in Bamenda Division have planted almost all arabica, instead of reserving the tree for those areas too high for Robusta. Moreover, it should be a rule that only first quality coffee be exported under the name of Southern Cameroons coffee. At the moment many thin trees produce poor cherries; and quality is not improved by poor processing. Cherries are kept too long before pulping; insufficient running water is available to clean the beans; and the dried beans are not always stored completely dry. The Co-operatives are trying to improve the cultivation, processing, and storage; but the need for more Agricultural extension services to train the farmers is as marked here as elsewhere.

LAND TENURE IN GRASSLANDS

The expanded cultivation of coffee trees, and the movement of strangers from other parts of the Division into villages and towns, have produced land-tenure problems like those in the forest areas, although few strangers come into the Division, and there is as yet little wage labour on native farms.

When a stranger wishes to 'borrow' land to farm or build, he gets permission from the /Fon/ to approach a quarter-chief for the loan of some spare land on which to settle. It may be difficult for him to get permission to plant permanent tree crops (coffee, raffia, palm, kola-nut) and he can feel no security of tenure if he farms or if he builds. But this insecurity extends to some extent to the villagers themselves. Village land is nominally in the gift of the won ^{de jure} but is usually divided between the /lineage head/ quarter-chiefs. ~~who~~ are the senior members of the extended-family compounds. All families have the right to demand land from their quarter-chief. and on a man's death his sons usually take over his acreage; but the tree crops and cattle revert to the lineage head who has the responsibility to look after the widow and young dependents (Miss Phyllis Kaberry). The extension of coffee planting conflicts with this system, as a man who has planted an area of coffee trees wants to leave this valuable capital to his sons. Here, as in the forest areas, there is need for the prospective Commission on Land-Tenure and legislation.

To these land-tenure difficulties, within the village community and in the growing towns, ^{*}is added the conflict between farmers and graziers over the use of land and the damage done by stock. The Fulani have come to graze in the Bamenda Highlands only in the last forty years. This is surprising, considering that there are 1,000 sq. miles of tsetse-free pasture between 3,000 and 8,000 feet. In 1921 there were estimated to be 7,000 cattle in the area; in 1939 60,000; now about 250,000. The Bamenda native farmers own few cattle, though some are taking to mixed farming (mainly to get manure for their coffee).

Difficulties arise between farmers and graziers, because the pasture is not fenced and the cattle are not corraled at night. Although land is divided into farming areas and grazing areas with some waste in between, damage to crops is unavoidable unless herds are kept manageably small and the herdsmen's supervision is continuous and diligent.

The farmer would like to have the Fulani put their cattle on fenced-in sections for two or three years to manure it, and then have the land revert to farming. He regards the Fulani as strangers; and is very suspicious of any move to give them permanent rights to land. The Fulani like to move a herd across country, up and down from low ground to high ground with the seasons, going lower in the dry season when the tsetse fly has moved down and when the grazing higher up is thin. They are reluctant to settle in one place; and reluctant to go to the expense of fencing, although tired of court cases for cattle trespass. Certainly they cannot be expected to fence without a ten-year lease on the land. But, even if the land-tenure system were revised, and he were offered that security, there is considerable difference of opinion on whether he would, or should, give up his habits of movement.

Twenty years ago when these farmer-grazier disputes were becoming frequent, attempts were made to demarcate the grazing boundaries. There have been revisions since; but the expansion in both cultivated area and cattle population has led to continual litigation, a back log of court cases on cattle trespass, and a deal of time and temper lost in deciding rights and assessing damages. The women especially feel their food crops are vulnerable; and worry about possible damage and the trouble of obtaining redress.

THE FULANI HERDS

It was said above that the Bamenda Division has at present about 250,000 head of cattle. This is important to the Native Authorities for there is a jangali tax of 5/- a head. Although there is tax avoidance, as the cattle are moved about and over borders at assessment time, the tax yield is over £50,000, which is about two-thirds of the yield of the general poll tax on adults.

The herds are growing fast (by about 50,000 head in the past two years) as more are brought in from the north; and they are valuable, being worth £4m. at £15 a head. But the cattle present at least three major problems. The first is the cattle-trespass on farmers crops referred to already. The second is the improved use of pasture, and stock improvement. The third is the economic beef yield of the herd, and the transportation of the beef to the consuming markets of the forest areas and of Eastern Nigeria.

A great deal of work has been done on pasture and breeding at the Livestock Investigation Centre at Jakiri to the east of Bamenda. Most of the pasture on these grasslands is very thin. This is sometimes due to the soil, but is also caused by annual burning of the hills. In the dry season all the grass is burned off to kill the ticks which infest the cattle, and to bring on a flush of fresh green stalks to nourish the stock. The result is a thin, leached soil and poor pasture and each animal needs from five to ten acres of grazing, according to the soil. Jakiri is not a particularly favourable spot; at 6,500 ft. it is rather high; but they keep an animal on from one to two acres. This does involve regular dipping against ticks, and the making of hay and silage to carry through the dry season. The Fulani regard this as an unreasonable and irksome alternative to extensive grazing; but they may be forced to it when the cattle population presses against the grazing area. As for improving breeds, the main Fulani type in the Division is the Red Longhorn; though the last few years have seen an influx of white Aka cattle which now form about a sixth of the total. The Jakiri Centre has developed a smaller-boned, lighter crossbreed which matures faster (in $3\frac{1}{2}$ to 4 years), breeds more frequently, gives good carcase yield and quality, and at the same time produces reasonable milk yields by Fulani standards. These crossbreeds are appreciated by the Fulani, who are keen to buy them, no matter how sceptical they may be about silage, fencing, and not burning grass.

The number of cattle is rising quite fast (50% in the past ten years) and so is the price of steers. This varies greatly over the year

being low towards the end of the dry season, and when the Jangali tax has to be paid; but it seems that the average price for cattle has roughly doubled in the last decade. This reflects the rise of prices and wages in the coast towns, and the increasing demand for meat as real incomes rise.

But the quantity of meat reaching the market from this quarter of a million head is most disappointing, as it is from Fulani herds all over Northern Nigeria. Fundamentally this is because the Fulani does not want to raise his standard of living by selling large ties of cattle, but to raise his status by having as large a herd as possible. A Fulani chief may control thousands of cattle worth tens of thousands of pounds without this being reflected in his way of life. At the moment only about 25,000 head a year are sold from the 250,000 herd; and these tend to be the old and poor stock sold to pay the tax, buy cloth, etc. The Fulani sell mainly to Hausa traders; and the animals are driven down the road to market: this may be the local town, or it may be Victoria 250 miles away at the ~~coast~~. It is estimated that of the 25,000 sold, about 14% are consumed locally, about 18% are driven down to the forest areas and killed there, and 68% are walked to the towns of Eastern Nigeria. There are many disadvantages to the system: weight is lost on the long march, and the meat is in poor condition when it gets there; the cattle become diseased on the way through the forest; and this, and the lack of refrigeration at the destinations, mean that cattle must be killed and eaten soon after arrival, whatever the requirements of the market.

