

**A HISTORY OF COFFEE PRODUCTION IN
KIAMBU COUNTY OF CENTRAL KENYA, 1912 -1978**

NDIRANGU PAUL NJARAMBA

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER OFARTS DEGREE IN
HISTORY OF
MOUNT KENYA UNIVERSITY**

OCTOBER, 2016

DECLARATION AND APPROVAL

Declaration by the student

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university or for any other award.

Signature.....**Date**.....
.....

Ndirangu P. Njaramba

MAHS/2014/63466

Approval by supervisors

We confirm this research was carried out by the candidate under our supervision:

Signature.....**Date**.....

Dr. Charles O. Choti

Senior Lecturer.

Department of History.

Mount Kenya University.

Signature.....**Date**.....

Dr. Isaac K. Tarus

Senior Lecturer.

Department of History,

Egerton University.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my parents Mr. and Mrs. Ndirangu for their prayers, motivation and advice they gave all through, this study.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my gratitude to the Almighty God for giving me strength, favour and grace in accomplishing this task. My classmates in School of Social Sciences for the healthy discussion and criticism, my parents Mr. and Mrs. Ndirangu, for inculcating the value of hard work and perseverance, siblings Gladys, Ruth and Elizabeth, for their great support and encouragement in completion of this thesis. I cannot forget the input of my friends who were there in time of need, Alfred Anangwe and Felix Orodia thank you. A lot of gratitude also goes to my supervisors Dr. Charles O. Choti and Dr. Isaac K. Tarus for their advice, guidance and corrections they gave while carrying out this study. I will remain indebted to the staff of Kenya National Archives and Kenya National Library Services for availing the necessary documents that made the task of writing this document fruitful.

GLOSSARY OF KIKUYU WORDS

<i>Mwene</i>	Owner
<i>Mbari</i>	Clan
<i>Karigei</i>	A type of weed
<i>Wangure</i>	Illicit huts
<i>Posho</i>	A type of flour
<i>Mumenyereri newspaper</i>	Guardian newspaper
<i>Shamba</i>	Farm
<i>Shambas</i>	Farms
<i>Rika</i>	Age group
<i>Karanis</i>	Clerk
<i>Kipande system</i>	The pass system
<i>Kiama</i>	Council
<i>Wakikuyu</i>	The Kikuyu people
<i>Tembo</i>	Native beer
<i>Ene</i>	Owners
<i>Ahoi</i>	Tenants at will
<i>Ndungata</i>	Servant
<i>Muciarwo</i>	The one who is born
<i>Muthoni</i>	In law
<i>Muhoi</i>	Tenant at will
<i>Kiama kia Atumia</i>	Council of women
<i>Njama ya Ita</i>	Council of war
<i>Ndundu</i>	Committee
<i>Muthamaki</i>	Leader
<i>Kiama kia rugongo</i>	Elders of the district
<i>Kiama kia ndundu</i>	Council of elders
<i>Kiama gia itura</i>	The Council of the village
<i>Ndundu ya mucii</i>	Family Council
<i>Ngai</i>	God

Mugai

Distributor

Muhiriga

Clan

Mucii

Household

Thingira

Man's hut

Nyumba

Woman's hut

Ikumbi

Store

Makumbi

Stores

ABSTRACT

This research examines the history of coffee production in Kiambu County between 1912 and 1978 basing on three objectives; to investigate the origin and development of coffee production in Kiambu County from 1912-1950, to examine the role of Africans in coffee production in Kiambu County from 1950-1963 and analyse the contribution of coffee production to the economic transformation of Kiambu County from 1963-1978. Coffee growing was introduced by the Missionaries and later on adopted by the white settlers. Africans duty was to provide labour as the whites reaped handsomely at their expense as shown through the use of dependency theory. This research was carried out in Githunguri and Gatundu constituencies of Kiambu County using both primary and secondary data. A total of 15 informants comprising of both gender of varying ages were interviewed. The research established that, despite coffee production among Africans being prohibited, by 1930s Chief Koinange had made unsuccessful attempts to plant the coffee trees. To appease Africans after the outbreak of the Mau Mau rebellion in 1952, the colonial government was more than willing to accommodate Africans demands, though with conditions in order to pacify the settlers. Spirited campaign by African chiefs for the lifting of the ban had at last materialised. It was thus not surprising that the first beneficiaries of coffee production among Africans were the chiefs and headmen as established by this research. Reforms were undertaken by the colonial government under the Swynnerton Plan of 1954 which involved land consolidation and issuance of title deeds. Cash crop growing increasingly became lucrative as compared to other economic activities. Africans engaged in coffee production in both large scale and small scale and later on joined co-operatives to market their produce. Through the proceeds from coffee production Africans were able to transform their social economic well being. A number of challenges however, began to bedevil coffee production in Kiambu, corruption and poor leadership not only in factories but also at societal level dented the economic glory that had been associated with coffee production.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION AND APPROVAL	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
GLOSSARY OF KIKUYU WORDS	v
ABSTRACT	vii
LIST OF TABLES	xi
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background to the study	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	4
1.3 Objectives of the Study	5
1.4 Research questions	6
1.5 Research Assumptions.....	6
1.6 Significance of the Study.....	7
1.7 Scope and limitations of the Study.....	7
1.8 Review of related Literature	8
1.9 Theoretical Framework.....	20
1.10 Research Methodology	24
1.11 Data Collection	26
1.12 Data Analysis.....	26
1.13 Chapter Presentation.....	27
CHAPTER TWO	29
THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF COFFEE PRODUCTION IN KIAMBU COUNTY 1912-1939	29
2.0 Introduction	29
2.1 Pre-Colonial History of Human Settlement in Kiambu County.....	29
2.2 Pre-Colonial Socio-Economic and Political Organisation of the Kikuyu of Kiambu	31
2.2.1 Pre-Colonial Social Organisation of the Kikuyu in Kiambu.....	31
2.2.2 Pre-Colonial Political Organization of the Kikuyu in Kiambu	33
2.2.3 Pre-Colonial Economic Organisation of the Kikuyu in Kiambu County.....	34
2.3 Establishment of Colonial Rule in Kenya and Land Alienation in Kiambu	37

2.4 Coffee Growing in Kiambu County Before and During the First World War 1914-1918	40
2.4.1 Labour Supply in Kiambu Coffee Farms Before and During the First World War 1914-1918.....	42
2.4.2 Coffee Growing in Kiambu County During the Inter-War Period, 1919-1939.....	47
2.4.3 Supply of Labour in Kiambu Coffee Farms During the Inter-War Period 1919-1939	51
2.4.4 Chapter Conclusion	59
CHAPTER THREE	61
COFFEE PRODUCTION IN KIAMBU COUNTY DURING AND AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-1950	61
3.0 Introduction	61
3.1 Coffee Production in Kiambu During the Second World War 1939-1945	61
3.2 Labour Supply in Coffee Farms in Kiambu County during the Second World War 1939-1945.....	66
3.3 Coffee Growing in Kiambu County after the Second World War 1945-1950.....	71
3.4 Chapter Conclusion	74
CHAPTER FOUR.....	76
AFRICAN COFFEE PRODUCTION IN KIAMBU COUNTY 1950-1962.....	76
4.0 Introduction	76
4.1 The delay of African Coffee Production in Kiambu County.....	76
4.2 Experimental and Unlawful African Coffee Growing in Colonial Kenya and Kiambu County	82
4.3 Official Sanctioning of African Coffee Growing in Kiambu County	86
4.4 Mau Mau Rebellion and Its Impact on African Coffee Growing in Kiambu County 1951-1954	90
4.5 The Swynnerton Plan and African Coffee Growing in Kiambu County 1954-1959	92
4.6 African Coffee Growing in Kiambu County on the eve of Independence 1957-1962	96
4.7 The Role of African Coffee Cooperative Societies in Colonial Kenya.....	103
4.8 Chapter Conclusion	107
CHAPTER FIVE.....	109
AFRICAN COFFEE GROWING AND THE ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION OF KIAMBU COUNTY 1963-1978.....	109
5.0 Introduction	109

5.1 The Place of Coffee in Kenya’s Development at Independence	109
5.2 Coffee Growing and the Transformation of Kiambu County 1964-1970	116
5.3 Coffee Growing and Economic Transformation of Kenya 1970-1974.....	123
5.4 Coffee Growing and the Transformation of Kiambu County 1970-1974	125
5.5 Coffee Growing and Economic Transformation of Kenya 1974-78	129
5.6 Coffee Growing and the Transformation of Kiambu County 1974-78	131
5.7 Chapter Conclusion	135
CHAPTER SIX.....	136
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	136
6.1 SUMMARY	136
6.2 CONCLUSION	140
6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS	140
REFERENCES	142
PRIMARY SOURCES	142
ARCHIVAL SOURCES	142
SECONDARY SOURCES.....	145
BOOKS.....	145
INTERNET SOURCES.....	149
APPENDIX	150
List of Informants	150
Location of Kiambu County in Kenya	151

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Small farm coffee production as percentage of total production.....	110
Table 2: Cash crop share of recorded marketed production (% age of total production of marketed crops).....	111
Table 3: Quantity of marketed cash crops.....	114
Table 4: Kenya's agricultural exports 1962 and 1970 (in £ million).....	114
Table 5: Development expenditure on agricultural research for selected crops (in Pounds).....	124
Table 6: Gross marketed cash crops production (in K£).....	130
Table 7: Membership turnover and market share of the most important agricultural marketing cooperatives ¹ in Kenya by activity (1977)	131

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Arabica coffee was first grown in the cool highlands of Ethiopia. Besides the fact that it was first grown in Ethiopia; the origins of coffee are lost in a legend. It is said that an Ethiopia goat herd named Kaldi was the first to feel caffeine's stimulant nature. He noticed that when his goat ate the berries and leaves of wild coffee trees they became impish than usual. Curious, Kaldi decided to try the berries himself and found they got him stimulated too. He showed them to a nearby holy man and described their extraordinary effects. The holy man refused to listen and dismissively threw the beans onto some glowing embers. Before long; however, the aroma of roasting coffee caused him to wonder if something that produced such a delicious fragrance might not perhaps be divinely ordained. He lifted the dark roasted beans from the ashes and put them into water to cool, thus making the first cup of coffee (Milinga et al. 2008).

It is difficult to have more accurate information on the origin of the drink, although it is known that African people, such as the Galla of Ethiopia, harvested coffee berries which they ground, mixed with animal fat or butter and rolled into lumps or balls. These were carried on long journeys and eaten both as food and as stimulant (Millinga et al. 2008). This threatened the market for the 'forbidden-wine' (alcohol), not only at the African monastery but far beyond into Arabia, later into Turkey and to rest of the coffee world (Minai 2014)

As for how the word coffee entered the English language, there are different theories that have been advanced. One is that the word may have entered the English language by the way of the Italian *caffè*, the French *café*, the Dutch *koffie* and the Turkish word *kahveh*, which all in turn derive from the Arabic word *qahwa*. It is also possible that the name, like coffee itself has its origin from Ethiopia as the crop first grew there in the Kaffa region (Milinga et al. 2008). Today, coffee is consumed as one of the world's leading beverages. Consequently, it is grown in a multitude of countries around the world more particularly in Asia, Africa, Central and South America as well as in the Caribbean and Pacific Islands.

Coffee trees produce their best beans when grown at high altitudes in a tropical climate where there is rich soil. Such conditions are found around the world in locations along the Equatorial zone, between latitudes 25 degrees North and 30 degrees South. Besides location, other factors which affect the quality and flavor of coffee include the variety of the plant, the chemistry of the soil in which it is grown, the weather, the amount of rainfall and sunshine, and the precise altitude at which the coffee grows. These variables account for the various qualities of coffee which are produced around the world. Some of the ecological and climatic conditions which favour the growth of coffee are found in Kenya.

Mr. T. J Anderson the first entomologist of the department of agriculture noted that;

-----from the comparison of Kaffa country with kikuyu our oldest plant here being 18 years old and still sound, strong and bearing splendidly, showing no sign of exhaustion. I am of the opinion that we can expect the trees to keep for about 50 years, bearing well, if properly looked after.

Coffee growing was introduced in Kenya by missionaries and, later on, by European farmers (Bichanga and Kabaka 2013). It was first planted in Kenya at the French Catholic Mission in Bura on the slopes of Taita hills as early as 1895. The plant perhaps, was first introduced Mr. John Peterson, on behalf of Scottish mission, in the year 1893. The seed was obtained from the agents (Smith Mackenzie and Co.) of the British India Company of Aden. It was sown at Kibwezi and in 1896 the first crop was reaped (Hill 1956). Due to the hot and dry climate, the coffee did not do well in Kibwezi.

Available evidence seems to prove that the coffee at St. Austin's mission was derived, via Bura from mocha seed and the coffee at the Church of Scotland mission; kikuyu was derived via Kibwezi, from seed, probably mocha, almost certainly acquired from Abyssinia. The majority of the coffee plantations started during the first decade of the 19th century were planted with seed from St. Austin's mission at Nairobi or St. Augustine mission at Kikuyu. The trees were predominantly of mocha origin. The mixed nature of this mocha material had proved to be a valuable asset in the development of coffee planting in Kenya (Hill 1956).

Colonial government in Kenya encouraged white settlers to grow coffee on large scale, in order to bolster its exports. This is because Kenya, at the time, did not have a lot of minerals to exploit for economic development. In the initial years of its production, Africans were not allowed to grow coffee. It was feared that if Africans grew coffee, they would not supply labour on European farms. In addition, European farmers did not want competition from Africans. Also, Africans were considered illiterate who could not understand how to effectively apply skills required in the production of quality coffee. European farmers, thus, feared the spread of pests and diseases from African-grown coffee

onto their farms. Gradually, though, the situation changed and Africans were allowed to grow coffee but only on small-scale (Njunu 2013). Most of the Africans continued to supply labour on European-owned large coffee farms where most of them resided as squatters.

Post-colonial Kenyan government encouraged the growth of coffee as an export crop. Indeed, coffee exports remained to be the leading foreign exchange earner for the country for many years after independence (Njunu 2013, Kegode 2005). The government encouraged coffee growers to operate under cooperative societies. Large scale African farmers were allowed membership to the Kenya Planters Cooperative Union in 1965. The Union which had come into existence in 1932 had failed to accept African membership. Processing and marketing of coffee was coordinated through a long chain process; linking the farmers, the cooperative societies, unions and private estates with KPCU, the Coffee Board of Kenya and ultimately with the consumer. This structure gave the small scale farmers very limited control of marketing their produce. Before entry of Kiambu African coffee growers, the industry had been dominated by European settlers. Coffee growing among Africans in Kiambu commenced with the local administrators, mainly colonial chiefs. Africans who collaborated with the colonial establishment were, thus, rewarded with permission to grow coffee. This study examined the history of coffee production in Kiambu County.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Coffee production in Kiambu County was of paramount importance to Africans in that it transformed their socio-economic lives. An analysis of the historical changes that were

driven by ardent advocates of coffee production in Kiambu had not been undertaken. Chief Koinange and Harry Thuku for instance hailed from Kiambu, they had immense contribution to the licensing of African coffee production yet an in depth research on this, had not been undertaken. The economic marginalisation driven by cash crop production did not entirely affect the Kikuyu people in the same way. This research thus, established that there were different economic dynamics that characterised the economic set up of Kiambu due to its proximity to Nairobi. The different economic alternatives that Africans engaged in had not been examined critically to establish that not all Africans in Kiambu were driven to the periphery by colonial economy. The role of chiefs as partial collaborators had not also been examined to establish that they agitated for economic rights in an attempt to position themselves to reap from capitalism during colonialism and post-colonial era.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

Objectives of the study are:

- i. To investigate the origin and development of coffee production in Kiambu County from 1912 to 1950.
- ii. To examine the role of Africans in coffee production in Kiambu County from 1950 to 1963.
- iii. To analyse the contribution of African coffee production to the economic transformation of Kiambu County from 1963 to 1978.

1.4 Research questions

This study focused on the following research questions:-

- i. How did coffee production commence and develop in Kiambu County?
- ii. What role did the Africans play in coffee production in Kiambu County?
- iii. How did African coffee production contribute to the economic transformation of
Kiambu County after independence?

1.5 Research Assumptions

The introduction of coffee growing in Kenya was researched basing on two assumptions. The first assumption was that, it would contribute towards economic development of the country. The second was that, it would contribute towards the modernisation of the country's agricultural sector as well as the entire economy. Kiambu is one of the areas in Kenya where coffee growing was introduced during the early years of colonial establishment. Coffee growing in Kiambu County spilled over into the post-independence period. A study on the extent to which coffee growing has contributed to the economic transformation and development of Kiambu County had not been undertaken. On the other hand, dependency theorists have asserted that the growing of export crops such as coffee creates underdevelopment, since the crop is exported as a raw material at a lower cost and imported as a processed product at a higher price.

1.6 Significance of the Study

Coffee growing was introduced in Kiambu with a view to enhancing both local and national economic growth. For some time, since its inception, coffee growing was highly embraced by those who grew it because it generated income and wealth. In recent years, however, coffee farmers have not been happy with the growing of this crop. By undertaking a historical study such as this one, it has been possible to provide an understanding of the reasons which motivated and later on discouraged coffee growing in Kiambu. Based on the findings of this study, both the national and county government can design intervention measures which can help shape the destiny of coffee growing in Kiambu for the benefit of the farmer and the government.