Accordingly the Veterinary Department plans to buy cattle in Bamenda Division when they are cheap, and fatten them on a store-system at the Government experimental ranches. They will then be killed and refrigerated in Bamenda, the hides, the offal, etc., also being prepared for sale. The meat can be transported to the towns, either by refrigerated lorry or by air from the nearby airstrip at Bali, ^{whichever} proves cheaper. An F.A.O. expert has helped start a pilot scheme, with a small

abattoir, and a refrigerated lorry which has made trips to Victoria with frozen meat. He has reported favourably on the full project, and expects it to be commercially successful. The needs of the forest people, and those of Eastern Nigeria, for first-class protein are so great that a scheme of this kind deserves the most careful consideration.

Archives No. Qd/a/1946/14

Provincial Archives — Buea

FILE No. 53'16Department of Origin Plantations

DATE REGISTERED

2 - 8 - 16

JIT AUTHORITY

SUBJECT

Bamenda: Labour
Employed on Plantations

SUBSEQUENT FILES

LIST OF ENCLOSURES IN THIS FILE
(Entries to be continued on third page of cover if necessary)

THIS FILE IS

PREVIOUS FILES

MINUTES OR INSTRUCTIONS

N. 445/96/1916.B.



Resident's Office,

Bucc, 8th May, 1918.

R. 455/11

Sir,

With reference to the instructions issued by His Excellency the Governor-General and to our many interviews on the subject of the payment due to the Benenda labourers on a contract made between the Chiefs and people and the late Resident Mr. Duff, I have the honour to enclose extracts from correspondence received from the officer-in-charge of the Benenda Division. I might mention that while at Benenda in February last I went very fully into this matter with the District Officer and formed the opinion that the amount of L1,508: 18: 8d as put forward by him, is in no way excessive and I think, in the interest of the Plantations for the future labour supply, should be paid without further delay and it is with this end in view I would ask for your concurrence to its payment.

2. I enclose at your request, extracts from the District Officer's report, also a copy of a letter addressed to all the District Officers of the Province authorizing them to engage labour at twenty Marks clear per month and full rations. (The Mark at this time was valued at 9d.). I would draw your attention to the terms of the contract under C. I have no intention at this stage of going over old and much worn ground again but I would remark especially that I have before me

THE SUPERVISOR OF PLANTATIONS,

B O T A.

- 2 -

a copy of the pay sheets of some of the labourers in question for the month of August 1916 to January 1917, and the total amount paid for this period to any one labourer amounts to a sum varying from L1: 7: 4d to L3 : 17 : 1d; the pay for this period, according to the contract under which the men were engaged, should total L4: 10/- plus a handsome ration of rice &c.

3. I hope this will now draw to a close, what has been a most unhappy incident for the two Departments, and that you will now be able to write R.I.P. on the voluminous documents on the subject, and that they may remain in the archives of the Government undisturbed.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,

McGowan

Resident,

Onitsha Province.

N. E. S.

- 2 -

not observed. For this reason it would seem that a consolidated compensation to meet the case is the only practicable solution of the difficulty. I suggest, that it be paid upon a basis of 4 Marks per month per labourer for the term of this contract, -which works out at slightly over one penny per diem, at the present exchange of the German Mark, which would mean that :-

For a 3 months contract completed the labourer receives 12 Mks.
" " 4 " " " " " " 16 "
" " 5 " " " " " " 20 "
" " 6 " " " " " " 24 "

Therefore, if approved, the total compensation to be paid to labourers who were sent from this Division to the Plantations (vide extract Annual Report attached marked "D") would be :-
 46,200 marks, or £1,503: 18: 8d. which is ^{not} an abnormal sum ~~to~~
 to enable us to eradicate an unfortunate impression.

There will be no difficulty in locating these labourers and inducing them to come to receive this "bonus". Should there be, in individual cases, it could always be paid to the chiefs, and I am rather inclined to think that it would be better to hand it over to the chiefs in toto.

+ + +

I have &c.,

(Sgd:) G.S. Podevin

D.O. In charge Banenda Division.

Certified true extract,

G. S. Podevin
 8/5/1918.

No. 96/1916.

Resident's Office,

Buea, 5th April, 1917.

District Officer,
Bamenda.

Your telegram 178 of 1st instant.

2. Summarized pay sheets have already been sent you, the Supervisor of Plantations informs me.

3. The rations consisted of plantains, palm oil, rice, salt and fish, the Supervisor of Plantations states.

(Sgd:) E.C. Duff,

Resident,
Cameroons Province.

Certified true copy,

Bamenda District
8/5/1917.

Source: NAB, File Qf/1960/8, The Economy of the Southern Cameroon Under the United Kingdom, 1960.

APPENDIX 11 : BAMENDA LABOUR EMPLOYED ON PLANTATIONS

Archives No. Q11/119

Provincial Archives — Buea

FILE No. <u>53/16</u>	Department of Origin <u>Plantations</u>	
DATE REGISTERED <u>2-8-16</u>		
THIS FILE IS NOT TO BE RELEASED WITHOUT AUTHORITY	SUBJECT <u>Bamenda: Labour Employed on Plantations</u>	SUBSEQUENT FILES
	LIST OF ENCLOSURES IN THIS FILE <small>(Entries to be continued on third page of cover if necessary)</small>	
	PREVIOUS FILES	MINUTES OR INSTRUCTIONS

Statement of recruited Bamenda and Dschang Labourers died on inland's
ESTATE.

Estates	Name of Labourers	Number	District	Town	Date of Death	Cause of Death	Re-marks
MUKONJE	Winda	-	Bamenda	-	27.3.18	Dysentery	
	Among (Owang)		"	Bumanta	4.9.18	Tapeworm	
	Far		"	Baku	27.9.18	Diarrhoea	
	Nafia		"	Bafumbo	4.10.18	Rheumatism	
	Akam		"	"	22.10.18	Bronchitis	
	Abuan		"	"	12.11.18	Debility	
	Nguwa		"	Bamakung	16.11.18	Influenza	
	Wanga		"	Bamugo	22.11.18	"	
	Bonadale		Dschang	Mbo	24.11.18	"	
	Cameroon		"	"	27.11.18	"	
	Mundame		"	"	16.12.18	Dysentery	
	Muam		Bamenda	Bafumbo	22.1.19	Ankyl	
	Fuka		"	"	10.2.19	"	
EKONA	Abanda		Dschang	Tonyange	6.9.18	Dysentery	
	Ewongua		"	Nkonkoa	21.9.18	Pneumonia	
	Kumba		"	Elumba	10.9.18	Diarrhoea	
	Kofee		Bamenda	Babadju	6.7.18	Bronchitis	
	Doota		"	"	30.8.18	Diarrhoea	
	Jack		Dschang	Elumba	26.8.18	"	
	Singa		"	Mbo	21.11.18	Influenza	
	Olama		"	Fowen	22.11.18	"	
	Sixpence		"		23.11.18	"	
	Tombo		"		23.11.18	"	
	Longboy		"		25.11.18	"	
	Fineboy		"		25.11.18	"	
	Ekande		"		15.11.18	"	

On Tour 6/19.

26th July

Sir,


I have the honour to forward herewith the list of Bamenda and Deschang recruited labourers who have died on the Plantations: we have no record of those who died on the return journey particulars not having been forwarded to this department.

2. Do you wish me to forward you the money now, according to this list or shall I send it when the District Officer has dealt with all claims and knows the exact amount

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your obedient Servant,


Acting Supervisor of Plantations.

The Resident,

B u e a

M.W.

Source: N A B, File: Qd/a/19.No 53/16, Bamenda Labour Employed on Employment, 1953.

APPENDIX 12: TEA CONTROL PRODUCTION

20/9 (1941) 5

V. 500/4

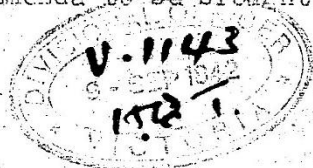
<p>1. TEA CONTROL</p> <p>2. PRODUCTION OF LOCAL TEA</p>	<p>888/5 Local Foodstuffs Control</p> <p>888/6 Flour Control</p> <p>888/7 Butter Control</p> <p>888/8 Milk Control</p> <p>1142 Production of Local Tea</p>
<p>Previous files</p> <p>888/1 Imported foodstuffs control of</p> <p>888/2 Salt Control</p> <p>888/3 Liquor Control</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Brooklands House</p> <p style="text-align: center;">T3</p>

No. 2640(2)/25. ⁶ +Provincial Office,
B u e a,
Cameroons Province,
7th September, 1942.The District Officer,
Victoria.Production of Local Tea.

The Manager, Cameroons Plantations, informs me that in the course of the next six months he hopes to be able to supply all local requirements for tea from supplies grown locally thereby saving shipping space. An adequate supply of tins, is, however, lacking.

2. I should be grateful, therefore, if you would ask all consumers in the Victoria Division to save any tins which are fitted with screw or press tops and if you would arrange for these tins to be sent in due course to the Manager, Cameroons Plantations, Buea. Tins of any size or shape serve the purpose provided they are fitted with screw or press tops.

3. I have arranged with the O.C. Pioneer Corps for supplies from Bamenda to be brought down in his lorries.



[Signature]
Acting Resident,
Cameroons Province.

1002
9/9
Circular to all Europeans
also me to be ~~sent~~ passed
to our African consumers.
1002
10/9
1002
10/9

1002
Two Circulars Action taken.
have been sent out one to Europeans and one to Africans.
Keep in view.

No. 2640(2)/26.
 Provincial Office,
 Bua,
 Cameroons Province,
 7th September, 1942.

The District Officer,
 Victoria.

Production of Local Tea.

The Manager, Cameroons Plantations, informs me that in the course of the next six months he hopes to be able to supply all local requirements for tea from supplies grown locally thereby saving shipping space. An adequate supply of tins is, however, lacking.

2. I should be grateful, therefore, if you would ask all consumers in the Victoria Division to save any tins which are fitted with screw or press tops and if you would arrange for these tins to be sent in due course to the Manager, Cameroons Plantations, Bua. Tins of any size or shape serve the purpose provided they are fitted with screw or press tops.

3. I have arranged with the O.C. Pioneer Corps for supplies from Bamenda to be brought down in his lorries.

(Sgd.) G.J. Plens
 Acting Resident,
 Cameroons Province.

The African Staff D.O.'s Office, Victoria.

"	"	"	Government School, Victoria.	<i>JS</i>
"	"	"	Posts and Telegraphs Department, Victoria.	<i>✓</i>
"	"	"	Customs Department, Victoria.	<i>JS</i>
"	"	"	Medical Department, Victoria.	<i>JS</i>
"	"	"	Produce Inspection Dept., Victoria.	<i>JS</i>
"	"	"	Police Force, Victoria.	<i>JS</i>
"	"	"	Marine Department, Victoria.	<i>JS</i>
"	"	"	Public Works Department, Victoria.	<i>JS</i>
"	"	"	Forestry Department, Victoria.	<i>JS</i>
"	"	"	Native Administration Office, Victoria.	<i>JS</i>
"	"	"	United Africa Company, Victoria.	<i>JS</i>
"	"	"	John Holt, Victoria.	<i>JS</i>
"	"	"	Elder Dempster Lines, Victoria.	<i>JS</i>
"	"	"	Barclays Bank, Victoria.	<i>JS</i>
"	"	"	Plantations Department, Bua.	<i>JS</i>
"	"	"	School	<i>JS</i>
"	"	"	Basel Mission, Victoria.	<i>JS</i>
"	"	"	Native Baptist Mission School, Victoria.	<i>JS</i>
"	"	"	Roman Catholic Mission School, Bua.	<i>JS</i>

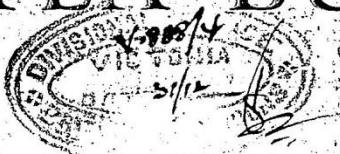
Circulated for information and action, with special reference to paragraph 2 above, please.

G. J. Plens
 District Officer.

H.D.T.



TEA BULLETIN



DECEMBER, 1949

BULLETIN NO. 1

An Invitation To THE TEA CENTRE, IBADAN.

Mr. P. L. Bichard, Commissioner of the Tea Bureau (West Africa) Ibadan, Nigeria, extends a most cordial invitation to you to visit the Tea Centre when you are next in Ibadan. The Centre is situated between the Railway Station and the Rex Cinema on the Ijebu Bye-Pass and is fast becoming the Ibadan rendezvous for all interested in Tea Production or Marketing, or in improving the service of the beverage.

If it is your first visit, you are assured of a warm welcome from Mr. Bichard and his staff, who will be delighted to explain in detail any aspect of their activities. If it is a return visit, the same welcome awaits you, and there will be many developments to interest you. In either case, please make your identity known to the Receptionist on arrival.

WHAT IS THE TEA BUREAU?

The TEA BUREAU exists to promote the interest of tea - one of the world's major industries in West Africa.

Its income is derived from a statutory levy on all teas exported from India, Ceylon, Pakistan, Indonesia and British East Africa, these funds being administered on behalf of the tea producers and their Governments by the International Tea Market Expansion Board, which operates in West Africa through the Tea Bureau. Its activities are carried on in the firm belief that the interests of the industry can best be furthered by giving all possible help and guidance to those concerned with serving or consuming tea. In West Africa where tea is fast becoming a national institution this means that the work of the Bureau impinges at some point or other on every section of the community. The Headquarters of the Bureau are at Ibadan, Nigeria.