This study is also significant because it has filled a missing gap in existing literature. Before undertaking this study, much of the literature available about coffee production in Kiambu County was of general nature. Now there is historical work which primarily devotes itself to examining the history of Coffee growing in Kiambu County. This study investigated the origin of coffee production in Kiambu County; it also examined the role of Africans in coffee production and analysed the economic transformation of Kiambu region due to coffee production. In meeting these objectives, the study has helped to promote an intellectual understanding of the history behind coffee growing in Kiambu County and the transformation that was witnessed.

1.7 Scope and limitations of the Study

Kiambu County was chosen for this research because one of the vocal proponents for African coffee production, the late chief Mbiyu Koinange, hailed from Kiambu. The

County, however, has experienced a tremendous change with the vast coffee estates being turned into real estate. It was hence interesting to look into the chronological order of events as they unfolded in coffee production, since its introduction in Kiambu County in 1912. The study stopped at the year 1978 because this is the time when the first president of post-colonial Kenya died. A lot has been said about how Kenyatta favoured development in Kiambu County because it was his birth place. It was interesting to examine how the Kenyatta regime helped nurture coffee growing in this county. Also the post-colonial period, between 1963 and 1978 provides ample period within which one can examine the impact of post independent government policies on coffee growing in Kiambu County.

1.8 Review of related Literature

Colonialism and underdevelopment in Kenya, East Africa and Africa is a theme which has been well captured by the works of Banaji (1977), Bernstein (1977), Cooper (1981), Rodney (1981), Brett (1973) and Leys (1975), among others. These authors in their work debate about the contours of underdevelopment and dependency in Kenya's agricultural sector by noting how colonialism catalysed Kenya's integration into the world capitalist economy while fostering economic measures that resulted in unbalanced development. These works are important in helping articulate the theoretical framework upon which this study is hinged.

According to Brett (1973) colonial-led colonial government designed Kenya's economic policy to be complementary to, not competitive with, the metropolitan economy. This, as Brett (1973) points out, implied an emphasis on the export of primary products, such as coffee, coupled with the import of British industrial goods. This resulted in an unbalanced

pattern of development that never produced the secondary and tertiary economic activities necessary to sustain local industrialization. Moreover, Brett notes that the dominance of the white settler community along with the state's control over all spheres of economic life further exacerbated the structural imbalances.

The wide range of restrictions on African agriculture coupled with the colonial state's oligopolisation of manufacturing and marketing under European and Asian control inhibited the emergence of indigenous "social forces... able to create a political basis strong enough to enable them to change the terms of which these cumulative unequal exchanges that now take place." Thus, Brett's and Ley's works help to reinforce the theoretical framework used in this study.

Kitching (1982) demonstrate that capitalist accumulation was already emerging among some Kenyans during the colonial period as a result of agricultural exports. Such studies however, fail to capture the situation of capitalist accumulation in Kiambu County during the colonial period as a result of coffee exports. This study will attempt to fill this missing gap in existing literature.

Van Zwanenberg (1975) in his work tackles the debate on the nature of colonial accumulation and rightly argues that by 1919 it had been agreed by both the imperial and colonial authority to develop exports through European estate plantations rather than African peasant production. Van Zwanenberg points out that capital had to be generated within the system, and that this could only be achieved by extracting surplus from the product of African labour. His assertion that primitive colonial accumulation was the process of struggle which involved taking a larger proportion of the resources from the

general community and transferring it to the European sector, is supported by similar studies such as those by Wolff (1974), Tignor (1976) and Stichter (1982) who all agree with Van Zwanenberg's argument. This study established that coffee growing in Kiambu contributed to the underdevelopment of the County. This view fits in well with the tenets of the dependency theory which posits that coffee growing for export took away the economic surplus from Kiambu, thereby under-developing the area.

Tignor (1976) rightly admitted that among the three groups, the Kikuyu were affected most by the process of change, through loss of land to white settlers. He noted that most of the Kikuyu who lost land were quickly and dramatically turned into an agricultural proletariat for the white farmers. This is corroborated by evidence from studies such as those by Wolff (1974) and Stichter (1982). This study explored the question as to whether the taking away of land from the Kikuyu of Kiambu automatically led the Kikuyu to offer labour on whites' coffee farms. The study found out that, on the contrary, the Kikuyu of Kiambu engaged themselves in activities away from offering labour on white-owned coffee farms. They had the advantage of being close to the City of Nairobi. As a result, they planted food crops which they supplied the Nairobi population. They also exploited other avenues which included migrating to other areas where they found land for settlement. These areas included the Rift Valley and the Kambaland.

Stichter (1982) and Maxon (2003) concur that areas which were already experiencing population pressure by the time Kenya was being colonized, such as Central Province (Kikuyuland), Central and Northern Nyanza districts, immediately entered the colonial economy without coercion. Even though, the Kikuyu of Kiambu exploited the economic

avenues which the capitalist-leaning colonial government provided in great measure. They, however, would have reaped immense benefits from the capitalist economy if, their land had not been taken away for coffee growing. This study found out, contrary to the findings of other studies, that the Kikuyu of Kiambu, rather than offer cheap labour on white-owned coffee farms decided, instead to sell food crops to the urban population residing in Nairobi. This was more profitable than selling their labour.

Tignor's study (1976) asserts that, the presence of powerful collaborating chiefs among the Kikuyu contributed to their early entry into wage labouring is only partly true going by the findings of this study. Kiambu colonial chiefs such as Koinange were partial collaborators with the colonial government. In most cases they agitated for the rights of their people especially in matters of land. A lot of political agitation sprung from among the Kikuyu of Kiambu and chiefs were part of them. This contributed to the laxity with which ordinary Kikuyu collaborated with the colonial government as well as with white coffee growers.

From the 1950s all the way to the 1970s, studies focused on agrarian change in Kenya assessing the importance of emerging class of African capitalists. Warren's studies (1973) on *'Imperialism and Capitalist Industrialization'* is a case in point. This study sought to understand how this emerging class of African capitalists captured the coffee cooperative movement for their own benefit. Indeed, the findings are interesting. The cooperative movement was captured by the emerging Kenyan elite which mismanaged the movement to the detriment of the smallholder coffee farmers. Such studies influenced Leys (1975) to reorient his conceptual stance on the nature of Kenya's national bourgeoisie under conditions of dependent capitalism. In particular, Cowen's study of the historical patterns

of indigenous accumulation in wattle production in the Central Province of Kenya was particularly influential in inducing Leys (1975) to rethink his early seminal work. Cowen's work, which was backed by hard evidence, revealed that there was an indigenous class of capitalist accumulators among the Kikuyu long before the agrarian reforms of the 1950s took place. Cowen noted that by the 1940s this class of indigenous accumulators had not only established forms of commodity production based on the direct employment of wage labour, but were also already competing with the European and Asian merchant capitalists. Indeed, notwithstanding the constraints that the colonial economy imposed in the form of settler monopolies and the intervention of foreign capital, this class reproduced itself over the years as "an independent social force" whose propensity for accumulation did not fit the object of expanded colonial production. From the late 1970s, the weight of research on the Kenyan agrarian debate shifted to the analysis of internal process of change under colonialism, especially class formation and changing forms of production and labour. The Kenyan agrarian debates of the late 1970s and early 1980s were now based on the peasantry and indigenous class formations. Atieno-Odhiambo (1974) and Ng'ang'a (1981) were basically concerned with the issues of the Kenyan peasantry.

Kitching, writing on the impact of colonial capitalism, particularly about how it forced Africans to engage in colonial economy, is concerned with the patterns of class formation within society. He rightly points out that the late twenties and the thirties were the crucial time when the essential parameters of socio-economic differentiation among households were laid down in the most densely populated, agriculturally developed and commercialized areas of Kenya. Kitching's study (1982) is significant to this study of

South Nyanza because it contains important information on agrarian change during the pre-colonial and colonial era.

Beinart (1982) argues that in order to assess African responses to the colonial economy, it is crucial to focus on political, social, economic and cultural factors that influenced their reaction to market forces. He notes that, while a small group of wealthier peasants were able to accumulate resources and survive on land, the majority became marginalized. This is typical of capitalist mode of production. This study sought to know if capitalist production of coffee had such an impact on the Kikuyu of Kiambu. The study established that the Kikuyu of Kiambu did not experience the marginalizing effect of capitalism the same way. This is because, while some offered cheap labour on European coffee farms, a majority decided to migrate away from Kiambu while others grew food crops for sale in the adjacent Nairobi markets. The key finding that emerges from Beinart's work (1982) is the emergence of a class of capitalist accumulators as a result of the linkage between the pre-colonial African economy and the capitalist mode of production. The other crucial point articulated in his study is the regional variations in response to the colonial economy. This concurs with the evidence of studies such as those of Njonjo (1981) and Ng'ang'a (1981), who as has already been noted, argue that there was an emergence of indigenous capitalist accumulators in the Central Province of Kenya during colonial rule.

Studies by Stichter (1982) and Kanogo (1987) reveal how colonial labour and agrarian demands transformed pre-colonial economies of Kenyan societies, and how Africans responded creatively to the new colonial opportunities and constraints. While these studies point out that through the appropriation of African land, oppressive taxation, forced labour and the creation of marketing and financial institutions, which were biased against

Africans, Africans were marginalized by the colonial economy, the same studies fail to point out how some Africans seized opportunities provided by colonial capitalism to enrich themselves. This study attempts to highlight this aspect.

While studies have underscored the under-developing nature of coffee production to African small scale farmers, there are those studies which have focused on how to make coffee growing productive to the economy (Karugu 2006, Gathura 2013).

Some studies have associated the Mau Mau uprising with the alienation of African land as well as the use of such land for agricultural production. Thus, overcrowded and many lacking alternative livelihoods, the Native Reserves were fertile grounds for rebellion. It eventually happened in 1952 in Central Province, with the eruption of the so-called 'Mau Mau' rebellion. The underlying reason for this uprising was poverty caused by the massive expropriation of Kikuyu land by European settlers. The colonial state introduced reforms in African agriculture during the post war period to mitigate the increasingly desperate socio-economic conditions in the African reserves (Wanyande, Omosa and Ludeki 2007). This study found out that African elite who led the Mau Mau rebellion nurtured selfish interests rather the interests of the masses. At independence, the Kikuyu elite simply replaced the White exploiters. This is well seen in the manner in which cooperatives were managed. Those who benefited were those who ran the activities of the cooperative movement just the same way that the political class benefited from state resources.

Economic exploitation had pushed the Africans to a point of taking arms making an uprising inevitable. However, after publication of the Swynnerton plan in 1954 and the beginning of its implementation in 1955, cotton and wattle bark and as a percentage

component of the total value of agricultural exports from Kenya show an equally statistically significant downward trend of almost 10% per annum under the base year for the period 1955 to 1962, indicating that African farmers, hard pressed to commercially exportable agricultural products, capitalized on the opportunity to expand into coffee and other areas of specialization (Ochieng and Maxon 1992) .

The Swynnerton Plan (1952-1954) was officially known as “A Plan for the Intensification of Native Agriculture.” It was an agricultural reform programme proposed by an Assistant Director of Agriculture in the Colonial Administration, a Mr. R.I. Swynnerton. Its motivation was both political and economic. By initiating the modernisation of African agriculture, it was hoped to form a stable capitalist economy which would starve off rebellion. The intention was to pacify an increasingly restive indigenous population which with each passing moment was demanding more concessions from the colonial government. These reforms slowed down the momentum that was generated by the ‘Mau Mau’ rebellion in agitating for independence.

Chief Koinange was among the first African in Kiambu to grow Coffee as he was among the vocal Africans who had agitated to be given a chance to grow it. Koinange was considered a progressive chief and thus it was not a surprise when he became the first African to produce coffee in Kiambu. In 1915 Northcote praised his effort to suppress drinking, his encouragement of education and his adoption of European farming techniques (Kipkorir 1980).

In other words, the first thrust of State support to indigenous development involved the rapid transfer of land in the former White highlands through the settlement schemes. By

1975 several large foreign owned estates still remained producing commodities such as tea, sisal and coffee. We learn, however from Gavin Kitching in his book *Class and Economic Change in Kenya* that in the period 1958 to 1968 the gross farm revenue of African Smallholders in Kenya from a little under Ksh 8m to over Ksh 34m, an increase of 420 percent in a decade. The largest single item in this growth was Coffee production, which was worth a little over ksh1 million in 1958 and nearly Ksh 8.5 million nine years later (Ochieng 1989).

Africans were allowed to grow cash crops without a clear policy of how to administer and market it without being exploited. Half a century later the growing of coffee had failed to really alleviate poverty among the small scale farmers due to exploitation. The new African owners on the plantations were no better off than their counterparts in the mixed farms, but there were fewer of them. They took badly neglected farms which needed nursing for several years and heavy injection of capital to bring them back to full production. These farmers were beset by a combination of problems such as lack of authority over members, indiscipline, interference with management decisions by members, and inadequate financial and managerial expertise (Heyer, Maitha, and Senga 1979).

Furthermore, Africans were to borrow money against the security of the title. L.SB Leakey notes that ultimately, borrowing would greatly exceed the resources of Kenya. However, if the development of cash crop growing is pressed as intensively as suggested in this plan, the African farmer will in due course be able to secure a substantial income of his own which will be reinvested in his farm and will therefore not be so much in need of outside assistances (Leakey 1956).

The demand for Africans to be incorporated in the co-operative movement had begun in 1940s with the sentiments of Africans being aired by Eliud Mathu in parliament. This is affirmed by Ochieng and Maxon (1992) when they note that; in addition there was open agitation from African producers and their representatives, especially senior Chief Koinange and Eliud Mathu (the first African representative in the Legislative Council) for African participation in the cooperative movement (Ochieng and Maxon 1992).

A visit to a co-operative expert at the time, W.S Campbell would shed more light on what the future held for Africans who would join the cooperative movement. He confirmed that co-operative marketing organizations would be appropriate for African growers particularly those producing cash crops such as coffee. Campbell recommended that Africans be encouraged and assisted to organize cooperative groups. The government passed cooperative societies ordinance in 1945 to facilitate this. The following year, a cooperative department was established under the ministry of African affairs (Ochieng and Maxon 1992).

Registration of cooperatives was speeded up after 1951. This was partly the result of the fact that rising prices for most primary products made it easier to entice African household to become involved. Between 1951 and 1959, 511 cooperatives were registered. The colonial state was also very interested given the political climate engendered by the emergency, to provide a means for the middle class farmer, which it wished to succor as a buffer against rural radicalism, to market his produce. Thus, most new cooperatives were registered in central province, but cooperatives membership grew remarkably in what would become Kisii and Bungoma Districts as well (Ochieng and Maxon 1992).

In haste to set up cooperative societies for the colonial government convenience, it hampered the setting up of credible, efficient and ethic based institutions. Cooperative societies failed to find the right footing in the management of coffee production. It was incredible to find out how the internal structures of coffee factories have evolved over the years. During the colonial period, as may be recalled, each colony was made to produce a single cash crop or two, and no attempts were made to diversify the agricultural economy. The habit of producing these single cash crops appears to have become so ingrained that it has not been changed to any appreciable degree since independence (Adu Boahen 1987).

Inefficiencies were also serious though as the 1968 Economic Survey put it: A determination in the quality of small holder coffee has been a cause for concern for several years. A major contributory factor in declining quality had been the severe shortage of adequate processing capacity in the society factories. Coffee authority was set up in 1967 to tackle this problem..... The quality of management in the society factories also, has not always been involved in undertaking adequate intensive courses to improve their capabilities. Factory managers have been organized and steps taken to replace those unable to perform their function efficiently (Heyer, Maitha and Senga 1979).

Matters disintegrated in the coffee sector as the Kenyan economy began to have turbulence in the 1970s. The deterioration in the balance of payments, is one of the factors responsible for the inflation which Kenya was experiencing from 1973 to 1975. Before 1973, Kenya was remarkably free from inflationary pressures. In the 1960s, the cost of living rose by little over 2 percent per annum, and Kenya was used as a shining example of how to develop quite rapidly without inflation. By 1973-1974, however, inflation had really set in with the cost of living rising at an annual rate of 15 to 20 percent. The inflation could be

attributed not only to rising import prices, but also to monetary factors within Kenya, and rising food prices to keep up with export parities as well as rising production costs (Heyer, Maitha and Senga 1979).

Kenya Planters Cooperative Union faced enormous challenges in marketing of coffee which would lead to its decline and eventually be put under receivership. The handling and payment system were fairly laborious and slowed down the flow of coffee from the farmer to the importer. Overhead costs associated with these procedures were high meaning that farmers received a lower proportion of the exporter price than they would have in a more efficient system. Payments to farmers were often late and resources were siphoned off the system at various levels (Daviron and Ponte 2005).

Small scale farmers, thus, failed to reap enough from the growing of coffee. For all the economic progress made by cooperatives there still remained hurdles to surmount for cooperative societies to fully exploit their potential. Perhaps, the most crucial issue remained the pay-off of the small-scale farmers received for their crop through the cooperative. If, it is regarded as uneconomic by the farmers, no amount of exhortation for him to work harder and produce more will likely have much success. Securing a profitable return to the member thus, has been and will remain the most crucial single factor in achieving the smooth functioning of agricultural marketing cooperatives (Ochieng and Maxon 1992).

Despite many writers carrying out various researches about coffee growing, little has been written pertaining native coffee growing especially in reference to Kiambu County. This study investigated the origin of coffee production in Kiambu County, it also examined the

role of Africans in coffee production and analysed the economic transformation of Kiambu region due to coffee production.

1.9 Theoretical Framework

The study made use of modernisation theory and dependency theory. The concepts of development and underdevelopment are at the center stage of both theories. Whereas modernisation theory equates modernisation with development, dependency theory attributes underdevelopment of Africa to economic exploitation of the West. Modernisation theorists argue that Africa has failed to develop because of failing to follow the path that Western countries followed towards development. Dependency theorists on their part argue that, the encounter between Africa and the West accounts for the underdevelopment of the former and the development of the latter. The relevance, relationship and applicability of these theories to this study are discussed in this section.

The theory of modernisation is closely tied up with colonization of Africa. Colonisation, of Africa, was justified as a civilising and modernising mission. Africa needed both civilization and modernisation because it was a 'dark continent' inhabited by primitive and backward people. Colonisers viewed Africans as people engaged in unproductive and backward economic activities. Their farming practices were archaic and un-modern and therefore would not guarantee any development. Thus, colonisers of Africa came up with development policies couched in modernisation terms. Modernisation incorporated the full spectrum of the transition and drastic transformation that a traditional society had to undergo in order to become modern (Hussain *et al.*, 1981; Lenin, 1964). Colonised societies were to be made to follow developmental footsteps of Europe (largely the former

coloniser of Africa). In order to raise the standard of living of Kenyan societies, the colonial government introduced policies which would transform societies.

Upon the establishment of colonial government in Africa, attempts were made to modernise agriculture in the colonies by encouraging farmers to try new crops, new production methods and new marketing skills (Ellis and Biggs, 2001). It is against this background that we understand the importance attributed to introduction of coffee farming in Kenya during the colonial period. Coffee growing was developed in Kenya and in Kiambu as a measure that would help realise economic development and human advancement. Modernisation of agriculture led to hybridisation of coffee seedling, pesticides and fertilizers use and application of other scientific knowledge to replace traditional agricultural practices. According to Smith (1973), modernisation is about exchanging of older agricultural practices with something more recent. Agricultural societies can therefore be regarded as modern when they display specific characteristics. Modern societies, according to Coetzee *et al.* (2007: 31) are those which exhibit the following characteristics: (i) Readiness to accommodate the process of transformation resulting from changes; (ii) Continuous broadening of life experiences and receptiveness to new knowledge (iii) Continuous planning, calculability and readiness towards new experiences (iv) Predictability of action and the ability to exercise effective control; (v) High premium on technical skills and understanding of the principles of production (vi) Changing attitudes to kinship, family roles, family size and the role of religion (vii) Changing consumer behaviour and the acceptance of social stratification. Notably, modernisation strategies and policies are common to both the pre and post-colonial states in Africa.

At the time of colonisation, no African society in Kenya possessed the above qualities. It is for this reason that colonialists, including missionaries, labeled Africa as ‘dark continent’ which needed to be enlightened (modernised). Promoters of modernity believed that the underdeveloped areas needed to benefit from the scientific advances and industrial progress of the West. Thus, the West took upon itself the responsibility of developing Africa through colonisation because Africa’s development was lagging far behind other regions of the world as a result of the obvious ‘innate’ inferiority of black people to master the socio-economic and technological environment that was necessary for improving their social and economic conditions.

Upon colonial establishment, White farmers and missionaries started growing coffee in Kenya as one way of modernising the Kenyan economy and improving economic wellbeing of the colony. The crop was meant for export with the initial years of its inception, it was grown by whites only. Africans, it was argued, lacked the necessary modern skills to grow coffee and if allowed, they would produce poor quality coffee. So they were to be apprenticed by the European farmers until such time as they would be able to grow quality coffee. Africans’ contact with coffee growing in the initial years of colonisation was limited to supplying labour on white-owned coffee farms.

Indeed, a lot of coffee left Kenya for export. As this happened however, the level of economic development in the colony as well as the economic wellbeing of Africans continued to lag behind. This state of affairs invited criticisms from dependency theorists who argued that colonisation and modernisation were malicious and misdirected. Rodney (1972) in his book *“How Europe underdeveloped Africa”* clearly demonstrates the empires of Mali and Songhai in West Africa, Tshaka in Zululand, Mossi to the East of Mali and the

kingdom of Dahomey in the central part of Africa where some of the most powerful in wealth and territorial expansion. The economies of the above states were composed of farmers, artists (gold and silver smiths, weavers, wood carvers, cloth makers, medicine men – experts in naturopathy), and sculptors of wood, iron and terracotta. Samir *et al.* (1987) and Rodney (1972) claim that the economies in Africa used advanced African technology and techniques.

Dependency theorists argue that the West desired to change Africa's development course in favour of theirs. Modernisation theory was criticized by dependency theorists because it encourages the foreign powers to prescribe the route to Africa's development. The modernisation route of development was a Eurocentric experiment which failed to pull the continent out of poverty and underdevelopment. Modernisation was successful in creating dependency of colonies and post-colonies on the West. Coffee growing in Kenya and Kiambu provides sufficient ground to justify this dependency relationship. Raw coffee was grown for export and was subjected to further manufacturing. The value added to coffee after manufacturing meant that it would be sold for a higher price. Much of the re-manufactured coffee was imported by the colonies at a higher price. Africa was, thus, reduced to the status of supplying raw materials to the west at a cheaper price and consuming industrial products from the West at a higher price.

In addition, much of the labour employed in the production of raw materials for export was cheap, sometimes free. This added to further exploitation of colonies and post-colonies. This relationship which began in the colonial days continues even today. Coffee from Kiambu is mainly for export and in spite of the huge profits accruing from coffee growing and consumption, farmers in Kiambu continue to languish in poverty and

underdevelopment. According to Rodney (1972), the colonial conquest that followed the 1884 to 1885's Berlin Conference (partition of Africa) established a comprehensive economic and political domination of Africa by the West. Africa's endogenous development path was discarded in favour of an 'external driven development path' which was and is still manipulated by the metropolis. There has to be a paradigm shift if Africa is to reclaim its right to chart a new way to development.

Thus, modernisation theory fails to account for the increasing impoverishment of the Kiambu coffee farmers over the years. It is for this reason that this study adopts dependency theory as basis for trying to understand the cause of poverty and underdevelopment which result from coffee production in Kiambu. Borrowing from Rodney's analysis of Africa's underdevelopment, this study established that it is the relationship between Europe and Africa during colonialism which enabled Europe to organize itself with regard to accumulating capital gained from her colonies in Africa and shrewdly investing the surplus in productive economy thereby steadfastly increasing national wealth and riches for its people.

1.10 Research Methodology

This section highlights the methodology which was used in carrying out this study. Historiography which depends on the use of primary sources and other evidence was used to carry out the research. It focuses on the past, thus helping in generating a sense of continuity of from the past as various events unfolded. The major steps involved included; data collection, analysis of data based on emerging themes and presentation of the findings.

Archival documents included district annual reports, provincial annual reports and agricultural reports which were analysed under different themes.

The research focused on Kiambu County. The county is vast, comprising of several sub-counties. In identifying the area of study, purposive sampling was used. Githunguri and Gatundu constituencies were purposively sampled as only a limited number of people were needed for the oral information to complement and corroborate archival information.

Through use of snowball sampling the initial informants were used to highlight other key respondents that gave crucial information making the research a success. Komothai ward had the most respondents as its success in coffee production was unrivalled to other parts of Kiambu County especially after Africans were allowed to produce the crop. The research employed question guides as a tool of collecting oral data enabling the researcher to capture as much details as possible from the respondents' own wealth of knowledge.

In obtaining oral data, question guides with different sub-themes on coffee production were used to collect information from oral informants who comprised of persons between the ages of 75 to 90 years. In choosing this age bracket, it was done in order to capture the period under research. They had witnessed various changes in the coffee sector, as they gave an account of events as they unfolded at the time. But, informants beyond 90 years had memory lose hence they lacked credibility as they could not articulate various events in the past clearly. The different historical timeframes and changes that were witnessed helped to classify the content that was researched.

The question guides were administered by the author, assisted by two research assistants. Even though most of the respondents possessed knowledge of English, there were a few

who could only be spoken to in Kiswahili and Kikuyu languages. Both the author and his research assistants were knowledgeable in Kikuyu and Kiswahili languages and were thus, able to provide translated versions of the question guides.

Choice of respondents was based upon an individual's wealth of knowledge regarding coffee growing in Kiambu County. Thus, coffee farmers, factory chairmen and directors of coffee cooperative societies were identified to provide vital information that helped achieve the research objectives. Both male and female respondents were targeted as they had different points of view especially on, whether coffee production did transform their lives or not.

1.11 Data Collection

The research mainly depended on available archival materials, secondary literature and oral interviews. Archival materials were accessed from the Kenya National Archives Nairobi. Secondary data was accessed from the Mount Kenya University Library, the National Library Services, the Coffee Research Institute Library in Ruiru as well as from various institutional and university research libraries. Some of the secondary data was obtained from personal/home libraries. Additional secondary data was accessed online from the internet. Oral interviews were used to complement and corroborate the data obtained from archival information and secondary sources.

1.12 Data Analysis

The researcher analysed the data collected qualitatively from oral interviews, archival information, library research and other official documents which were organized basing on emerging themes. Analysis was done in a way that helped achieve research objectives as

outlined in this study through use of different historical timelines, within which events unfolded. Analysis of data was done chronologically to historicise coffee production in Kiambu County.

1.13 Chapter Presentation

Chapter two examined the origins of coffee growing in Kiambu County between 1912 till 1939. This period is within which coffee growing emerged in Kiambu but between which Africans were not allowed to grow coffee.

Chapter three covered the Second World War period and the aftermath, 1939 till 1950. Africans having participated in the war, its impact was felt in the grassroots in terms of more pressure to put an end to economic exploitation among Africans

Chapter four covered the period between 1950 and 1963 and analysed the role of Africans in coffee growing in Kiambu County. This is after the pressure of the Mau Mau revolt, which made the colonial government lift the ban for Africans growing of cash crops. The goal was to examine the impact that Africans had if any, on coffee growing in Kiambu and the relationship between African coffee producers and the colonial government. The chapter also sought to establish if coffee growing by Africans led to any socio-economic and political changes among the African population as well as between Africans and the colonial government.

Chapter five covered the period between 1963 and 1978. This is the period when Kenya was served by President Kenyatta. Kenyatta hailed from Kiambu County and the goal was to examine his influence, as well as that of his government, on coffee growing.

Chapter six makes up for the summary, conclusion and recommendations of the research at a time when coffee once a lucrative crop is in jeopardy of being redundant due to its dwindling fortunes.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF COFFEE PRODUCTION IN KIAMBU COUNTY 1912-1939

2.0 Introduction

This chapter investigates the origin and development of coffee production in Kiambu County. Since coffee growing was a new crop which was introduced in Kiambu County after the establishment of colonial rule, this chapter begins by examining socio-economic and political history of Kiambu County prior to colonialism and the introduction of coffee farming. The next section examines pre-colonial history relating to the human settlement of Kiambu County.

2.1 Pre-Colonial History of Human Settlement in Kiambu County

The establishment of colonial government in Kenya, the settlement of white farmers in Kiambu and the subsequent introduction of coffee growing took place at a time when Kiambu County had been settled by people of Kikuyu ethnic community. Before Kikuyu settlement, Kiambu County had been settled by a race of the Athi (Boyes 1968). These people were hunters and gatherers and benefited from the thick forest which covered the entire Kiambu landscape. This forest had plenty of wild animals and hence formed an ideal environment for the hunter gatherer Athi community. Athi was a term which the Europeans, upon arrival in Kenya, used to describe the various hunting tribes that lived in the forest zones of today's Kenyan highlands. The Athi established temporary habitats and each group owned about 200 to 300 acres of hunting estates an indicator of low population

density. These areas, in the present Kiambu District, received high rainfall and were drained by many rivers.

Athi population mainly continued to depend on hunting as the main means of production until the arrival of the Kikuyu community (Leakey 1977). Before moving into the present Kiambu County, Kikuyu together with Cuka, Mbeere, Embu, Ndia and Gicugu migrated from Tigania and Igembe in Meru. They then expanded to Ithanga and Mbeere where they were able to consolidate themselves between 14th and 16th centuries. They then migrated to Mukurwe wa Gathanga in present day Murang'a District where they progressively developed into a distinct group (Muriuki 1974, Leakey 1977, Wanyoike 2002). When the Kikuyu came into the present Kiambu County, they bought out the Athi as noted thus:

Kiambu was the last district to be settled by the Kikuyu before the arrival of the Europeans. Pioneers were still streaming into the area when the first European settlers arrived from the Coast. Kikuyu settlement in Kiambu had followed a different pattern from settlement elsewhere. The Kikuyu pushing south from Murang'a found the forest lands they were entering in the possession of Athi hunters. Instead of driving them off, the Kikuyu bought the land from the Athi with payments of goats. These purchases, rare in the other Kikuyu areas, formed the basis for the land claims of Kiambu lineages (*mbari*) at the time of settlement and later when the lineages were trying to recover their lands from the settlers through the Kenya Land Commission (KNA/PC/CP.1/4/2).

The settlement of the Kikuyu in Kiambu County led most of the Athi to give up their hunting life because they intermarried with the Kikuyu. They gradually reduced in number mainly due to absorption by the Kikuyu and in the span of one or two generations they were almost completely absorbed.

In 1887, when the first European entered Kikuyuland, the Kikuyu of Kiambu had expanded and started occupying forested lands near Ngong Hills (Muriuki 1974, Leakey 1977). Their south-westward movement took them past Karura region towards the Maasai

border by mid-19th century. By 1880s they had now advanced towards Muguga, Kikuyu station, Uthiru, Limuru and Gatundu where mbari (clans) established clusters of homesteads in the areas they claimed (Muriuki 1974). These areas are found in present day Kiambu County. Thus, the Kiambu area, before white settlement, was characterized by socio-economic and political life of the Kikuyu. The economic landscape of the area was defined by the economic life of the Kikuyu. The next section briefly examines socio-economic and political organization of the Kikuyu of Kiambu before white settlement and introduction of coffee growing.

2.2 Pre-Colonial Socio-Economic and Political Organisation of the Kikuyu of Kiambu

This section is divided into three parts; the pre-colonial social organisation, the political organisation and the economic organisation of the Kikuyu in Kiambu.

2.2.1 Pre-Colonial Social Organisation of the Kikuyu in Kiambu

Socially, the basic social unit of the Kikuyu of Kiambu was the family and according to Musalia (2010), gender, age and seniority defined the roles, rights and responsibilities within the household and in the wider Kikuyu society. The Kikuyu lived in dispersed homesteads where each household (*Mucii*) consisted of the man's hut (*thingira*), the wife's hut (*nyumba*) and one or more grain stores (*ikumbi*-sing *Makumbi*-plural). In a polygamous family, children born of the same father could call themselves by the name of their father, and therefore belonged to their father's family. The family (*nyumba*) was the basic socio-political unit and was supposed to be economically self-sufficient. The household was made up of the wife or wives and their children. Several families made up a clan (*muhiriga*), which was an important institution of socio-political organisation among the

Kikuyu because through the clan one had a sense of belonging to the wider Kikuyu community (Sorrenson, 1967, Musalia, 2010). The Kikuyu have nine clans, which are all given female names according to the mythical story of the nine Gikuyu daughters (Muriuki, 1974).

Socially, gender disparities existed between the position of women and men since, with age, men became entirely independent while women were subjects of their male guardians as wives or daughters. But age and seniority helped women to gain some measure of power for example the first wife in a polygamous family had authority over her co-wives particularly by influencing her husband. An industrious first wife had to be consulted if the man wanted to marry again and sometimes she could sway the husband to marry and would even pick a girl for him. Co-wives assisted in the supply of the much needed agricultural labour for economic production. (Leakey, 1977, Musalia, 2010).

In the spiritual domain, the Kikuyu were a religious community who believed in a supreme supernatural God (*Ngai*). They believed the mountain was the official dwelling place for their God, and, therefore prayed turning to this mountain since he was the controller of everything in the world including economic resources. For instance, *Ngai* (God) was viewed as the distributor (*mugai*) just as a Kikuyu man distributed resources to his dependents. All public ceremonies remained the domain of men. In fact, men religiously conducted almost all Kikuyu ceremonies from birth to planting. Religion was therefore a crucial part of social organization intertwined with economic activities and this maintained family and tribal life (Jomo Kenyatta, 1938).

The God of the Kikuyu had power and control over departed spirits of disease and pestilences. Thus, Kikuyu people held various sacrifices for blessings of economic activities. They sacrificed to their god for his generosity in providing rains which would bring economic affluence to the community. Sacrifice for rain was done on village or territorial basis and conducted by the head of the family believing the rains would enhance bumper harvests. The congregation gathering for the sacrifice was made up of village members led by head of the family owning the land. He was assisted by the deputy head of the family and at least two elderly men who lived in the village but not a member of land owning family. The Reason for assisting was because the prayers covered all members of the village (Musalia, 2010).

2.2.2 Pre-Colonial Political Organization of the Kikuyu in Kiambu

Politically, the Kikuyu had a decentralized system of government which was based on democratic principles where political power was diffused within age set (*riika*). Political, judicial and religious functions were performed by an age set which took political tasks of the territory after thirty years on reaching the rank of senior age set. They had to pass through the warrior grade which provided defense and served as executive representatives of the elders. They were assigned policing duties in the markets and during festivals. The Kikuyu were a patriarchal community and the men headed the socio-political and religious institutions. The basic political unit was the family headed by the father who represented the family unit in the government. Members of one family group were deemed to be forming a family council (*ndundu ya mucii*). Several family councils formed a village council (*kiama gia itura*), which comprised of heads of several families in the village. The

senior elder acted as the head of this council and their role was to represent the villagers in the government (Leakey 1977).