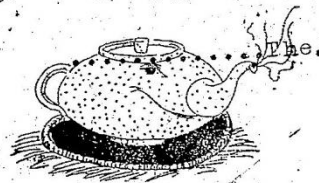
SERVICES OF THE TEA BUREAU

The main services of the Tea Bureau are as follows:-

Catering Department

This department is an inevitable development of the close association of good tea and good catering.

THE TEA BUREAU (W.A.), IBADAN, NIGERIA



3/12

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The Tea Bureau makes widely accessible all catering knowledge and experience, including up-to-date information on such varied subjects as stores control, menus (including snacks and salads), staff management and canteen accounts. Much of the guidance thus given is based on practical experience gained under all sorts of conditions.

Equipment Department.

In its operation in this country and all over the world the Bureau has been fortunate in gaining an enormous fund of extremely valuable experience. It is continually carrying out research into all phases of tea production and consumption.

It is the function of the Equipment Department to make readily and conveniently available to manufacturers the relevant information which may be of assistance to them and help to stimulate the production of improved tea-making equipment.

Planning department.

This department is responsible for planning and designing tea stations, equipment, industrial canteen kitchens, and generally indicating to architects, work managements, catering people and others, the layout which, in the Bureau's experience, will best enable them to operate their services efficiently.

The Bureau also has facilities for Training and runs special courses for Tea Supervisors and their staff. It arranges lectures and film shows on a wide range of subjects, including the history and production of tea and practical tea services. The many special publications issued by the Bureau can be seen in the Tea Centre and the special library of reference books is at the disposal of the public.

The Tea Centre.

The Tea Centre was officially opened on Saturday 26th November. It has been generally greeted as an attractive addition to the amenities of Ibadan. It comprises of, a Tea Lounge and Tea Bar which is open to the public from 7.30 a.m. to 6.30 p.m. daily except Sunday. African artists have collaborated in the decorative scheme. Also it comprises of an Equipment Display and information booth. The hostess of the Tea Centre is Miss Patricia Johnson.

The Tea Bureau, West Africa

The Tea Bureau, West Africa, was inaugurated in Ibadan in December 1948, Mr. P.L. Richard being appointed the first Commissioner of the Bureau. Mr. S.N. Thomas has been appointed Assistant Commissioner. Other Senior members of the Staff are :- Messrs M.B.E. Freeman as Officer in charge of Field Operations; R.A.B. Ipaye as Stenographer and Librarian; D.D. Kehinde as Publicity Officer; B.O. Ishola as Public Relations Officer; and Miss Patricia Johnson as Receptionist at the Tea Centre.

The Bureau's business hours are:-

Weekdays	-	8.30	-	12.30
		2.30	-	4.30
Saturdays	-	8.30	-	12.30

.....TEA BUREAU

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TEA BUREAU ACTIVITIES

Following a brief period for organisation the Bureau started tea promotion activities in Ibadan. The activities of the Bureau were at first directed to the introduction of tea to the 600,000 Natives of Ibadan through public service channels and tea kiosks, operated under the sponsorship of the Bureau.

The first Kiosk.

The first of these tea kiosks was given an experimental run when it was opened up in front of the Bureau's premises with a specially trained African lady in charge. Selling tea at 1d a cup, the kiosk attracted the attention of many passers by who stopped to sample its wares, and on occasions during the first few days of operation, small crowds gathered around it discussing the merits of the "cup that cheers". The kiosk was dressed with posters carrying tea slogans. One of these posters was drawn by a local African Artist. The kiosk also carried a display of the teas available on the local Ibadan market.

Assistance given to Africans

Other public service activities have included assistance to Africans to set up tea kiosks on their own account. Mr. S.B. Ogun is already operating nine kiosks in Ibadan with marked success.

Tea Push Carts.

Tea Push Carts have been introduced and are operating in the busy areas of Ibadan and they also attend outdoor gatherings and sports meetings. The carts are loaned to African operators.

Information.

On the information side arrangements were made with the two Ibadan cinemas for the public screening of Bureau films for a week.

Press Conference

The Commissioner held a press conference at which he outlined the back ground and objects of the Bureau to the editors of a number of local newspapers. Following the conference Bureau films were shown and the newspaper men were entertained to tea.

Distribution of Leaflets.

Over 25,000 leaflets giving instructions on how to make good tea have been printed in English and a local vernacular and have been distributed in the markets of Ibadan. A pamphlet telling the story of tea has been distributed to schools.

Tea on Ibadan Railway Station.

The Bureau has erected two tea kiosks on Ibadan Railway Station. There being no permanent refreshment rooms on the station, the kiosks have attracted a deal of attention. During their first month 5,584 cups of tea were sold at 1d per cup, despite the Ramadan fast.

The Lecture Campaign

The Lecture campaign held by the Bureau was most successful and most of the schools in Ibadan have now been visited.

.....The

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The lectures were practical and dealt extensively with the geographical, historical, economical and romantic aspects of tea from the time its first evolved in China. Pictures showing tea estates and factories in the tea producing countries of the world were exhibited. Tea booklets, pamphlets and leaflets on how to make good tea were distributed. The children were treated to cups of tea after each lecture.

Tea Exhibition.

To mark the formal opening of the Exhibition a cocktail party (with the cocktails made from tea) of which the Commissioner was host, was held in the Bureau's Hall, Ibadan, on June 11th 1949. Mr. Ernest Ikoli, ex-Legislative Council member and prominent Nigerian journalist, who is a representative of the London Times, opened the Exhibition. During his opening speech Mr. Ikoli said :-

"..... I believe you know that tea is grown in the Cameroons. Production at present may not amount to very much, but I heard that before long tea growing in that part of the country will be undertaken on a much larger scale which I hope will add to the prosperity of our sister territory. What pleased me most about this Exhibition was that every item on display is either manufactured in Nigeria or of British origin. We, here in Nigeria should welcome the opening of a Bureau of this world wide organisation and I do feel that great goodness can be derived from the free services which the organisation can give to the peoples of West Africa. I therefore claim that the work of the West African Tea Bureau is of national importance."

Primarily the object of the Exhibition was to direct attention to the service work on which the operations of the Bureau are based and through a display of equipment to depict the different types of public service of tea suitable for exploitation in West Africa.

Among the leading exhibits were, specimens of tea kiosks, outdoor water boiling equipment of the chip boiler type, multipots, and a fully equipped tea push cart. In addition, a "Tea in the Home" section displayed various examples of silver and china sets, as well as domestic boilers, while picnic sets, thermos flasks and specimens of plastic cups and saucers formed another display.

As a general background to the equipment displayed, the hall was decorated with tea maps and illustrations of tea in Africa, which included a layout of photographs showing tea production in Nyasaland and the Cameroons. On another panel were photographs depicting the activities of the Bureau.

Following an official opening of the Exhibition, wide publicity resulted in the Lagos and local press and a number of useful contacts were made. Among many visitors to the Exhibition were leading members of West African trading organisations handling tea.

TEACHERS AT TEA.