There was a wider group, the district council (*kiama kia rugongo*) and all the elders of the district participated in it. The council was presided over by a committee (*kiama kia ndundu*) comprised of senior elders of the village who were the most advanced in age and wisdom was elected as a judge and president (*muthamaki or muciiiri*) of the council. National council was formed from the district council comprised of several committees (*ndundu's*) to represent the whole population. Members of all these councils were 30 years and above but there was a council of young men that was very important, (*njama ya ita*) or the council of war whose age ranged between 20 and 24 years. They carried out military activities like earlier mentioned on behalf of the community.

Government positions were not inherited they were given on merit determined by an individual's conduct to his group and community (Muriuki, 1974). Women were politically shut off from the governing council, they were allowed to have their own congress, "*kiama kia atumia* " (council of women). Women's councils were traditionally isolated from matters of warfare, territorial expansion or the maintenance and regulation of the judicial system plus matters relating to resources especially land.

2.2.3 Pre-Colonial Economic Organisation of the Kikuyu in Kiambu County

Economically, the Kikuyu were an agricultural people. The Kikuyu were mainly farmers and agricultural products were the core sources of their food. Kikuyu owned many cattle, goats and sheep which were very crucial to their life. They were also used during religious

ceremonies. A Kikuyu man who owned land was called *mwene* (owner) and was highly respected (Leakey 1977, Muriuki 1974).

Agricultural activities were accompanied by various ceremonies such as the planting ceremony, ceremony of purifying crops and harvesting ceremony. They believed these sacrifices would calm down the ancestral spirits from bringing pests and insects that would affect their crops and livestock. A man was responsible for the use of land for building or cultivation sites for the sub clan (Musalia 2010, Leakey 1977).

Women bore the burden of all hard work. Though women are said to have done all the hard work to provide for the family there was division of labour for example forest, bush and land clearing for cultivation was done by men. Freshly cleared ground was cultivated by men and these duties were deemed the hardest to do. Women prepared ground for sowing seeds but planting was done by both genders. Women planted maize, various kinds of beans, millet and sweet potato vines but harvesting was mainly done by women. Dress making, pottery, weaving of baskets was done by women. Grinding millet for making gruel and pounding grains in wooden mortars and sugarcane for making beer was done by women (Muriuki, 1974, Musalia, 2010).

Men planted bananas, yams, sweet potatoes vines, sugar canes and tobacco. They also provided poles for propping of bananas and yams but weeding was done collectively. Tending cattle, sheep, goats, slaughtering, distributing meat and preparing skins was done by men. Cattle rearing and ownership was a display of wealth and part of kikuyu economic life. They also made roads and bridges, did wood carving, blacksmithing, bee keeping and hunting. The young men were also expected to protect and defend their land and also enrich

their families by raiding the Maasai (Leakey 1977). Beer brewing and trading was done by both genders hence carrying and selling grains to the market was done by women while men took goats or cattle to the market and sold them. Production of music instruments like rattles, drums, flutes, horns was men's work. Children worked with their parents in production and distribution of the family resources and wealth till the time of marriage (Musalia 2010, Leaky, 1977).

There was gradual evolution of land ownership among the Kikuyu, as the community migrated in search of new territory establishing new land tenure systems in different areas in Kikuyu state by late 19th century. As a core source of livelihood the ease of using this land was governed by the type, level and relations of production between people whether among men, women and between women and men. Accumulation of wealth was possible through the hard work of the tenant's family members, confirming the important role they played in creation of wealth for the family hence empowering it as an economic unit during the pre-colonial period (Muriuki 1974, Leakey 1977, Musalia, 2010).

Before the arrival of the British in Kikuyuland the Kikuyu cultivated surplus foodstuffs for commercial purposes (Jomo Kenyatta, 1938: Leakey 1977: Talbott, 1992, Musalia, 2010). The Athi acted as primary dealers and middlemen between the coast caravans and the source of food in the heart of Kikuyu land especially southern Kikuyu. The food crops produced and sold to the caravans included sugarcane, millet, sorghum, maize, a variety of beans and bananas. Though food production was the primary economic activity they also kept domestic animals. But they rarely ate meat apart from during important ceremonies. The Kikuyu diet was mainly grains and a variety of green vegetables like sorghum, millet, beans, bananas and sweet potatoes (Leakey 1977, Musalia 2010).

The sweet potatoes were exchanged for goats and hence served as an important means of increasing wealth. Sweet potatoes and other perennial crops like arrowroots, cassava and yams acted as suitable substitute in times of drought due to their capacity to withstand drought under minimal weeding. They also grew others crops for various commercial purposes like castor oil, tobacco, gourd plant, thatching grass, notonia petraea (*ng'ondu ya kiondo*) a creeping plant used in purification ceremonies (Leakey 1977, Muchoki 1988, Musalia, 2010).

2.3 Establishment of Colonial Rule in Kenya and Land Alienation in Kiambu

The establishment of colonial rule in Kenya paved way for the alienation of land in Kiambu County for white settlement and, consequently, for coffee growing. Thus, the first onslaught of colonial establishment on the Kikuyu of Kiambu was in the terrain of land tenure. The traditional pre-colonial Kikuyu land tenure system changed tremendously and this had consequences on the economic organization of the inhabitants of Kiambu. Land in Kikuyu land, during the pre-colonial period, was owned by *mbari* (sub-clan) and when the sons of the pioneers matured they regarded such land as their ancestral land. They developed a great attachment to it for economic purposes. Moreover, land could be “given” out only with the approval of *mbari* members or the council members. Any “sale” of land to non- *mbari* members could only be transacted if no *mbari*- member was willing to buy but such sales could be redeemed (Muriuki, 1974). These were carried out between the landowner and the *ndungata*, or *muciarwo*, a *muthoni* and *muhoi*. To avoid irrational expulsion of tenants by the landowners, land laws were formulated and followed and if a tenant died a new agreement with his children was reached (Leakey 1977, Musalia, 2010).

Land ownership was determined by the initial process of acquiring it and original ground breaking of this land through cultivation or hunting laid the main basis of ownership. A landowner also attracted people who were not members of his own clan who came to search for land as *ahoi* (tenant-at-will). These tenants-at-will used this land for their economic benefit. These included in-laws where a father-in-law gave a landless son-in-law the right to use his land hence extending this right to the daughter. This created a class of wealthy landowners (*ene*) who owned property and hence commanded a lot of respect from the rest of the community especially because they could take in several tenants on their land (Muriuki 1974, Leakey 1977, Musalia, 2010).

Tenants were required to pay annual levy of beer or first fruits of his harvest to his host. But with the passage of time when the friendship became strong, a *muhoi* would request to be granted a resident-tenant status. This paved way for him to move in with all his family members for settlement on the landowner's land and attained both farming and residential rights. The residential tenant paid by slaughtering a ram or an ewe at the boundary of the landowner before he was welcomed in his land. A hard working tenant would gradually amass adequate assets like goats and sheep which enhanced the acquisition of his own land and, therefore, joining the class of landowners. Accumulation of wealth was possible through the hard work of the tenant's family members, confirming the important role they played in creation of wealth for the family hence empowering it as an economic unit during the pre-colonial period (Muriuki 1974, Leakey 1977, Musalia 2010).

The advent of colonialism tremendously changed the economic organization of the Kikuyu people. Fertile land was alienated as the white settlers were allocated land by the colonial government. Africans were forced out of their land and put into reserves. If the government

needed land for the public good and had none available left in its hands it was contended that if it were purchased the burden would then fall on the community as a whole who were to benefit and not a few individuals or a small section of natives (KNA/ MAI/12/2 Kiambu District Annual Report 1911:17). Africans could not benefit in a new capitalist system while all their lives they had lived under African socialism. European farmers at the end became beneficiaries as they transacted the alienated land for profit. Several estate changed hands a marked feature had been the sale, by the original owners of land of which they had failed to make a complete success in favour of new owners who were willing to pay handsomely for it. Near Kiambu 900 acres bearing coffee and wheat fetched \$38,000 and an instance was quoted of underdeveloped land having fetched \$15 an acre (KNA/ MAI/12/14 Kiambu District Annual Report 1918-1919:6).

Land alienation, thus, entrenched capitalism in Kikuyu Land and this marked the beginning of Africans being turned into a state of either landlessness or squatters. In the Pre-colonial period there were safeguards that the Kikuyu community had put in place to ensure that the poor were not landless. Land tenure perhaps the most serious aspect of the growing spirit of individualism took root. The complete communalism of the original Bantu system had already been weakened by the fact that the Kikuyu immigrants from the north had to pay for their footing in the hunting grounds and honey forests of the Athi and these payments were naturally made by the people who could afford to make them. The payments were reciprocal arrangement involving the interaction of Kikuyu and Athi families by adoption or intermarriage and gave the Kikuyu families the right to settle unmolested and the right to clear bushes and the forest and to turn them into cultivable land. These checks in the pre-

colonial set up were no more as exploitation and individualism that is entrenched in capitalism, gained root.

2.4 Coffee Growing in Kiambu County Before and During the First World War 1914-1918

Coffee growing in East Africa first began in the Uganda Protectorate before spreading into Kenya. In accordance with colonial policy of making Uganda protectorate self-supporting, cash crops, including coffee were introduced in 1904. The same year witnessed the enactment of the Coffee Leaf Diseases Ordinance of 1904. The legislation prohibited the importation of plant and seeds from designated countries, except with permission and subject to special conditions (Barnes 1976). Coffee growing and research work in Kenya was part of the duties of the government entomologist, originally appointed in 1908. In 1909, the Department of Agriculture in Nairobi warned about the expansion of coffee growing. It doubted whether it was advisable for settlers to confine themselves solely to coffee production since plants were very susceptible to pests and diseases, and production depended on the acquisition of sufficient number of laborers at harvest time (Barnes 1976). In 1910 however, the world price of coffee began to rise steeply, and a considerable number of Kenyan settlers started planting the crop. By 1911-1912 coffee was classified as one of the protectorate's major industries (Barnes 1976).

In 1913, the government appointed a mycologist to assist in coffee research work. In early part of 1914 an ordinance came into operation to control the sale of coffee plants within the protectorate as a means of preventing the spread of leaf rust. In 1914, a coffee plantation inspector was appointed to advise planters and inspect land for infected coffee bushes or conditions which might give rise to diseases and pests (Barnes 1976).

The Kiambu area had favourable weather conditions and soil types which suited coffee production. Other factors which promoted coffee growing in Kiambu County were reliable rainfall and high prices (MA1/12/2 Kiambu District Annual Report 1911). By 1915 the chief industries in Kiambu were coffee planting at the lower altitudes while market gardening and wattle growing in the higher altitudes. In spite of the First World War outbreak in 1914, coffee plantation continued being extended rapidly in the district. Its production progressed over the years in comparison to citrus, wattle, maize, beans, peas, vegetables and orchards (Barnes 1976:29).

During the First World War beans began to fetch high prices in the market which led the farmers to plant them in coffee farms. Beans formed a very profitable crop owing to war and were being grown extensively between rows of coffee (KNA/ MA1/12/12 Kiambu District Annual Report 1916 – 1917:36). In the year that followed coffee was being planted in increasing acreages yearly, in the lower Limuru, Kabete and Mbagathi (KNA/ MA1/12/13 Kiambu District Annual Report 1917-1918:18).

Nevertheless, all was not well with coffee growing in Kiambu, there was the impediment of Coffee diseases which hampered the production of coffee. In 1918, for instance, the coffee crop was almost entirely ruined by thripps. This, nonetheless, did not hinder continued production as the area under coffee continued to expand exponentially. During the same time, the crop fetched high prices on the world market, as a result of which farmers continued to produce the crop (KNA, MA1/12/14. Kiambu District Annual Report 1917-1918:18). Apart from world prices and favourable climatic and soil conditions, coffee growing in Kiambu County was also founded on the availability of labour supply. This is examined in the next section.

2.4.1 Labour Supply in Kiambu Coffee Farms Before and During the First World War 1914-1918.

The colonial government provided a lot of subsidies and incentives to encourage the settlement of white farmers in Kenya. Two most important subsidies awarded to white settlers were cheap land and labour supply. John Ainsworth remarked in 1905 that Europeans will not do manual labour in a country inhabited by black races (Mungeam 1966). In 1912, a Native Labour Commission was appointed to find ways and means of inducing Africans to come out and work (Bennet 1963).

Most of the settlers were given land on either a 99-years or 999-years lease. In addition to cheap land, the colonial government devised policies which generated cheap labour supply. Africans were squeezed into native reserves thereby generating land scarcity for them. This pushed most of them to seek survival on white settlers' farms as labourers or squatters. The introduction of hut tax also pushed most Africans to seek paid work in order to raise money for paying taxes.

In certain circumstances, chiefs were used to force Africans to seek paid work. Many are times when some African labourers deserted duty from white farms and chiefs were called in to force them back. But this kind of work was not easy for the colonial chiefs because, in some circumstances, it was not easy for the chiefs and headmen to discriminate between men on leave and those who had deserted duty (KNA/MA1/12/9 Kiambu District Annual Report 1911-1912:7). In the initial years of colonial establishment, many Africans deserted duty due to the oppressive and exploitative nature of work in white settler farms.

Native reserves, or land units set aside for exclusive use of Africans, was the main source of labour for white settlers. The Kikuyu of Kiambu were not easily amenable to colonial

schemes aimed at generating labour supply for white settlers. By 1911, for example, many Kikuyu were migrating from the Kiambu native Reserve into either rift valley or to the Kamba native reserves in search of land for farming. They did this instead of seeking paid work on white-owned coffee farms. A survey carried in 1911 noted that:

There was a constant stream of emigration from the district to up country districts. As long this did not seriously reduce the population of the reserves it did not seem to need checking but if it became excessive the reserves would cease to be a reservoir for casual labour and would lose much of their usefulness (KNA/ MA1/12/9 Kiambu District Annual Report 1911-1912:7).

Africans immigrated from Kiambu to other areas that were unfavorable in as far as climate was concerned just to run away from forced labour. There had been too much affliction between Africans and the white settlers that they contemplated leaving for Ukambani. Kamba land had always faced shortage of rainfall and relied on Kikuyus for food through barter trade during the long distance trade.

The out-migration of the kikuyu from Kiambu took place against the backdrop of increasing acreage under coffee production. This, in turn, led to an influx of labourers from other areas, notably from Murang'a District. Outsourcing labour from outside the district was very much encouraged by the Kiambu District Commissioner, who noted in 1911 that:

I doubt whether this district can supply much more labour and in view of this I would recommend that for government undertakings labourers should not be recruited in this District. The increase of coffee and black wattle cultivation requires all the labour that can be got and settlers are sure to cry out against more being taken away for government projects (KNA/MA1/12/3 Kiambu District Annual Report 1911-1912).

Thus, the demand for labour on coffee farms in Kiambu increased faster than the supply (KNA/ MA1/12/9 Kiambu District Annual Report 1911-1912:8). Shortage of labour in Kiambu was further complicated by the consequences of land alienation which took away land from Africans thus forcing them to migrate from the District in search of land elsewhere. Many kikuyu from Kiambu ended up in the neighboring Machakos District. The reason given being that there was unlimited agricultural and grazing land available there, that no work was required from them and that life was generally easier in Ukambani than in Kikuyu (KNA/ MA1/12/3 Kiambu District Annual Report 1911-1912).

Another reason which contributed to shortage of labour on white settler farms in Kiambu was the proximity of the area to Nairobi. Nairobi had developed rapidly upon it being chosen as the headquarters of the Kenya-Uganda Railway. Kiambu however, had an advantage when it came to trading activities due to its proximity to Nairobi (KNA/ MA 1/12/2 Kiambu District Annual Report 1911:3). Rapid urbanization in Nairobi led to a corresponding demand for food. This food was mainly supplied by the Kikuyu of Kiambu. Indeed, trade in food generated more money than working on white-owned coffee farms. Dairy farming near Nairobi was flourishing owing to the high price and great demand for milk which had led to the natives making a profit (KNA/MAI 1/12/10 Kiambu District Annual Report 1914-1915:46).

The farmers also carried out fowl keeping destined for the Nairobi market. The Kikuyu of Kiambu also benefited by trading in maize. The outbreak of the First World War also witnessed an increase in the harvest of a large amount of maize which was being disposed of by the natives in order to obtain the money for the hut and poll tax (KNA/MAI/12/17 Kiambu District Annual Report 1922:19). Natives could only transact business in the city

as there were no trading centers in the native reserve. The native markets were held every fourth day of the week and a fair number of native shops in the reserve could not yield enough cash to pay taxes. The Kiambu District Commissioner noted the entrepreneurial spirit of the Kiambu natives in 1934 when he observed that:

The natives of this district are remarkably fortunate in having such a great variety of marketable produce with such close marketing in Nairobi and the thickly populated settled area around their reserve. Apart from the greater revenue producing commodities such as maize, beans, wattle bark and potatoes a very useful source of revenue is made from the sale of vegetables, charcoal, maize stalks, firewood, bananas and dairy produce including poultry (KNA/Kiambu District Annual Report 1934).

The colonial government, even when faced with a crisis of labour whose magnitude continued to severely affect the settlers and coffee growing, failed to change the colonial policies that would have been pro-Africans and in so doing failed to curtail emigration. It was noted during the hut count of 1916 that, a large number of natives emigrated to Lumbwa, Njoro, Nakuru and Naivasha. While this had begun in April, the tide was still in progress in July when resolute efforts were made to stem it. Some success was seemingly achieved as comparatively few men had left the reserve since that time but this was short-lived. After a short time, a new wave of migration began once again and this proved difficult to prevent towards the end of the First World War (KNA/ MA1/12/12 Kiambu District Annual Report 1916-1917:3).

In spite of the reasons pushing the kikuyu out of Kiambu being clear, the thinking of the colonial administrators was that it was caused by a weed. It was held that the reason for emigration was the spread of a weed called "Karigei" and it's terrible handicap to

cultivation. Thus, the Kikuyu were migrating away from land infested with this weed (KNA/MA1/12/12 Kiambu District Annual Report 1916-1917:4).

While the Kikuyu of Kiambu resisted colonial schemes that would have pushed them to work on coffee farms, the First World War provided a conducive environment which saw some of them work on coffee plantations for fear of being recruited into military service. This was noted in the Kiambu Annual report of 1916-1917 which stated that a “large number of labourers were now working for the full twelve months in order to avoid possible recruitment for the carrier corps” (KNA/MA1/12/12 Kiambu District Annual Report 1916-1917:41).

But, as the war approached its end, the colonial government became more aggressive in employing Africans for the army. The beginning of the year 1917-1918 saw an increased call for carrier corps and a pressure was put upon the natives in the reserve which resulted in the conscription of practically every able bodied man who was not in regular employment on the farm or elsewhere. This saw a certain number of Kikuyu escape to Naivasha while a large number worked on the farms sullenly while giving as much trouble as they could (KNA/ MA1/12/13 Kiambu District Annual Report 1917/1918).

The social life of the Kikuyu was also a stumbling block for the continued flow of labour from the reserves. Illicit huts known as “Wangure” to which girls were taken rather against their will for the night sprang up and drunkenness was more marked than ever (KNA/ MA1/12/13 Kiambu District Annual Report 1917/1918:2).

2.4.2 Coffee Growing in Kiambu County During the Inter-War Period, 1919-1939

After the First World War the economic recession was witnessed and its ramifications were felt in the coffee sector. The year on the whole was not a good one for the planters. The price of all farm produce fell heavily at the end of 1920 and the market remained in a state of depression thereafter (KNA/ MA1/12/16 Kiambu District Annual Report 1920-1921:44).

In the same year drought almost brought coffee production to its knees. The drought in the middle of the year had an adverse effect on the crop, and the advantage of providing shade for the trees was clearly proved. Several coffee estates were wholly or partially sold and good prices were realized (KNA/ MA1/12/16 Kiambu District Annual Report 1920-1921:44). Due to the challenges witnessed in producing coffee, alternative crops began to be planted as reported at the time thus:

Recently in the district experiments have been made in the cultivation of sugar cane and some planters go so far as to say it may eventually prove a rival to coffee. Market gardening and dairying were found to be profitable and were being increasingly undertaken (KNA/ MA1/12/16 Kiambu District Annual Report 1920-1921:44).

In spite of this, more land was put under coffee. This notwithstanding, there were other obstacles which surfaced and which had negative impact on coffee production. Unfavourable weather conditions and political uncertainty dented the hope of some white settler farmers on the viability of continued production of coffee. On the whole the period after 1921 was one of the most difficult and disappointing results compared with previous 15 years of coffee growing in Kiambu County. Whereas on a certain farm 70 acres were

picked in 1920, eleven acres only were picked in 1921. (KNA/ MA1/12/16 Kiambu District Annual Report 1920-1921:44).

However, there was some optimism among coffee growers in 1922. During this year, it was observed by the District Commissioner that:

The depression in the coffee planting industry, the main industry of the district showed good signs of lifting many of the coffee planters who had been hard hit by the last two bad seasons, but the crop this year has increased in quantity and improved in quality and a bumper crop is expected next year provided the climatic conditions are favourable. The general feeling is therefore one of reviving optimism (KNA/MA1/12/16 Kiambu District Annual Report 1920-1921:44).

Being an export crop, coffee marketing was vital element as this determined whether the farmers would make a profit or not. The Local Native Council took an active interest in the better organization and the marketing of produce. The steps taken had been preliminary and included the building of go-downs at Limuru and Thika, and the formation of a standing agricultural committee under the chairmanship of the Agricultural Officer and encouragement given to the formation of Native Producers Co-operative Society. Although the Local Native Council took some part in the inception of the society, it was an independent body with its own constitution and membership. The constitution was to be forwarded to the registrar for gazetting as was provided in the ordinance. The society dealt with the marketing of wattle bark, potatoes, beans and hides. The membership at the time was about one hundred but the roll was expected to swell rapidly over time (KNA/ MA1/12/16 Kiambu District Annual Report 1920-1921:44). By 1930 European coffee planters numbered 931, which was forty-four percent of the total European farm-owning population (Barnes 1976:29).

As observed in the preceding section of this chapter, coffee growing in Kiambu area took away most of the land belonging to the Kikuyu. There were also, other ills which the kikuyu associated with the colonial government as well as with coffee growing in Kiambu. These litanies of ills began to generate anti-colonial feelings among the Kiambu Africans. Forced labour in settlers' farms which had been alienated from Africans were too much for the natives to allow their progress without a fight. As if taxation on already poorly paid labourers was not enough the colonial government introduced the Kipande system (a system of registering natives with a view to checking their movements).

While resistance from Kiambu Africans seemed to be passive in the early part of the 1920s, the years that followed witnessed increasing anti-colonial activities. This movement was at the time much uncontrolled and unbalanced, local natives were being encouraged by political factions (having their headquarters in Nairobi) to make unreasonable demands to resent the authority of the government officers and chiefs. The feeling in the reserve at the time was one of unrest and it was not easy to combat propaganda which was skillfully organized (KNA/Kiambu District Annual Report 1921:1).

Chiefs were the first target of African rebellion as they had completely evolved to be self-centered and served only the interest of the Europeans for their own benefit. The administrators direct contact with Africans especially while recruiting labour for coffee plantations and collecting taxes was bound to cause conflicts. The district commissioner, of Kiambu district, at one time remarked that:

My own opinion is that a path of the chiefs and elders together with their incessant victimization of their people has produced feelings of resentment coupled with the fact that there is an ever increasing young population

gradually becoming educated, which is beginning to insist on a fuller share of representation.

The failure of the colonial government to resolve the underlying economic deprivation of Africans led to emergence of more radical Africans in Kiambu ready to change the course of history in the district in 1922. The outstanding incident during the year 1922 had been the sedition agitation conducted by the native Harry Thuku. This culminated in his arrest and a riot in Nairobi broke out, which had to be dealt with by force of arms. Thuku was deported to Kismayu and his associates Waiganjo and Mugekenyi to Lamu and Wanya respectively. This affair formed the subject of a white paper in the British parliament (KNA/MA 1/12/17 Kiambu District Annual Report 1922:17). The anti-colonial movement however, did not die out but, was carried on with greater secrecy. The white settlers called the movement Thukuism giving the impression that if Harry Thuku was dealt with the movement would be vanquished but this was not to be.

The chiefs diplomatically began to demand for change for instance Chief Josiah, while giving his views to the land commission chaired by Mr. Carter, stated his discomfort with continued exploitation of Africans; “the fact that worries us is that many Europeans have obtained land which was ours and on which they now plant coffee and make themselves rich at the expense of the Kikuyu owners.” In 1932, the Kikuyu Central Association submitted a plea to the colonial government stating that:

Our honest efforts for making the truth known to the outside world and especially to the British people is construed as seditious and revolutionary while in reality we are rendering a real service to the British people by acquainting them with the real feelings of the people whose doctrines they have taken upon themselves to rule and control. It is nothing short of treachery and trickery to make misleading and untrue statements in a

flattering manner with a view to please the authorities in a manner which will win their favours.

A land commission was set up in 1932 to look into increasing complaints regarding land. These complaints, so marked in the Kiambu area, had produced anti-colonial agitation among the African resident population of Kiambu. Recommendations to calm down the growing agitation among the Kikuyu were made by the Land commission after Africans began to show their displeasure in regard to their farms being taken away. The district commissioner highlighted this thus:

While the year has been satisfactory from an economic point of view, politically it has been distinctly troublesome. The natives of distinctly for the first expressed their dissatisfaction with the recommendations of the land commission and considerable difficulty has been experienced in getting them to put up their cases quietly and in organized manner through their elders, rather than by means of political meetings and agitations which are liable to be swayed by extremists and easily get out of hand (KNA/ Kiambu District Annual Report 1936:2).

Just like during the First World War period, the supply of labour on coffee farms during the inter-war period was an issue which impacted on coffee growing as examined in the next section.

2.4.3 Supply of Labour in Kiambu Coffee Farms During the Inter-War Period 1919-1939

The enormous task needed to assemble enough labourers was very tasking for the District Commissioner who noted at the end of the WWI that:

The large increase in coffee and flax are especially noticeable. Satisfactory as these developments are, it must not be forgotten that they add considerably to the

administration burden of endeavoring to arrange for an adequate supply of native labour. During the coffee picking season especially the position of the District commissioner at Kiambu is not an enviable one (KNA/ Kiambu District Annual report 1919-1920)

Alcoholism, which had been noted as a problem during WWI had reached worrying proportions. Alcoholism had been caused either by desperation or depression which had been caused by the war. The drinking problem had been partly caused by the coffee growers themselves. Several of them had erected sugar crushing mills thereby making it easier for the natives to manufacture native beer (*tembo* as it was referred to) thereby contributing greatly to the difficulties of administration in dealing with drinking in reserves. This prompted the local administration to take steps by enacting legislation to regulate the practice (KNA/ Kiambu District Annual Report 1921:6). The economic depression which was witnessed after the WWI was a product of both the war as well as the climatic conditions. The colonial government responded to the recession by advocating for reduced wages. The District Commissioner noted during the same period that:

During the year the reduction of wages was successfully carried out and I am quite sure that had this not been brought about a number of estates have had to close down. There have been no labour difficulties during the past year due no doubt to the crop shortage land still continues to be opened up for coffee and in time I imagine when the rains are again normal difficulty will be experienced in getting sufficient labour (KNA/MA1/12/13 Kiambu District Annual Report 1921:7).

What underscores the exploitative nature of coffee growing in Kiambu, is the fact that when the coffee market faced recession laborers' wages were slashed yet when coffee prices shot up, wages were not increased correspondingly. This state of affairs led to revolts on coffee farms though on a small scale. The working relations between Europeans and

natives were dissatisfactory. When the situation got worse, propaganda was applied to Africans to hoodwink them into submission (KNA/ MA1/12/13 Kiambu District Annual Report 1921:8). Despite the narrative that the lowering of wages was due to economic depression there were extreme cases of resistance. In extreme cases of resistance by African labourers, courts were called in to intervene. Two serious cases of violence among natives were dealt with by the courts, the offenders being adequately punished (KNA/MA1/12/13 Kiambu District Annual Report 1921:9). The other alternative for the settlers was to import labour whenever workers in Kiambu began to disregard the contracts they had entered into.

In the years that followed the Kikuyu moved out of the district in large numbers almost crippling the labour pool that the settlers enjoyed previously. Emigration was a very serious question according to the Europeans at the time. Many thousands of Wakikuyu emigrated from central Kenya during the inter-war period. Many of them settled in Naivasha, Nakuru and other up country districts. Various reasons were assigned for this, such as greater freedom from control, better grazing facilities and so forth. The movement still continued and it was impossible to stop it from one end. An order had been issued to all the Government headmen of the district under the Native Authority Ordinance to prevent any further emigration from their respective locations, but, if it was impossible to fully enforce it. Some success, however, was obtained by the stringent enforcement of the provisions of the Resident Native Ordinance in every district. To this end, the District commissioner of Kiambu noted that “if this ordinance was strictly enforced as against the farmers in the up country districts, it could be found that emigration by the Wakikuyu would greatly diminish” (KNA/MA1/12/13 Kiambu District Annual Report 1922:17).

The problem of alcoholism among Kiambu native resurfaced again in 1923 when brewing industry was opened in the neighborhood of the Ruaraka river, and it was understood that the liquor was expected to be on the market in the early part of 1923 (KNA/ MA1/12/13 Kiambu District Annual Report 1922:8). The effect was not only felt on the labourers, but also on the local colonial administrators, notably the headmen. Some old headmen of the non-educated type were of very little use because they were spending a great part of their time in a state of intoxication. This made it very hard for them to exercise their authority as required under the Native Authority Ordinance even though the council of elders (*Kiama*) had under stimulation imposed heavy fines for drunkenness. The younger educated headmen did try to do their work properly and these were the ones who were relied upon by the District Commissioner of Kiambu (KNA/ MA1/12/13 Kiambu District Annual Report 1924:5).

The planting of coffee did not require much labour as during the picking season. Labour as usual had been short at the coffee picking season and as far as one could see the position was bound to become worse as a larger portion of land in Kiambu under coffee growing continued to increase every year. As the demand for labour on coffee farms increased, so did it increase in other competing sectors. For example, the construction of the railway line in central Kenya during this time had an impact on labour supply on coffee farms. The farmers complained that the supply of natives from Nyeri, Fort Hall, Embu and Meru had failed them and it was expected that the professional recruiters had taken all those available for railway work. It was also said that, the women were not coming out as well as they used to. The problem of obtaining labour to pick coffee was a very difficult one. Coffee was an uncertain crop and the actual date of ripening so much depended on vagaries of the weather

that was impossible to say exactly when the labour will be needed (KNA/ MA1/12/13 Kiambu District Annual Report 1924:8).

Through use of coercive and oppressive means the colonial government was determined to find a soft belly among the Africans to make them provide labour. One way involved the raising of taxes. It was hoped that by gradually bringing hut tax collection nearer to the beginning of the year, it was possible to stimulate the natives to go out to labour about the time of the coffee picking season (KNA /MA1/12/13 Kiambu District Annual Report 1924:9).

Social interactions were also prompted through sports in an attempt to lure more Africans to the white settler's farms. This was as though, life on farms was deemed to be less attractive to Africans as compared with life in the native reserves where Africans participated in native dances. A good deal was to be done to make farm life more attractive by providing the staff with football and encouraging games, inter-farm sports. Also, the building a large meeting place where natives met after work hours and listened to a gramophone served to encourage Africans to work on farms (KNA/ MA1/12/13 Kiambu District Annual Report 1924:9).

A system of registering natives was introduced popularly known as the Kipande system. This served to limit the freedom of movement among Africans (KNA/MA1/12/13 Kiambu District Annual Report 1924:9). By limiting the freedom of movement, this colonial government's despotic move did create a fertile ground for Africans to revolt. All along the colonial government together with the settlers failed to lay down favourable policies that would have encouraged Africans to work. The mode of payment was also slow creating

more discouragement to the Africans. Sometimes in the case of casual pickers the headmen was given Chits to give to the pickers each chit being a voucher for 20 or whatever the price of one tin of coffee was. The pickers sometimes had to wait a long time before getting paid for the chits whereas the headman was entrusted with the actual money, they could get paid and go home at once (KNA/MA1/12/13 Kiambu District Annual Report 1924:10).

Formal education provided young Africans with skills after training; they were ready to do other jobs but not manual labour. Education was offered free and this may have been a contributory cause according to the District Commissioner for many Africans to be enlightened. He further contrasted the life in Britain and what was happening in the colony when he asserted that, “in our own country and in all our subject countries labour was cheap and plentiful and the laboring classes apparently contented till we provided them with teachers. With the advent of free education came discontent and unrest. The whole country was flooded with well dressed youths who wanted jobs as Karanis. I recently had occasion to try and engage a hut counter. The office was almost immediately crowded out with applicants. I do not suppose that any of these would demean themselves with manual labour.” (KNA/MA1/12/13 Kiambu District Annual Report 1924:10). The comparison was misplaced as Britain had undergone agrarian revolution and the British citizens could not allow to be exploited. Manual work had been made unpleasant by the settlers due to exploitation and thus it was almost impossible for the elite Africans to accept work in the settler’s farms.

Alcoholism continued to be a stumbling block of having a reliable workforce making the colonial government put up measures to curb the situation. The work of the headmen had been fair only. There was a great difficulty to get the headmen of old standing to take rally

effective steps under the native Authority ordinance to stop excessive drinking. The Kiambu Kiama imposed fines amounting to Kshs. 4,014/- during the year against young men who belonged to the forbidden rika or circumcision ages of indulging in beer drinking (KNA/MA1/12/13 Kiambu District Annual Report 1925:4).

The colonial government enacted several laws to for enlisting and keeping of African labour. Having tried different legislations to acquire labour and maintain it, the colonial government realised that this was not working as they had wished. This prompted the white settlers to try and improve the welfare of the workers. Employers began giving increasing attention to conditions of life on farms, provision of schools and recreations. Wages had gone up, the current rate now being Kshs. 12/- per month. But nothing like sufficient attention was paid to the welfare of native labour by the majority of employers and the result was very dire when extra labour was urgently required for harvesting purposes. Employers were, then, compelled to offer very high wages (MA1/12/13 Kiambu District Annual Report 1925:12). In some instances, almost 10 percent of the value of the coffee berries was paid for the picking of them. Kikuyu women from Kiambu became unreliable workers in 1925 especially during harvest. Some planters had to gather their crop without their aid. The District Commisisoner noted in 1925 that “women did not like any change in conditions of labour even though, on the face of it, the change appeared to benefit them” (KNA/MA1/12/13 Kiambu District Annual Report 1925:12).

Africans began opposing the use of Kipande due to its limitation to freedom of movement and exploitation. Nearly, everybody was disagreeing about the use of Kipande (Registration certificates). The Kipande System restricted movement of labourers between districts. The punishment of breaking the Kipande System included a fine and imprisonment. The second

punishment entailed reduction of salary. A man who earned 20 shillings per month, on being charged for refusing to obey the Kipande system, would have his salary reduced to 15 shillings. As Africans became more rebellious the colonial government stepped up its oppressive measures. Those who lived near the police station had noticed that perpetually people living on European farms were being driven away and made to go out as squatters having failed to go to work and were actually sent to prison. In 1932, the Kikuyu Central Association listed the enormous challenges that Africans were facing stating that:

Our honest effort for making the truth known to the outside world and especially to the British people was construed as seditions and revolutionary while in reality we were rendering a real service to the British people by acquainting them with the real feelings of the people whose destinies they have taken upon themselves to rule and control.