Teachers from different centres in the Western Provinces, who underwent a Refresher course at the Rural Education Science Centre, Moor Plantation, Ibadan, paid an informal visit to the offices of the Tea Bureau last July. The excursion group under the leadership of Mr. E. Eyo, was received by Mr. M.B.E. Freeman, the Bureau's representative and entertained to Tea.

.....TEA BUREAU'S

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TEA BUREAU'S ASSISTANCE TO THE GIRL GUIDES
ASSOCIATION, NIGERIA.

Mrs. Cheesley, acting Regional Commissioner, Girl Guides Association, Western Provinces, paid a visit to the Bureau to ask for guidance and assistance for the serving of tea by the Girl Guides to the general public at outdoor gatherings. The 1st Ibadan Girl Guide Company, attached to the Sacred Heart Convent, Ibadan, have adopted the idea of serving tea in order to raise money to send two guides to Rome for the coming Holy Year. The Bureau has offered to lend the company the necessary equipment to operate on their own account at the U.K. Tourist Football match which is to be held in Ibadan on December 10th.

MARKET NEWS - IBADAN.

Prior to the opening of the Tea Bureau campaign, there were only three brands of tea available on the Ibadan Market, packed in $\frac{1}{2}$ lb and 1 lb. units.

Since the Bureau's operations started, a number of other packers have placed teas on the market and there are now eight different brands available, some of them packed in small units to meet the needs of the African with low purchasing power. The smallest of these packets sell for 3d while there are others at 3d or 6d.

Owing to a high import duty of 10d per lb., teas generally sell at a higher price than elsewhere in Africa, and $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. packets retail on the local African market at an average of 2/3 each.

Because of high humidity, quantities of tea over $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. are generally available in tins, instead of packets. Such tins average around 4/4 per $\frac{1}{2}$ lb and 8/3 per lb. for India and Ceylon teas sold under the brand names of well known packing firms.

There has recently become available a Kenya tea which is packed in Lagos and which sells on the local African market at 8d for 2oz. packet. Loose tea from Kenya retails at 4/6 per lb.

TEA BUREAUX AND EQUIPMENT.

In their service operations all over the world the Tea Bureaux of the International Tea Market Expansion Board have gained a fund of valuable experience with various types of tea-making equipment. At the same time they are constantly carrying out research into improvement of equipment or the development of apparatus to suit the varying circumstances and needs of different countries.

The sound, practical knowledge so gained is always made readily available to manufacturers for assistance in the production of improved tea-making equipment. In West Africa this generally means contact with agents or representatives of overseas manufacturers, though there is evidence of awakening interest in the production of equipment in Nigeria.

The Tea Bureaux in Africa are regularly asked for advice from where suitable equipment may be purchased. As the Bureaux are not directly interested in the sale of equipment and, further wish to be completely impartial in such matters - it is the policy of the Bureaux to advise the names of manufacturers or agents from whom the equipment can be procured for the purpose of obtaining quotations.

As regards the provision of equipment in African markets, it is the general policy of the Tea Market Expansion Board that its Bureaux shall take whatever measures as are practicable and desirable to have readily available at the lowest possible price

.....such

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such equipment as is required in the interest of tea.

However it is no part of the Board's policy that its Bureaux should build up a monopoly for British or other exporters at the expense of getting satisfactory and cheaper equipment made locally.

While the Board directs that its Bureaux should allow normal trade channels to supply equipment needs, it does, nevertheless, reserve the right as a temporary, emergency measure, to import equipment and sell it at cost plus handling charges where adequate supplies of locally manufactured or imported goods are not available at competitive prices. The "handling charges" would be sufficient to cover the normal agent's commission, so as to prevent a noticeable difference in the prices charged by the Bureaux and those by an agent.

Where the Bureaux find it necessary to take a direct hand in the stimulation of local manufacture, they do so to aid their market development activities undertaken on behalf of the tea producers of the world. Here it should be noted that the Bureaux do not provide the initial impetus for such enterprise in any spirit of acting in competition with the interest of established manufacturers or their agents.

This statement of policy is made for the benefit for all those connected with tea equipment, in order that there shall be no misunderstanding as to the position of the Tea Bureau in West Africa and to ensure that no erroneous impressions should exist in the minds of those who manufacture or handle tea equipment.

VISIT OF THE ORGANISING DIRECTOR
INTERNATIONAL TEA MARKET EXPANSION BOARD LIMITED,
LONDON

Mr. Antony Tasker, O.B.E., Organising Director, International Tea Market Expansion Board arrived at Ikeja Airport on October 14th, to commence his tour of Nigeria. He was accompanied by Mr. P.I. Richard, Commissioner, Tea Bureau who flew to the Gold Coast to meet him.

Mr. Tasker visited the Bureau Headquarters in Ibadan on October 15th and while in Ibadan held a Press Conference. Mr. Tasker informed the newspaper reporters that the Bureau in West Africa had already found ample proof that tea is as popular with the peoples of West Africa as with the peoples of other countries where it has been established for much longer periods. "Our aim" said Mr. Tasker, "is to provide the best possible service on behalf of our industry to all who buy, sell or consume tea, and we look forward to a steady expansion of our activities in West Africa". Before the gathering dispersed the Press and members of the staff were entertained to tea.

While in Ibadan Mr. Tasker paid a courtesy visit to the Ibadan University and was shown round the College by the Principal Dr. K. Mellamby. A Canteen is at present being constructed at the University to provide refreshments to the students; it is hoped that the Bureau will be able to offer assistance.

After a few days in Ibadan Mr. Tasker accompanied by Mr. Richard visited the West and East of Nigeria and had many discussions with representatives of tea interests.

Mr. Tasker left Kano by air for Johannesburg on October 27th.

.....VISIT OF

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VISIT OF H.M.S. NIGERIA

Two sailors of H.M.S. NIGERIA, Leading seaman R. Read and Able-seaman W.J. Glue arrived in Ibadan during the week-end of November 13th as guests of the Commissioner of the Bureau.

Interviewed by a representative of the Bureau's Public Relations Department Mr. Read said that the maximum daily consumption of tea on board H.M.S. Nigeria was about 3,000 cups. When asked how so much tea was drunk, seaman Read said that there are 600 officers and men on the ship and the average daily consumption is 5 cups per head.

It is understood that the whole of the British Navy consume approximately two tons of tea a day.

The two seamen on leaving the Bureau declared that they were highly impressed by the efficient service rendered to them.

THE WORKERS WELFARE ASSOCIATION.

The Workers Welfare Association sent Messrs Kester O. Shoruna. and Oluwadare Obisakin, employees of the Association, to the Bureau, for a three weeks course on canteen management.

After training, these men will undertake the responsibility of the management of Workers' canteens in Lagos or elsewhere, and will help to train new personnel for similar services in various provinces.

This has been a case out of many requests from the Trade Unions for assistance, advice and guidance on the possibility of opening and managing refreshment centres.

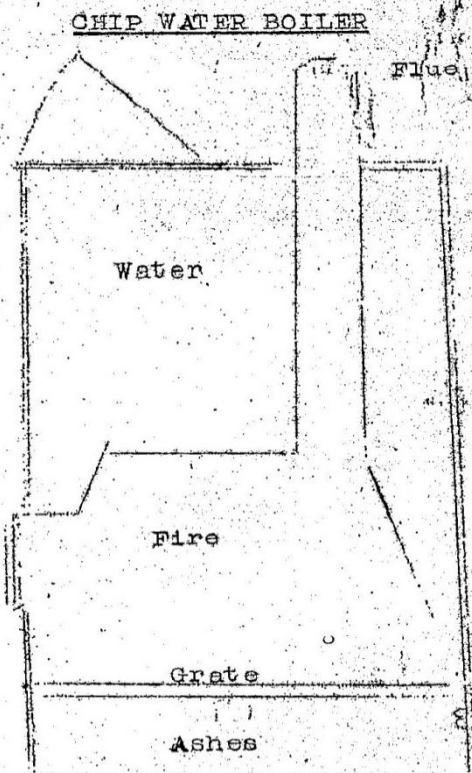
VISITORS TO THE BUREAU

Among the many important visitors to the Bureau since its inception could be mentioned Messrs W.T. James O.B.E., Director of Companies, London; J.A. Danford, Director, British Council, Western Provinces; I.L. Gray, of Heple Motor Services Ltd., Halifax; P. Wilkinson, Manager, British West Africa Corporation, Ibadan; C.F. Sayle, United Africa Coy., Lagos; P.B. Cooper, United Africa Company, Ibadan; S.J. Wilson, Representative of Nestles Milk Company of Vevey, Switzerland; Mr. & Mrs O.O. Budede, Labour Department, Lagos; Mr. Peddell, Liptons Tea Agent, Lagos; Misses Wilcox and Banigo, Teachers from the United Missionary College, Ibadan; Lt. Col. Leeming, Area Resettlement Officer, Western Provinces; J.A. Adigun, Editor, Western Echo, Ibadan; D.R.G.G. Jones Education Department, Ibadan; S.T. Ogolo, Asst. Manager, Provision Dept. John Holts & Co., Ibadan; J.A. Albert, United Africa Co., Ibadan; Chief J.R. Turton, the Rishawe of Ilesha; and Second Honourable Unofficial Member of the Regional House of Assembly; Rev. & Mrs T.V. Aderinbola, Education Secretary, Anglican Church, Ibadan, D. Sanders, U.A.C., London; Chief A. Ola Okupe, Alaperu of Iperu, Ijebu Remo, Mr. & Mrs. Millard, P.W.D. Ibadan; Y.S. Ola Ishola, Managing Director, Nigerian General Contractors, Ibadan; Dr. S.T. Tamma-Abels, Negro Babies Welfare Officer, London; F.K.I. Pepple, Police Inspector, Lagos; and G. Davies Watkins, Principal, St. Andrews College, Oyo.

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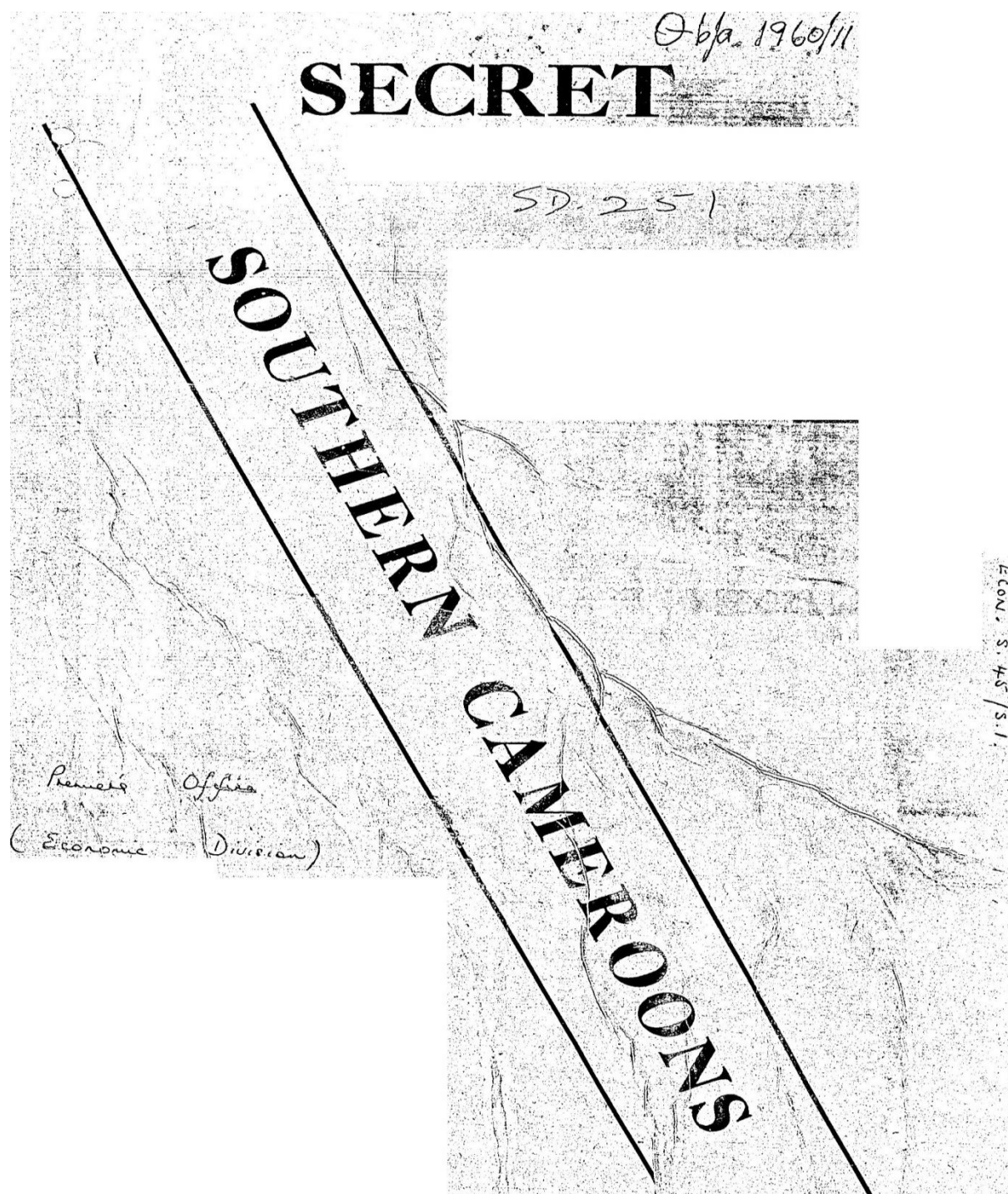
Would recipients of this Bulletin please note that extra copies are available on application. We would also be happy to add to our Mailing List the names of interested friends of the present recipients.