Time and time again the colonial government had made promises which it had failed to keep. For instance, during the requirement for Africans to join the First World War his Excellency Sir Henry Convey Belfield on the 20th August 1914 had promised no more interference with African land in the future. However, this did not come to pass. The Kikuyu Central Association members began to question the colonial policies and deeds beginning with land alienation and creation of reserves. The term reserve in reality did not mean allocation which had been reserved for Africans but in practice meant an unfenced detention camp out of which natives dared not move with any degree of freedom.

The colonial government continued passing legislations that made employment in settlers' farms untenable. As this unfolded, Africans in Kiambu took to trading activities. The Kiambu Native Reserve was ideally situated in regard to markets for their produce and, as production increased and the prices of primary products improved, more and more natives found trading and the development of their own holdings more profitable than working on

the farms for a comparatively small wage (KNA/MA 1/12/30 Kiambu Annual Report 1936:18).

The reserves however, eventually could not cope with the high demand for labour. It was generally recognised that the local labour supply was insufficient to meet the demands of the coffee farmers. The reasons were that the areas under coffee were continually being extended. The labour on the North Eastern side of the reserve was tending to drift over the mountains to pick pyrethrum on the Kinangop area. In addition, increased cultivation in the reserve demanded attention at the beginning of the short rains which may easily have coincided with a flush of coffee and school attendance by both boys and girls which was on the increase and was to continue to be so (KNA/MAI/12/32. Kiambu District Annual Report 1938:16).

2.4.4 Chapter Conclusion

Kiambu was the last district to be settled by the kikuyu before the arrival of the Europeans with the first onslaught of colonial rule in Kiambu County being the land tenure. Land alienation entrenched capitalism in kikuyu land and this marked the beginning of Africans being turned into a state of either landlessness or squatters. In East Africa coffee was first introduced in Uganda and later on in Kenya whereby factors which favoured its introduction in Kenya being, reliable rainfall, low altitude and availability of labour. In an attempt to escape forced labour emigration began in 1911 to Rift-valley and Kamba land. Influx of other labourers from Murang'a district to plug the labour shortage began. Other Africans moved to urban areas to trade in food commodities which generated more money than working on white owned farms as much could be made from eggs, poultry, flowers,

vegetables and charcoal. Thus, labour supply continued to present a problem for the coffee farmers as the clock ticked towards the beginning of the Second World War. The next chapter examines coffee growing in Kiambu during the Second World War.

CHAPTER THREE

COFFEE PRODUCTION IN KIAMBU COUNTY DURING AND AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR 1939-1950

3.0 Introduction

This chapter analysis the development of coffee production in Kiambu County during and after the Second World War. The war gave Africans an international exposure of the various dynamics of foreign politics and upon their return, plaid a major role in the struggle for independence and economic emancipation. Hence, in as much as the British had anticipated a quiet return of the ex-soldiers after the war, their return as discussed below became a game changer as the quest for decolonisation took a radical turn.

3.1 Coffee Production in Kiambu During the Second World War 1939-1945

As we have observed in the preceding chapter, coffee growing in Kiambu faced the problem of acute shortage of labour before the outbreak of the Second World War. This situation remained the same when the war broke out in 1939. By 1941 many Africans had been able to officially analyse the economic options they could take given their productivity. This led to the growth of the number of Africans opting out of employment for trading activities. As a result, the settlers' labour supply demand became inadequate. The Kiambu District Commissioner in his report of 1941 notes that:

While very pleased with the response of the local people to the demand for coffee picking labourers, many difficulty in recruiting labour locally for the less remunerative and more prolonged work on their farms particularly weeding. Much local labour, that is, male labour has not, in fact been available for weeding for some 7 or 8 years or more. This I believe to be the case and, unless wages are increased above pre-war level, I do not think there will be many locally recruited permanent labourers on farms. The fact

is that it is not really worth anyone's while to go out and weed for 30 cents a day and no posho – the rate at present offered in the eastern end of the district when much more can be made out of eggs, poultry, flowers, vegetables and charcoal not to mention the heavier exports.

The trading activities of Africans in Kiambu were dependent on the Nairobi market. This was clearly explained by the Kiambu district commissioner in 1942 when he writes about the economic interdependence between Kiambu and Nairobi. The interdependence of Nairobi and Kiambu increased every year. Kiambu residents ate maize and rice but grew very little of either. The supply came from elsewhere and was paid for by cash obtained in Nairobi. Residents of Kiambu supplied Nairobi with firewood, charcoal, potatoes, and eggs among others. This served to sustain the economies of both Kiambu and Nairobi.

Africans in Kiambu were still reaping huge margins of profit even during the world war of 1939 – 1945. Population in Nairobi was increasing due to the rural-urban migration and a new generation of Africans who were being born in Nairobi by parents who had moved to the city earlier on. Thus, Kiambu district continued to supply a very large proportion of the firewood, charcoal, vegetables, eggs and other produce needed to be supplied to Nairobi due to war-time increasing population. Financially, the Kiambu Kikuyu were benefiting from the demands for their labour and produce. Although wages, except in the military, had not risen to any great extent, prices of produce were huge compared to the pre-war figure (KNA/MA1/12/37 Kiambu District Annual Report 1937:1).

Lack of wage increment even when the economy warranted one kept Africans out of work in the settler's farms. Inflation for example in 1944 had gripped the district while the wages remained constant. The Kiambu Kikuyu did not see anything lucrative or congenial in

pruning or weeding coffee for 50 cents a day. Furthermore, there was more freedom and prestige in one having a business enterprise. In any case, the modern Kikuyu liked to be his own master and there were many trades to which he could turn his hand on which did give him quick returns more inviting than a settled wage and there was less bodily sweat mingled in it. Unless and until farms could make their living conditions much more inviting than those pertaining in the reserves to the modern Africans labour it was bound to be short. The young men had grown up much quicker than their parents and the temptation to be their own bosses was too great for them to turn down. Thus, they grabbed any opportunity that came their way, and with both hands, made the best of it (KNA/MA 1/12/38 Kiambu District Annual Report 1944:2).

Towards the end of the war, another opportunity presented itself which even served to keep the kikuyu away from coffee farms. This time, banks started offering loans to Africans. In 1945, the first African from Kiambu sought financial help from a bank to expand his business; this was despite the bureaucracy set at the time for Africans to obtain loans. The application was supported by the Local Native Council and suitable guarantors were found. Every effort was made to encourage this enterprise, but unfortunately it transpired that the applicant was more concerned with making an immediate profit than with developing his land on sound lines under the advice of the agricultural and veterinary officers. Both government and the bank were extremely sympathetic because the man chose his first item of expenditure to be a lorry (KNA/MA1/12/39 Kiambu District Annual Report 1945:13)

Thus, the poor working conditions in the Kiambu area and the trading opportunities offered by the Nairobi market led to a sense of growing individualism among the Kikuyu of Kiambu. This individualism became the most obvious political trend of the modern Kikuyu

and it had been developed as a political creed with such rapidity that it constituted the most serious threat to the structure of a society (KNA/MAI/12/36 Kiambu District Annual Report 1942:2). This was a clear indication that the colonial government anticipated revolt in the near future from the Africans. Driven by the need to make quick returns from African land with minimum economic investment the government had set a bad precedent that with time it failed to sustain especially when Africans began to rebel.

As years of colonialism progressed, the African population kept on growing putting pressure on land and yielding conflicts. It became increasingly clear that the large number of land cases instituted, did sprout from economic want felt largely among the younger members of families who found that their heritage was not sufficient for their ever growing family needs (KNA/MAI/12/37 Kiambu District Annual Report 1943:1).

Despite the introduction of wage labour the overdependence on land among the Kikuyu remained unchanged. Land still remained the beginning and end of everything for many Kikuyu, and their tendency to demand more land outside the native land unit increased (KNA/MAI/12/39 Kiambu District Annual Report 1945:7). Due to the growth of population and land alienation the Kikuyu in Kiambu moved to other areas for instance the Rift Valley. Others sought government intervention to address the problem of landlessness. There was certainly a large landless class growing up in the district which was asking what government was going to do for them and hoping that additional settlement areas would be made available. On the part of the colonial government, every opportunity was taken of pointing out that the solution to overcrowding was not more and more land and that the time had come when Africans had better come into terms with the fact that, as in other countries, only a proportion of people can live on the land and the others must seek their

livelihood in trade and industries (KNA/MA1/12/39 Kiambu District Annual Report 1945:8).

The colonial government hence, gave the land problem a wide berth which would lead to cementing of land distribution challenges in Kiambu. The chaotic system of land tenure in Kiambu was a problem which had exercised the minds of the administration for many years. The position got worse annually and was a very severe handicap on the development of good farming, land usage and the general economic progress of the district. That individual tenure was increasing there could be no doubt and though it may be argued that it was inevitable and even desirable it should come about in an orderly and legal way and not by means of the many subterfuges now employed to get around the original customary law about land (KNA/MA1/12/39 Kiambu District Annual Report 1945:14) There was an attempt to curb the continued rise of land cases at the time through arbitration. Unfortunately, the indigenous family council court of arbitrators no longer administered the law of the land and its decisions could not be enforced legally. In its place there was introduction of the native tribunals and it must be admitted that their decisions were more often based on expediency than on customary law. The old system by which members of the family were given individual rights for cultivation only was now too often interpreted by the tribunals to mean that the individual had the right to dispose of his holding (KNA/MA1/12/39 Kiambu District Annual Report 1945:14).

The tribunals however failed to find an amicable solution as incompetence and treachery in the tribunals led to miscarriage of justice in fair judgment of land cases. Some of the records of the older tribunal cases were very sketchy and one frequently found in a land case that “The *githaka* was divided between them” without any reference to whether this

was an outright division of the land or a partitioning of cultivation rights. It was regrettable but, undoubted fact that chiefs and other influential men, including members of the tribunals were taking advantage of the present state of uncertainty to acquire large areas of land. They knew perfectly well that an individual may not by custom dispose off the land for which he had cultivation rights outside the family without the consent of his family, many individuals did dispose off their holdings and the family possibly through lack of interest due to mortification of the family spirit raised no objection.

It was however, the aim of chiefs and other responsible men to see that these sales were in fact legal and that the consent of the family had been obtained. They knew very well that the family must be consulted and in fact be present during the various stages of the sale and yet it was amazing on how many occasions not one of the customary formalities had been observed the almost invariable excuse was to say that the land was divided generally as a result of some case before a tribunal (KNA/MA/12/39 Kiambu District Annual Report 1945:15).

3.2 Labour Supply in Coffee Farms in Kiambu County during the Second World War 1939-1945

We have observed in the preceding section of this chapter that coffee growing in Kiambu contributed to numerous problems that beset the African while, at the same time, opening new opportunities that helped some Africans to accumulate wealth through trade. However, it was the problems that coffee growing generated that the colonial government got involved with a lot. This is because the problems thus generated, contributed to anti-colonial struggles that were witnessed towards the end of the Second World War. The war, when it broke out, presented more other problems which added up to the pre-war problems.

Britain through its administrators in Nairobi at the onset of the outbreak of the Second World War began to be jittery about the loyalty of Africans. They had a good reason to be anxious as the aftermath of the war in 1945 Africans agitated for independence in a radical manner. The actual outbreak caused no surprise in the reserve. The European situation had been presented before natives from the early months of the year at divisional *barazas* (public meetings), teachers meetings and Local Native Council meetings and even through media weekly broadcasts. The district commissioner, on the outbreak of WWII, visited divisional centers where, in well attended barazas explained exactly what was happening and the reasons for local emergency measures such as petrol rationing (KNA/MA 1/12/33 Kiambu District Annual Report 1939:2).

Kikuyu Central Association refused to subscribe to the opinion that Africans were to declare their loyalty to the colonial government and in so doing to Britain. This pushed the government to become more aggressive towards KCA diehard adherents in quashing their resolve against oppression. The most noteworthy political event of that year was the rounding up, under the defence regulations, of the disloyal elements in the Kikuyu Central Association. This was done quickly, quietly and effectively, and since the manifestations of anti-British or anti-government activities had been conspicuous by their absence. The tune in the reserves was now all that it should have been, and no opportunity was missed by the leaders of the people to give vent to expressions of loyalty (KNA/ MA 1/12/34 Kiambu District Annual Report 1940:2).

Land on which coffee was grown by the settlers seemed to be the genesis of all the tribulations that the Kikuyu were facing according to their perspective. The political aspirations of the Kiambu Kikuyu had been and always would remain to be centered on

land. They had given their promise that such issues would not be raised during the war. Therefore, during the war-years, fire pot bubbled only in secret, only boiling over at infrequent intervals and usually at Local Native Council meetings when matters such as the expulsion of Kikuyu from the Kisii district; the Olenguruone settlement and provision for the landless from Loitokitok were broached (KNA/ MA1/12/38 Kiambu District Annual Report 1944:1).

The colonial government downplayed the problem arguing that it was obvious that the kikuyu (in common with all labour in every country) were to try and hold out for the best terms and for this reason there was not enough local labour to go around. The outbreak of the Second World War did have an impact on accessibility of labour. There was a wide spread of fear amongst the settlers that there would be a shortage of labour in 1941 when a bumper crop said to be the largest ever obtained in the history of the District was expected. The main point seemed that, so many natives had taken highly paid employment in military or semi military or Government service that there was not enough to go around (KNA/ MAI/12/34 Kiambu distirct annual report 1940;3).

The magnitude of the alcoholism problem had grown over the years and it was getting out of hand. There was no doubt that despite the introduction of special legislation designed to achieve more effective control the illicit traffic in Nubian gin was on the increase. It was not worthy that, within a matter of hours of the first application of the new legislation, which had put the responsibility for possession of distilled spirits and of implements on its manufacturers, occupier and persons found on premises and kept in the bush. Nevertheless, prosecutions and convictions continued, and heavy sentences were administered but it was

feared that the forces of law and order were fighting a losing battle on this particular front (KNA/ MAI/12/35 Kiambu District Annual Report 1941:2).

The settlers did not bulge from their oppressive nature and continued exploiting Africans. It took a lot of years and coercion for them to increase the wages. The idea of raising wages was repugnant to most farmers. This was the case for the entire war period though the arguments against it were not valid unless based on the premises that the wealth and standard of living of both the native and the Europeans were to continue in their present. The preferred argument at the time was that, with the demand for more production for war purposes and in order to maintain essential industries, the native should be made to offer his services whenever and wherever desired, at the pre-war rates of remuneration (KNA/ MAI/12/35 Kiambu District Annual Report 1941:7).

The colonial government also realised that, times were changing for continued exploitation and it had to make some concessions. The time had passed when the Kiambu able bodied male found working on a coffee farm at 30cents a day the most lucrative and most congenial means of livelihood available (KNA/ MAI/12/36) Kiambu District Annual Report 1942:11).

Africans were getting bold by day and had begun to challenge the status quo. This may have informed the change of tune from the colonial government. From time to time there had been complaints of a shortage of labour and some employers had demanded an augmented supply from among the thousands of loafers lurking in the reserve. But, the fact was that if the farmer wanted labour from Kiambu District he had to make conditions that were to attract labourers not from a life of loafing but from other forms of remunerative

employment in which they were already engaged (KNA/ MAI/12/36 Kiambu District Annual Report 1942:10). It was dawning to the colonial government that, the labourer was a human being with certain physiological needs, particularly if he was expected to work which could not adequately be expressed in the formula on the registration certificate.

The European farmers having noticed over time that threats, intimidations, legislations and all manner of brinkmanship had not worked to secure African labour, they began to entice the natives using other methods. There had been an increasing tendency during the year for the European farmers and the chiefs and the more responsible members of the Kikuyu tribe to get together and discuss common problems affecting the two districts.

There had been a number of social gatherings generally in the form of tea parties, both on European farms and in the native areas. These appeared to be very popular, although some of the younger and more irresponsible members of the tribe maintained that they were merely a form of bribery on the part of Europeans to allow labourers to go to their farms, sensible opinion was that it was quite impossible for the country to develop if the two races did not work in water tight compartments. The coffee farmers of Kiambu had put forward to government a suggestion that they would help, benefit the local natives in some way and cease when the last berry was off the tree (KNA/ MA1/12/13 Kiambu District Annual Report 1945:8).

During the Second World War, the Kikuyu elite began competing for labour with the settlers making cultivation in the district increase considerably. Indeed, many Kikuyu were themselves employing labour. Generally speaking, they paid higher wages than the European farmers although it must be admitted that the labourers were expected to do about

twice as much work for a fellow Kikuyu (KNA/ MA1/12/13 Kiambu District Annual Report 1945:9). Meetings were conducted to strategise on how to tackle the issues that had emerged in the provision of labour.

Labour liaison committees, consisting of production sub-committee members and chiefs, with the District Commissioner as chairman, were held at Thika, Ruiru and Kiambu. They provided a valuable opportunity for mutual understanding as well as facilitating the flow of coffee pickers to the areas most in need and for a discussion on any difficulties that arose in connection with labour. At both Ruiru and Thika the planters entertained the African members to tea.