Sectional drawing of the Chip water boiler for use with outdoor tea services.

The Commissioner and Staff of the Tea Bureau (West Africa) take this opportunity of wishing all readers of our Tea Bulletin and friends Best Wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

APPENDIX 13 : SOUTHERN CAMEROON ECONOMIC PLANNING



Ref. No. EC. SL/
Executive Council Office,
Buea

24 February, 1960.

To The Secretary to the Premier,
Buea.

The subjoined extract from Conclusions of the Executive Council is forwarded for insertion in File No. 123/S.1 ~~for the appropriate file~~ and for action.

2. Please acknowledge receipt within 48 hours on the attached form/~~and return to the~~
~~the number of the file~~

[Signature]
Secretary to the Executive Council
of the Southern Cameroons

SCGP 141/759/3,000

EXTRACT from CONCLUSIONS of a Meeting of the Executive Council
held on TUESDAY, 23rd February, 1960.

Normal reference: SCA(60)5th Meeting : Conclusion 1
Shortened form: 5(60)1

1. SOUTHERN CAMEROONS ECONOMIC COMMITTEE AND DEVELOPMENT
PLANNING 1960-65.

Previous reference : SCA(59)14th Meeting : Conclusion 8(1)
SCA(50) 9th Meeting : Conclusion 8(3)
SCA(59) 3rd Meeting : Conclusion 1.

The Council considered a memorandum SCA(60)33 submitted by the Premier and the Financial Secretary.

In introducing his memorandum the PREMIER said that since the formation of the Economic Planning Committee, two new Ministries had been created which were closely connected with the Economic Development of the territory. There were, however, no representatives from these Ministries on the Committee and, to add yet another two members to the Committee would make it very unwieldy. He had reconsidered the whole position and now favoured the composition set out in the memorandum.

The MINISTER OF NATURAL RESOURCES felt that there would be an advantage in having a Minister as a member of the Committee who could advise the Committee on any political aspects that might arise. It was suggested that this member should be the Minister of State who had no particular responsibility for any Department and could give an unbiased opinion.

The Council:

- (1) Agreed that the composition of the Economic Planning Committee should be as follows:-

Chairman	-	Financial Secretary.
Members	-	A Minister nominated by the Premier.
		Secretary to the Premier.
		Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Natural Resources.
		Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Social Services.
		Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Commerce and Industries.
		Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Co-operatives and Community Development.

SECRET

THIS DOCUMENT IS THE PROPERTY OF THE SOUTHERN CAMEROONS
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

SCA(60)56
File No. ECON.S.45/S.1
23rd March, 1960.

Copy No. 20

SOUTHERN CAMEROONS EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

SOUTHERN CAMEROONS ECONOMIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

Previous reference : SCA(60)5th Meeting : Conclusion 1

Memorandum by the Premier.

At its meeting of the 23rd February, 1960, the Council required that:-

- (a) a Minister should be nominated as a member of the Economic Planning Committee;
- (b) proposed terms of reference for the Committee should be prepared and submitted to the Council.

2. With regard to (a) above, the Council will wish to note that the Minister of Commerce and Industries has been nominated.

3. The Planning Committee held its first meeting on the 9th March, 1960, when, inter alia, it suggested the following terms of reference:-

"The Committee should:-

- (a) Consider and make recommendations on outline plans for the development of all services in the Territory, and variations of these plans, taking into consideration both the capital and recurrent costs of such services. In so far as the Cameroons Development Corporation or its successor company is concerned, the Committee would be kept informed of its development programmes to ensure that duplication did not occur.
- (b) Consider and make recommendations on any proposals relating to the establishment of new undertakings in the Territory. In so far as the Cameroons Development Corporation or its successor company is concerned, it is recognised that the Board has complete discretion over its development programmes and any necessary investigations concerned therewith.
- (c) Consider, or cause to be considered, where appropriate, surveys and investigations relating to particular or general issues

NAB, File Qb/a/1960/11, Southern Cameroon Economic Plainning.

APPENDIX 14: REPORT ON THE HEALTH OF NDU WORKERS

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON
PEACE-WORK-FATHERLAND

MINISTRY OF PUBLIC HEALTH
NDU HEALTH DISTRICT
DONGA MANTUNG DIVISION
N.W.P.
DATE: 3/8/2000

FROM: THE D.M.O

TO All Chiefs of Health Centres
Ndu Health District.

SUBJECT: CREATION OF A BLOOD BANK IN THE DISTRICT HOSPITAL

In view of creating a Blood Bank to serve in fast treatment of patients needing transfusion you are expected to supply us with the information below from your health areas.

1. The number of sickle cell patients
 2. The number of patients with elective C/S
 3. The number of women who often develop anaemia in pregnancy
(HB < 60% *ta/ya*)
- Make a list of the concern
 - Determine their blood groups and record in their cards
 - Forward the list to the District Service.



THE DISTRICT MEDICAL OFFICER
NDU DISTRICT HOSPITAL.

Dr. Ngala Isaac Jai
M.P. CGSS Yaounde

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List of Informants

N°	Name	Age	Status	Place	Date
1	Aba Florence	73	Tea Plucker	Tole	June 28 th 2015
2	Aba Pauline	53	Head Nurse	Ndu	August 19 th 2014
3	Afambon Augustine	53	Small Holder in Tiko,	Tiko	August 8 th 2015.
4	Audu Bibiana	59	Field Worker at the Tiko Rubber Plantation	Tiko	August 11 th 2015
5	Ayuk Divine	52	Field Assistance at the Idenau Plantation	Yaounde	July 20 th 2015
6	Azangwi Thomas	68	Audit Clark	Bota	July 20 th 2015
7	Azongwi Esther	68	Audit Clark	Bota	July 31 st 2015
8	Bah Andrew	55	Factory Worker in the Ndu Tea	Ndu	August 16 th 2014
9	Bantar Randi	46	Factory Worker in the Ndu Tea	Ndu	August 16 th 2014
10	Bisong Martin	58	Clerk at the Tiko Factory	Tiko	August 5 th 2015
11	Che Caleb	87	Former Plantation Supervisor	Tiko	August 2015
12	Ebong Ebenezer	58	Technical Staff	Idenau	July 19 th 2022
13	Ebot John	61	Technical Staff at Idenau	Idenau	July 19 th 2022
14	Egoh Emmanuel,	55	Engineer in the rubber factory	Tiko	July 31 st 2015
15	Egoneng Emmanuel	57	Factory Engineer at the Tiko Factory	Tiko	August 6 th 2015
16	Ejanga Bah	48	Warehouse Keeper at the Tiko Factory	Tiko	August 6 th 2015