At one of the Kiambu meeting, two representatives of the Kiambu local Native Council attended the meeting by invitation from the production sub-committee and their contribution indicated the type of obstructive and political approach to problems which had become typical of the elected members of the Kiambu council. They were not supported by the chiefs and the chairman was obliged to dispose of some of their suggestions with some directness. It was agreed at these meetings to raise the picking price per debe from 20 cents to 25 cents and in all probability if prices were sustained it would have been fair to raise this price again to 30 cents the following year (KNA/ MA1/12/13 Kiambu District Annual Report 1947:7). The next section examines coffee growing in Kiambu after the Second World War.

3.3 Coffee Growing in Kiambu County after the Second World War 1945-1950

The period after the Second World War witnessed a worsening in the situation of landlessness among the Kiambu Kikuyu. The Kikuyu elite in Kiambu followed in the

footsteps of the colonizers ways of exploiting the poor. There was a growing tendency for the richer Kikuyu to increase their land holdings by purchasing land from poorer Kikuyu whose holding was uneconomic either by size or poor cultivation. Frequently the purchasers were able to buy the land as a result of profit made from farming their land better with manuring and they applied their better farming methods with good results to the land they bought (KNA/ MA1/12/41 Kiambu District Annual Report 1947:6).

This tendency to create a land lord class was likely to result in the better farming of land and it was judged in relation to the social system by the land owner's treatment of hired agricultural labour which was satisfactorily at the time and internal wages were generally inclined to be higher than those paid on European farms. It was not clear how far this tendency was to go.

Its effect however, were likely to be beneficial economically, agriculturally and probably socially if they were not carried too far. It was in line with Kikuyu self-centeredness which had been sharpened by modern conditions and tended to militate against co-operative farming and the old tribal customs of communal land holding (KNA/ MA1/12/41 Kiambu District Annual Report 1947:6).

The reserves where most of the rural kikuyu resided became a fertile ground for the nationalist leaders to begin civic education and mobilization for their nationalistic activities. The Police Ordinance was passed to contain the rise of nationalism in the reserves but it also proved futile in the long run. The Kiambu District Commissioner castigated the nationalists' activities with no positive change of policy but only threats and intimidation when he said;

The district suffered from all the symptoms of a growing political unrest which has been fastened by the activities of agitators who emanate largely from Nairobi. Their policy was evidently to organize meetings in the reserve to foment and inflame ill feeling against government, its employees and activities. They arrived in taxis and collected money so that profits were in inverse ratio to the excessive feeling they could stir up. The kikuyu tribal character contains much that is characteristic of both Jews and Irish and it is astonishing how gullible and how susceptible they are to rumours related to alleged grievances. Democratic theory of free speech must be conditioned by its effect on the people and for this reason it became necessary also to take action to control the indiscriminate collection of funds to support agitators.

Demonstrations demanding better terms of services began in factories and spread to the reserves. A few days later, a strike started among the employees of the uplands bacon factory and the employees of the Lari Farm came out in sympathy. The strike obstinately refused to discuss their grievances and it became apparent that the “strike” was a political manouvre organised by intensive agitation from subversive Kikuyu elements in the adjacent reserve. As a result of the tension caused by these inflammatory tactics a riot developed on uplands station in which 3 rioters were killed and 6 wounded when the police were ordered to open fire. It was an interesting commentary to note that Chege Kibachia had spent a week working up the uplands area the day before he was arrested and finally deported (KNA/ MA 1/12/41 Kiambu District Annual Report 1947:2).

Later in the same month of September, a strike of coffee pickers was organized by women only and roads were picketed. Although not proven, there was every indication that this strike was organized by a member of the Local Native Council called Solomon Memia and another person called Lawson Mbugua who started the Kibathi agitation. Direct action stopped this strike and the pickers were mostly back at work happily within a week (KNA/MA 1/12/41 Kiambu District Annual Report: 1947:3).

The government reacted to the mounting pressure for an end to its economic subjugation by muzzling the press. Throughout this period, the vernacular press tended to become more scurrilous and, according to the District Commission for Kiambu, “fed poison” to those who relied on it for their weekly dose of sophisticated ignorance. Action was taken for criminal libel against Henry Mworira who was the editor of “Mumenyereri newspaper” which as a result moderated its tone. Further action was pending and “Radio Posta” had been involved and similarly it had abated unbridled statements (KNA/MA 1.12.41 Kiambu District Annual Report 1947:4).The District Commissioner applauded the Africans who had remained loyal by stating that:

There can be no doubt that only firm action with government support all along the line restored a political situation which was rapidly getting out of hand. In this I believe we were supported by the majority of reasonable kikuyu who see only chaos and serious trouble resulting from such tactics and these better citizens rely on and need for our support and encouragement. Much of the trouble has of course been brewed at the meetings of the Kenya African union in Nairobi but there are reasonable elements that do not approve and it would certainly be doing a disservice to the educated and more responsible African to associate him/his interests with the activities of unscrupulous agitators who must be curbed in Kenya and indeed the evils of similar subversive and irresponsible attacks on established authority are plain to see elsewhere in the world today.

3.4 Chapter Conclusion

Despite wage labour introduction, land was still valued and this formed basis for rebellion. Anti-social behaviours like alcoholism made recruitment of labour tedious as the settlers were not willing to make working conditions better and this led to desperation that contributed to Africans abusing alcohol. Africans began rebelling through strikes, but it was the colonial government crackdown of dissenting voices that set in for more radical nationalism that gave in to Mau Mau. Thus, it can be concluded that the period after the

Second World War was faced with more or less similar problems which had beset the coffee growing sector in Kiambu in the same measure as before. However, their intensity increased over time especially after the return of the ex-soldiers.

CHAPTER FOUR

AFRICAN COFFEE PRODUCTION IN KIAMBU COUNTY 1950-1962

4.0 Introduction

This chapter examines the entry of Africans in coffee production in Kiambu County between 1951 and 1962. While Africans were allowed to grow coffee in some part of Kenya, as early as in the 1930s, Africans in Kiambu County were allowed to grow coffee much later in the 1950s. Some of them had tried to grow coffee with the permission of the colonial government but with little success. Chief Koinange, for example, was prosecuted when he attempted to become a coffee farmer. This chapter begins by examining some of the arguments that were put forth against African coffee production in colonial Kenya and particularly in Kiambu County.

4.1 The delay of African Coffee Production in Kiambu County

Reasons which explain why Africans in Kiambu County were allowed to grow coffee late falls within two categories. The first category consists of general reasons which delayed African coffee growing in the Kenya as a whole. The second category consists of reasons which are specific to Kiambu County and which delayed the Africans in Kiambu from growing coffee. This section begins by presenting general reasons that delayed African coffee growing in Kenya. Musalia (2010) has observed that, in the first decade of the 20th century, the colonial government did not have specific policy on African agriculture. Instead, the colonial state's interests were more inclined to settler production because of the perception that only settler production would improve the economy. As a result of government bias, white farmers were favoured. Through the Department of Agriculture,

settlers were provided with extension services, equipment, seeds, seedlings and stud animals. It was through the state for instance, that settlers were encouraged and financed to grow coffee, which became an important cash crop in Kenya.

Apart from the government, white farmers' voice in colonial Kenya had become dominant due to their significant position in the Legislative Council. Under such circumstances, hence, African agriculture was improved as long as it did not negatively impact on settler agriculture. In fact, the colonial government did not have any specific programme tailored for African agriculture (Musalia 2010, Thurston 1987). Thus, this delayed African participation in cash crop farming.

African producers were denied the right to grow coffee with the excuse that they would cause diseases which would then spread to European farms (Musalia 2010). This was further reinforced by the fact that African education picked up at a slow rate. It would have been hard for Africans to absorb knowledge required for modern coffee farming. This fact tended to be reinforced in the 1930s when Africans were allowed to grow coffee on an experimental scale in Kisii and Meru (Barnes 1976, Thurston 1987). The first African coffee growers did not produce good quality coffee. This, as a result, delayed the sanctioning of African coffee growing on any reasonable scale.

Another factor which delayed African entry into the coffee sector was the dual policy of the colonial government. The dual policy, which began in 1923, was the main economic development policy after the Second World War (Musalia 2010). The policy tended to emphasize the need for Africans to engage in food production and provision of labour on white settlements rather than encourage them to engage in cash crop farming. In 1923,

Governor Sir Robert Corydon described the policy as “complementary development of non-native and native production” (Berman, 1990). The governor's conference in 1926, argued that,

....steady progress cannot be secured in rural areas unless every able-bodied native who shows no tendency to work is given to understand that the Government expects him to do a reasonable amount of work. Either in production in his own Reserve or in labour for wages outside of it.... (Lipscomb 1972:66).

Whereas the dual policy indicated the role Africans were supposed to fulfill, it did not address the role of Europeans in the development of the colony. In theory, therefore, the policy required the complementary development of the African as well as European economies (Sorrenson 1967) though in different aspects. But in practice, the dual policy seemed to mean that any policy that benefited Africans had to be carried out insofar as it did not interfere with Europeans' interests (Talbot 1990).

Even when Africans were allowed to grow coffee on an experimental stage in the 1930s, this was only meant to cushion white settler farming since it had suffered during the economic depression of the early 1920s (Talbot 1992). This is demonstrated by the fact that Africans living near settler estates were denied the right to grow coffee, the most lucrative crop in the colony fearing to lose African labour (Tignor 1976, Talbot 1990). Therefore, the dual policy was only practicable as long as Africans did not antagonise the settler agriculture.

The Economic and Financial Committee which was appointed, under Bowring, to establish modalities of implementing the dual policy recommended the encouragement of Africans in producing a surplus in the Reserves for export. On the contrary, African surplus production

was directed towards the internal market to feed the African labour force on estates principally on coffee and sisal plantations (Berman 1992). For the case of Kiambu, need had been identified to encourage African farmers in Kiambu County to grow food crops on which the ever expanding Nairobi population depended. Principally, Kiambu County was Nairobi's food basket. The provision of African agricultural education was also recommended to improve African production. But despite these recommendations towards improving African agricultural production, African able-bodied men were still being encouraged to move out of the reserves in search of wage employment rather than engage in coffee growing. By 1920-1921, government reports captured the predicaments of the less privileged African farmer noting that:

It is regretted that hitherto so little has been done to develop African agriculture potentialities. An analysis of the estimates of the Department of Agriculture would appear to show that the heavy expenditure of that Department is mainly devoted to helping the European farmer and to research work from which no doubt the native will, in some distant future, benefit (Tignor 1976:294).

After the Second World War, the Agricultural Department made recommendations to have European agricultural supervisors oversee agriculture in the African reserves. The responsibility of the field officers was to encourage Africans to grow edible exportable crops but not coffee. Among the crops Africans were encouraged to grow were maize and beans. The encouragement to grow maize coincided with Nairobi's dependence on Kiambu Kikuyu produce since the 1920s. Since 1923 attempts were made to stop local movement of maize in other directions and also hawking so that Nairobi's needs would be satisfied

(Robertson 1997). The importance of Kiambu as the granary of Nairobi was common knowledge to the authorities.

Apart from lack of formal education, Africans were also given limited agricultural training. This was a common trend during the colonial period, perhaps deliberate perhaps not, aimed at denying Africans the requisite knowledge that would have enabled them to participate in coffee growing. The training was, however, not smooth because the government did not provide enough finances and the training facilities for the purpose (Talbot, 1990). Scott Agricultural Laboratories established in 1922 in the Kabete area of Kiambu County was the first agricultural school in the colony (Tignor 1976).

The Second World War created food shortage in its wake in the early 1940s. The famine which lasted between 1942 and 1945, and which was named "*panya kuu*" or time of the rats (when rats were eaten) (Clayton and Savage 1974), tended to reinforce government's desire to confine Africans into food production rather than to encourage them to grow coffee. To solve the food crisis, in 1943, the Kiambu Local Native Council, purchased relief food for Ndeiya area, that was most affected by food insufficiency in the district (Musalia 2010). In addition, the Kiambu Local Native Council issued compulsory directives to Kikuyu families to grow at least a half an acre of sweet potatoes and cassava for food purposes (Musalia 2010). Thus, Africans in Kiambu were valued for their role in producing food rather than coffee.

Apart from being the food basket for Nairobi's ever growing population, Kiambu County also acted as Nairobi's labour basket. Thus, Africans in Kiambu would not have been allowed to grow coffee that early as this would have taken away the much-needed labour supply. If anything, the need for labour supply increased during the war when the military and the non-African civilians in Nairobi required African domestic servants (Musalia 2010). To attract African domestic labourers in Nairobi, wages were pushed up. Apart from war, the establishment of industries from the 1940s also encouraged the growth of Nairobi's population. Prior to Second World War, British investors and financiers were not interested in developing industries in Kenya. After 1940, this attitude changed as a result of the war. In 1940-1941, the Kenya Industrial Management Board was set up in Nairobi. The mandate of the board was to encourage the local manufacture of some goods formerly imported from Britain in order to avoid the risks of shipping. Thus, the 1940s witnessed a surge in demand for African labour in Nairobi, and Kiambu became the reservoir of this much-needed labour supply. Coffee growing by Africans in Kiambu hence would have snatched away the labour required in Nairobi.

With regard to coffee growing, Nairobi's proximity to Kiambu had two effects. The first is that it delayed the acceptance of Africans to grow coffee. The second is that Nairobi curtailed the supply of African labourers on white-owned coffee farms in Kiambu. The withdrawal of males from Kiambu caused labour shortage for settlers' coffee plantations. Shortage of African labour on white-owned coffee farms worsened when Africans were allowed to grow coffee in 1951. This is because both Africans and Europeans started to compete for African labour. Worse still was the impact of the outbreak of Mau Mau on

Africans and European coffee growing in Kiambu. Even though Africans in Kiambu were allowed to grow coffee late, there had been attempts at Africans growing coffee either under an experimental programme or through illegal ways. This is examined in the next section.

4.2 Experimental and Unlawful African Coffee Growing in Colonial Kenya and Kiambu County

African coffee growing was not allowed in the whole of Kenya at the same time. Various factors, at interplay, determined when coffee would be grown where. Economic depression of the 1930s, for example, led to the growing of coffee in certain places for the first time in history of the country. It was during the 1930s that the Department began taking services to the African areas more seriously (Thurston 1987). This serious interest in African farming was occasioned by the economic depression which led to the fall in world prices thereby undermining the viability of settler export crops.

As a result of the depression, there was more attention to the fertile African areas, which represented untapped agricultural potential and were less affected by production costs. Not only did the Colonial Office press for an immediate increase in African export production, but Sir Joseph Byrne, Governor of Kenya between 1931 and 1937, was less influenced by settlers than his predecessors and more receptive to African agricultural development. Consequently, the Chief Native Commissioner and the Director of Agriculture emphasized the need for increased African production (Thurston 1987).

It was during this period (1930s) that some sanction was issued to allow Africans to grow coffee in places such as Kisii and Meru on an experimental level. European farmers in Kenya exercised a lot of influence on the colonial government and it is their objection to

African coffee growing that led to much delay in Africans being allowed to grow coffee. In places such as Uganda and Tanganyika, where European settler presence was not as pronounced as in Kenya, Africans had been allowed to grow coffee. In Uganda and Tanganyika where there was a greater commitment to developing smallholder agriculture, African coffee production had been expanding since before the First World War. Robusta coffee grown in Uganda at altitudes of about 3,750 to 4,500 feet produced a low grade coffee, less valuable than the Arabica in Tanganyika grown at higher altitudes and processed by hand. This demonstrates that Kenyan Africans could have grown coffee successfully had settlers' objections not prevented its introduction.

If anything, large parts of Nyanza and Central Provinces were well suited to coffee production, and particularly those Kikuyu whose land bordered European farms in Kiambu County or who had worked on European coffee farms wanted to grow it. Although the Coffee Plantations Ordinance of 1918 required every coffee grower to have an annual license, it was not illegal for Africans to grow it and there had been a number of abortive efforts, as two instances demonstrate. Parmenas Mockerie, who had been to England for the Kikuyu Central Association, wrote to a friend there, Duncan Leys, in 1935 stating that a letter which has been circulated by the European Agricultural Officer of Fort Hall (later renamed Murang'a County) to mission schools had called for the uprooting of all coffee trees grown by the Kikuyu. These trees had been planted before the passing of the Native Grown Coffee Rules (Thurston 1987).

Another African who almost succeeded in growing coffee in the 1930s as a result of the economic depression of that time was Chief Koinange of Kiambu. Koinange planted coffee

in Kiambu in the 1930s after obtaining permission from the District Commissioner.

Koinange had had a lot of interest to grow coffee.

I told Canon Leakey and he gave me a few trees, which I planted near here. I went to European farms at Kiambu and I bought coffee plants and planted them, and I bought coffee seeds and put them in the nursery down near the river - and I had many coffee trees. When they were about ready to fruit, one European farmer (Mr. Knight) visited me and said he wanted to see my place. He spent the whole day here and saw all the coffee, saying "very good", and went home. Four days later Canon Leakey came and told me that they were discussing my coffee in Nairobi and all the Europeans were cursing him because he had given natives coffee trees to plant, and they were very much annoyed by it and had resolved to come and pull down my coffee (Bunche 1939: 41-42).

Even before Chief Koinange benefitted from his otherwise good coffee,

Canon Harry Leakey came to him and told him that the European settlers were going to pull down his trees. He was advised that if he pulled them down himself he could be compensated, but if the imperial government were to do this he would not receive anything. As a result, Chief Koinange destroyed the trees himself. The seedlings which he had started in a nursery on his farm he was forced to sell. They went to a European who planted them on the border of the chief's farm (Talbot 1992:83).

When experimental African coffee schemes were given an official blessing, it was not in the Kikuyu Districts. Koinange of Kiambu County and other individuals who planted coffee in Kikuyu areas did so without official sanction from the colonial office in Nairobi. Clarence Buxton, District Commissioner at Kisii, had pressed the Administration so persistently for permission to plant coffee that when the Colonial Office authorised it in selected African areas, Kisii was chosen, along with Embu and Meru (Barnes 1976).