17	Ekane John	66	Administrative Staff	Tiko Rubber Plantation	August 8 th 2015
18	Elange Alfred	81	Retired Tea Plucker at the Tole Estate	Tole Estate	August 24 th 2015
19	Emeka Chinedu	87	Old, the Oldest Business Man in Idenau	Idenau	August 15 th 2021
20	Enanga Esther	55	Nursery Attendant	Idenau	July 30 th 2015
21	Eposi Victorine	61	Head Woman at Tole in 1992	Tole	June 14 th 2015
22	Etengene Loveline	83	Former Tea Plucker at Tole	Tole	August 10 th 2015
23	Ettamanyi Onorine	41	Security Guard at the Idenau Plantation	Idenau	August 20 th 2015
24	Eyong Zacharia	59	Mill Mender	Idenau	July 29 th 2015
25	Fuh Joseph	58	Palm Harvester	Idenau	August 20 th 2015
26	Japmah Francis	45	Factory Worker at Tiko	Tiko	August 16 th 2015
27	Japonge Naomi	46	Security Guide	Idenau	July 19 th 2022
28	Kanjo Gerald	46	Technician in the Banso Baptist Hospital	Kumbo	August 28 th 2014
29	Kibong Ordilia	56	Head Woman	Ndu	August 29 th 2014
30	Koni Japhet	62	Retired Factory Manager	Ndu	August 20 th 2014
31	Kougang Julius,	76	Quarter Head in Tiko	Tiko	August 8 th 2021
32	Kwachu Justine	57	Executive Director of WAA-Cameroon	Yaounde	February 18 th 2015
33	Likumba Elisabeth	68	Plucker in the Tole Tea Estate	Tole	June 28 th 2015.
34	Lobe Michael	72	Quarter Head	Idenau	August 21 st 2015
35	Lumba Elisabeth	51	Clerk Officer	Ndu	July 7 th 2014
36	Mah Hilary	49	Audit Clerk at the Tiko Factory	Tiko	August 5 th 2015

37	Maloba Esther	57	Field Worker in the Tiko Plantation	Tiko	August 5 th 2015
38	Mamber Edward	63	Head of the Meteorological Center	Ndu Estate	December 11 th 2014
39	Mayah Evelyne	53	Head Woman at the Ndu Tea Estate	Ndu	August 29 th 14
40	Mbeng John	52	Plantation Manager	Ndu Tea	August 8 th 2014
41	Mbiba Japhet	76	Quarter Head	Tiko	August 24 th 2015
42	Mboka Marie	42	Factory Labourer at Tiko	Tiko	August 24 th 2015
43	Melon Bella	45	General Labourer	Bota	August 5 th 2015
44	Mesombe Divine	68	Field Worker at the Tiko Plantation	Tiko	August 8 th 2015
45	Molimbe Bruno	67	Factory Worker at Tole Estate	Tole	August 25 th 2015
46	Monde Michael	78	Retired Ndu Estate Manager	Kuwar Village	August 13 th 2014
47	Monenge Solange	67	Plucker at the Tole Estate	Tole Estate	December 10 th 2021
48	Muba Juliana	47	Plucker in the Ndu Estate	Ndu	August 14 th 2014
49	Mukete Agnes	56	Factory Worker at the Tiko Rubber Factory	Tiko	August 24 th 2015
50	Mukunje Isaac	57	Palm Collector	Idenau	August 29 th 2015
51	Mumah Angeline	50	Plucker at the Ndu Tea Estate	Ndu	July 7 th 2014
52	Munki Nathan	56	Head of Building Department	Ndu	August 17 th 2014
53	Nabola Matilda	81	Worked as a Plucker at Tole in the 90s	Tole	August 25 th 2015
54	Ndamsa Juliana	62	Head Woman	Kakar	August 10 th 2014

55	Ndi Tom	50	Mechanical Technician	Ndu	August 17 th 2014
56	Ndokong Isaac	47	Foreman of Mechanical Garage	Factory	August 17 th 2014
57	Ndumbe Jonathan	53	Field Labourer at the Idenau Plantation	Idenau	August 20 th 2015
58	Ndumbe Peter	51	Factory Worker at the Tole Estate	Tole	July 14 th 2015
59	Nfor Andrew	48	Head of Rolling	Ndu Factory	August 18 th 2014
60	Nfor Conilius	44	Factory Worker	Ndu	August 16 th 2014
61	Nfor Ernest	52	Head man in the Withering	Ndu Tea Estate	August 18 th 2014
62	Nformi Divine	79	Quarter Head in Ndu Village	Ndu	August 20 th 2014
63	Nformi Emmanuel	60	HRH the Fon OF Ndu	Ndu Palace	April 2012
64	Nformi Labu	48	Plucker in the Ndu Tea Estate	Ndu	August 20 th 2014
65	Ngah Florence	59	Head Woman in the Ndu Tea Estate	Tatum	August 11 th 2014
66	Ngalla Andrew	61	Field Supervisor at the Ndu Tea Estate	Ndu	August 13 th 2014
67	Ngalla Joseph	57	Head Man in the Ndu Tea Estate	Ndu	August 13 th 2014
68	Ngeh Victor	48	Head Man and Chief Electrician	Ndu Estate	August 7 th 2014
69	Ngwene Anne	76	Wife of Former Senior Service Staff at the Bota Head Office	Bota	December 9 th 2021
70	Nji Aaron	34	Plucker at the Ndu Tea Estate	Ndu	July 7 th 2014
71	Njikam Flora	51	Factory Worker at Tiko	Tiko	August 23 rd 2015
72	Njilla Florence	68	Retired School Teacher	Ndu	August 17 th 2014

73	Njoma Mary	50	CDC School Teacher	Bota	August 21 st 2015
74	Nketi Benjamin	47	maintenance coordinator	Bota Limbe	July 29 th 2015
75	Nkize Lydia	59	Accounting Clerk	Idenau	29 th of July 2015
76	Ntalla Esther	90	House Wife in Ndu Village	Ndu	August 10 th 2014
77	Shofola Angeline	52	Plucker at the Ndu Tea Estate	Ndu	August 20 th 2014
78	Sika Angelica	87	Farmer	Tavisa	June 17 th 2019
79	Talla Miriam	69	House Wife in Ndu	Ndu	August 9 th 2014
80	Tamfu Angelica	67	Former Weeder at the Ndu Tea Estate	Ndu	August 10 th 2014
81	Tantoh Cicilia	56	Typist at Bota CDC Head Office	Bota Limbe	August 5 th 2015
82	Tarla Emmanuel	51	Head of Capentry Workshop	Ndu	August 16 th 2014
83	Wepkeh Ali	66	Plucker at the Ndu Tea Estate	Ndu	July 8 th 2014
84	Wingoh Anita	86	Former Plantation Labourer	Buea	December 12 th 2021
85	Winteh Asana	92	First Female Contract Labourer at the Ndu Tea Estate	Kakar Village	December 11 th 2014
86	Wintoh Celine	52	Factory Worker in Tiko	Tiko	December 10 th 2021
87	Yefon Magdaline	52	Head Woman in the Ndu Tea Estate	Tatum	August 11 th 2014

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