Areas chosen for African coffee growing were remote from European farms. Kiambu County had so many of the European farmers and this made it difficult for Africans to be

allowed to grow coffee. Nurseries were established in each area, and an undertaking was given to the Coffee Board that planting would be limited to a negligible acreage in districts remote from European plantations and would only be increased after consultation with the Board. Tom Colchester, District Officer at Embu when coffee was introduced, saw it as part of the general campaign to push African crop production to raise incomes sufficient to meet taxes; it was not enthusiastically received (Thurston 1987).

The Kikuyu had shown a strong urge to plant coffee compared to the Embu who had never been much concerned with the campaign although, once nurseries and planting started, it caught on rapidly. This is not to say that D.C.s and some (but not all) Agricultural Officers had not pressed for coffee planting to be allowed. There were actually in Embu station in 1932 some fine Robusta coffee trees which a past D.C. had planted at the government station there as well as a vegetable garden to prove their suitability but around 1933 he had been required by higher edict to remove them (Thurston 1987).

Meru was where smallholder African coffee really developed, due primarily to the combination of favourable ecological conditions and the long term efforts of Jack Benson, the Agricultural Officer, who made coffee his abiding interest. From the late 1930s he gradually developed, by trial and error, the standards and procedures which were to be the basis of Kenya's smallholder coffee industry.

4.3 Official Sanctioning of African Coffee Growing in Kiambu County

Githunguri Division was gazetted as a coffee growing area in 1951 and a start had been made to get the industry going on similar lines to those used in Meru. Owing to the necessity for secrecy before the gazeting of the area it was not possible to have nursery sites ready for immediate planting. Negotiations were made for suitable site and a small nursery was set in Kiambu government station (now Kiambu town) where five pounds of S.L.9 seed were planted and they had germinated. It was also during the same period, 1951-1952, that coffee growing was expanded in Kisii and introduced in Nyeri, Fort Hall, North Nyanza and Taita in small acreages. Initially it was restricted to about 100 trees per holding, or about a fifth of an acre, with planned increases; it could not be grown within five miles of European estates (Kenya Agricultural Department Annual Reports 1951-1952, Thurston 1987).

Despite the waving of restrictions impeding Africans to produce coffee the conditions put forward were quite a challenge to surmount. Prudency or mere expediency made the Africans who wanted to produce the crop be loyal to the government after all a battle is won a step at a time. Unions and societies were the only licensed to have seedlings which they could distribute to farmers. The farmers found growing their own seedlings were dwelt with by the law, thus one had to buy the seedlings from the government. Monetisation of obtaining the seeds locked out the peasants, giving the chiefs and other loyalist a head start in coffee growing. Some of the stipulations were that, the land to plant coffee to be made soft through harrowing, mulching to be carried out, validation of the different holes that the coffee trees were to be planted be done, application of manure and in instances where soil

erosion was prevalent the farmer had to put up measures to prevent soil erosion.

Agricultural instructors had to supervise the growing of the seedlings and those who failed to abide as per the conditions were dealt with, by the law (Kamau, O.I. 2016).

As coffee was introduced, and many farmers became desirous of participating in its growing, so increased the number of land disputes. At the same time land litigation was becoming increasingly common, resulting in a reluctance or inability to invest in improvements. If a man did begin to develop his holding with advice from the Agricultural Department, a counter claim could be put forward, the validity of which the European officers had no means of judging in terms of local land law (Thurston 1987). People claimed ownership falsely or cultivated beyond their boundaries, and everyone was determined to stake his claim by ensuring, through a court decision, that his rights were established and recognized.

Even then, cases were appealed or resubmitted under different terms over and over. In Central Province this resulted in an endless number of cases costing thousands of shillings, creating divisions within families and building up resentments between the landed and the landless, particularly as richer men often succeeded in winning disputes. In Kiambu County alone, bribes apart, fees paid in African court cases rose from 13,000 shillings to 24,000 shillings in 1951 (Thurston 1987; 45). The Administrators, whose court responsibilities made them acutely aware of the problem in a very direct way, were thus as keen to find a solution as the Agricultural Officers. All too often it was necessary for them to examine boundaries, and as Loyd explained:

It was then that one could see so clearly what were the real problems on the ground of fragmentation and of the variation in size: sometimes quite big, but normally extremely small, and very often one would be deciding a case, which had been extremely expensive to the litigants involved, which was an argument over a piece of land the size of perhaps a small house (Thurston 1987:45).

The colonial government did not just allow Africans to grow coffee in Kiambu County. Favours were extended to certain privileged Africans. The most privileged category of Africans were the colonial chiefs and headmen. They were favored in order to extract their loyalty and support for the colonial government. In addition, these officials had used their privileged position to acquire more land which they would then use for growing both food and cash crops.

Some respondents who were interviewed during this study stated that the sub-clan of Waweru wa Magugu (Waweru son of Magugu) have huge tracts of land to this day (Njeri , O.I. 2016). While it may be possible to hold the view that the Magugu family was big during their migration into Kiambu County in the pre-colonial period, such that they were able to bring more land under use, the family may also have used force to acquire the land. This is bearing in mind the fact that Waweru wa Magugu was a colonial chief, and it is, also possible that he seized advantage of the situation to accumulate land during the 1950s, a reason that can explain the ownership of huge tracts of land in independent Kenya (Musalia 2010).

By the time Africans were allowed in Kiambu to grow coffee, land had been subjected market forces. Africans who had the money were able to purchase land from poor households or households which were desirous of migrating in search of more arable land.

Indeed, the value of land in Kiambu had risen by the 1950s that many Africans would have been tempted to sell their pieces. Musalia (2010) has observed that as the Europeans occupied land Kiambu, they blocked any further expansion and landowners continued to put more land under cultivation. This pushed the value of land value upwards and, subsequently, some people were pushed out of land through sale and purchase. Nairobi, which was just a short distance away from Kiambu was offering economic options for those who did not need to rely on land anymore. As a result, socio-economic situations which were occurring in Kiambu in the 1950s favored a few Kikuyu of Kiambu, most notably colonial officers, to seize the opportunity of growing coffee alongside other crops.

Agricultural activities of two prominent Africans in Kiambu contributed immensely to Africans being allowed to grow coffee. Several cases of unlicensed coffee growing had come to light, the most important of which was ex-chief Koinange Mbiu (KNA/ MAI/12/45 Kiambu District Annual Report 1951:15). Another notable African farmer in the district was Harry Thuku. He had run into trouble with colonial commanded chiefs due to his insistence on African right. His farming prowess nevertheless was unquestionable. Harry Thuku was a progressive African farmer in the district who had completely fenced approximately 300 acres with Cedar posts and a five strand barbed wire and was now in the process of building his own Cattle dip, to plans that had been supplied by agricultural department (KNA/ MAI/12/44 Kiambu District Annual Report 1950, page 10).

By 1953, different areas in the district began in earnest to produce coffee. Preparation for coffee planting in 1953 had preceded smoothly 3 nurseries had been established and about 5000 seedlings were expected to be ready for planting in April. Preparation of land for

planting in Komothai and Githunguri locations had proceeded satisfactorily (KNA/MAI/12/46 Kiambu District Annual Report 1952:12).

Conditions were set for Africans to get trees from nurseries but this never deferred them from their zeal to plant coffee. They were limited to 100 trees and had to fulfill conditions regarding manuring, secure tenure and membership of cooperative society. There had been no less than 452 applications to plant coffee and the target was 6,500 acres to be planted within the next 12 to 14 years (KNA/MAI/12/47 Kiambu District Annual Report 1953:7).

4.4 Mau Mau Rebellion and Its Impact on African Coffee Growing in Kiambu County 1951-1954

Africans in Kiambu were allowed to grow coffee after the outbreak of Mau Mau. The implications of Mau Mau rebellion on African coffee growing were twofold. There was the positive impact whereby the colonial government began to think of ways to improve the economic wellbeing of the Kikuyu of Kiambu through agricultural development programmes. This will be examined in detail in the next section of this chapter under the Swynnerton Plan which was implemented between 1954 and 1959. Between 1951 and 1954, however, Mau Mau had a negative impact on both European and African coffee growing in Kiambu. In 1951, the same year that Africans were allowed to grow coffee in Kiambu, women from Gatundu threatened to down their tools but financial constraints forced them to work when plans were mooted to bring labourers from Meru (Presley 1992).

Great effort was taken to suppress Mau Mau especially in Central Province and Nairobi. To check criminal elements in Nairobi, "undeserving" Kikuyu were rounded-up in 1952 through the "Operation Jack Scott" and the 1954 "Operation Anvil". Of the 30,000 rounded

up, 16,538 were detained while 2,416 dependants were returned to the reserves (Zezeza, 1992:183). In 1953, Kikuyu resident labourers in the Rift Valley were repatriated swelling the population in the reserves. Kiambu District received a total of 37,000 returnees while Murang'a and Nyeri each got 20,000. Such a population would have been a good source of agricultural labour in the reserves. But, by the mid-1950s such a population would not have been accommodated because of land scarcity. The returnees to Kiambu were disgruntled elements according to the official description "they were mostly bitter landless and penniless persons who joined the passive wing but owing to their poverty, it was difficult to take retaliatory action and many had to be employed in paid gangs" (Clayton and Savage, 1974:353). The returned labour did not better the situation in Kiambu, but it rather heightened the political temperatures that negatively impacted on both African and European coffee growing.

Apart from swelling the population of landless and penniless Africans in Kiambu, Mau Mau rebellion also led to the formation of villages, akin to concentration camps. These villages were meant to destroy any support the militant group could receive from the rural population. The villages established were, therefore, aimed at enhancing security in Kikuyu areas. A village consisted of a population of between 2,000 and 3,000 persons. Elkins (2005: 234) gives much higher figures than the official one, arguing that by 1955, about 1,050, 899 persons had been removed from their scattered homes and confined to 804 villages with a total of 230,000 huts. Between 1954 and 1955, more than 80,000 Kikuyu households involving more than 300,000 men, women and children in Kiambu District were affected by villagisation programme. Residents were settled in plots of 80 by 100

square feet (KNA/ CS/1/14/25, 1953-1954:18). Presley (1992:162) argues that the Kikuyu were in a semi-imprisoned state. Elkins (2005:234) argues that other than the difference in terminology, the villagers were in detention camps.

Certainly, there was a lot of fear in the villages. Villagers were not only afraid of the Mau Mau but also the security details of the Tribal Police, the Watch or Ward units. The villagisation programme did not only affect the villagers' movement but also the acreage they would cultivate, which must have significantly affected the food crop output. Each family was recommended to have a plot roughly a quarter-acre (Musalia 2010), which was not sufficient to produce food for a family, let alone coffee for sale. As stated earlier, Mau Mau was beneficial to the Africans in Kiambu, in relation to coffee growing, in that it made the colonial government to begin to think of ways of easing anti-colonial feelings. Encouragement of coffee growing under the Swynnerton Plan was one such way that the colonial authorities came up with as we set out to examine in the next section.

4.5 The Swynnerton Plan and African Coffee Growing in Kiambu County 1954-1959

By early 1950s, the socio-political and economic dissatisfaction mostly amongst Kikuyu in Rift Valley and in Kikuyu land led to the outbreak of Mau Mau. To counteract the events surrounding the rebellion, the government introduced profound changes especially in land tenure system, with the implementation of the Swynnerton Plan of 1954. The Swynnerton Plan in Kenya, 1954 to 1959, was the most comprehensive of all the post-war colonial development schemes, which aimed to increase colonial production of goods and raw materials through state intervention (Thurston 1987). The Plan was drawn up in response to

a crisis in land use in Central Province which stemmed from political decisions taken earlier in the century about land tenure and forms of production as well as from increasing pressures on peasant producers after the Second World War when real wages fell and households became poorer.

The Swynnerton Plan represented a culmination and amplification of various solutions to which the colonial government in both Nairobi and London turned during the Mau Mau Emergency as a means of expanding production, both to restore order and to forestall future discontent by broadening the middle class collaborative base. Once the Plan was in effect, its implementation was also to a large extent directed in the field (Thurston 1987).

The expanded Administrative Service imposed unprecedented control in Central Province and initiated the decisions to villagise and to introduce mass land consolidation. This provided the basis for the controlled rapid expansion of agricultural services during the remainder of the plan period. The plan saw mass introduction of cash crops and the foundation of a grade cattle industry at high standards which were to be of accelerating value to the Kikuyu of Central Province (Kiambu included) and to cushion it from the effects of high population growth for at least a generation to come.

Under emergency measures, the government acquired wide powers that enabled it to carry out physical brutal war against Mau Mau supporters alongside economic reforms, which were meant to erode local support for Mau Mau. The major economic reform was the Land Consolidation Programme conceived by Swynnerton, the assistant director of agriculture

who had previously been instrumental in encouraging peasant agriculture in Tanganyika (Mackenzie, 1998:168).

The Swynnerton Plan, or "A Plan to intensify the development of African agricultural policy in Kenya", published in 1954 gave comprehensive change of African agriculture from what the government termed a "circle of subsistence or near subsistence agriculture" (Thurston 1987)). The Plan completely changed the agricultural geography of Kikuyu land. It was an absolute turnaround of government's policy on African agriculture, with the aim of making Africans increase their productivity.

The Swynnerton Plan recommended individual tenure of land in agricultural areas. It also recommended the growth of cash crops by the landowners, which were hitherto preserved for white farmers. While the Swynnerton Plan outlined plan for growing cash-valued crops, it had none for food crops. They were specific procedures of advancing agricultural credit to cash-crop growers and an elaborated marketing of the same. Since men were the owners of land, they received the credit to improve the cash crops (Musalia 2010).

Consolidation and registration was favoured by wealthy Kiambu men and objected to by the poorer Kikuyu. But, since most of the poor participated in the Mau Mau activities, they were detained or imprisoned while the rest were contained in the villages leaving the government with little opposition if any to implement the Swynnerton Plan. The dictatorial powers of the State of Emergency allowed Swynnerton to alter government's policy on African land. He maintained that the government's policy on land was to be reversed to

enable the, energetic or rich Africans acquire more land and bad or poor farmers get less to create a landed and landless class. Swynnerton further asserted that, this was a normal step in the revolution of a country (Ibid: 127). With such authoritative determination, land consolidation, enclosure and registration began in Kikuyu land, the hotbed of Mau Mau resulting into an “agrarian revolution” (Smith, 1976: 125).

From 1955, the colonial administration endorsed land consolidation. The administration realised that it could use consolidation to reward the loyalists against the Mau Mau insurgents (Harbeson 1973:33). The District Commissioner in Fort Hall wrote that it was "important to seize the opportunity of rewarding loyalists by giving them larger and better holdings if we are to keep them on our side" (Sorrensens 1967).

Another one hoped that the land consolidation scheme would change the face of Kikuyu land and bring into being a middle class of Kikuyu farmers who would be too busy on their land to worry about political agitation. Targeted in this category were political and progressive farmers such as Harry Thuku. By producing a landless class, the plan hoped that such persons could work for the landed class. Therefore, the Swynnerton Plan hoped to replace the traditional institutions of social regulation and cohesion, and replace them with more specific economic relationships to provide at least a partial substitute. Another thing that consolidation did was to allow the Kikuyu get credit for agricultural improvement having been allowed to grow cash crops in 1951.

The emergency regulations assisted the process of consolidation and registration such that in 1958, it was completed in Kiambu. The emergency time was an opportune period to carry out the exercise in the absence of "elements" that were considered to be against the Swynnerton Plan. Consolidation enabled the Kikuyu to grow cash crops like coffee, tea, and pyrethrum. The next section examines the impact of the Swynnerton plan on African coffee growing in Kiambu County on the eve of independence.

4.6 African Coffee Growing in Kiambu County on the eve of Independence 1957-1962

The period after 1957 witnessed intensified agricultural development not just in Kiambu County, but also in other parts of Central Province which had been adversely affected by Mau Mau rebellion. More importantly, there were concerted government efforts, through the provincial administration and the Department of Agriculture, to improve African cash crop farming in general.

Since the area was not yet free from the effects of Mau Mau those who were targeted mainly were chiefs, headmen and others who showed loyalty, friendship and support to the colonial government. On their part, the Agricultural staff was primarily concerned with raising agricultural productivity as quickly as possible and took little interest in politics. The farmer's response determined the assistance he got (Thurston 1987). Very little coffee had been planted during the Emergency, and much of what there was had been destroyed by chiefs' and loyalists' opponents.

Mau Mau activities had somehow subsided after 1957 paving way for coffee to become the major thrust of development in Central Province. Farmers were so keen that the officers

found it hard to maintain control of distribution. Agricultural Instructors could be bribed to report that holdings were ready for planting and coffee seedlings were stolen from nurseries. This signaled the growing realisation by the Kiambu Africans that coffee was a means of a very substantial source of income which of course it proved to be (Thurston 1987). Despite all efforts to stock the nurseries there was a constant shortage, and the officers made numerous trips to European areas to buy truckloads of seedlings (*ibid*).

As far as possible, numerous controls were imposed along Meru lines, to get the coffee started under optimum conditions and to prevent the spread of disease. Before a farmer could have seedlings in his land, the land to be inspected by the local Agricultural Instructor. It had to be bench terraced, holes had to be dug to a certain standard and mulching grass and farmyard manure had to be available. The instructors then monitored planting methods, and, as Rimington described, they were constantly re-trained at divisional headquarters:

... the digging of the holes, the filling in of soil, the manure, how to get the root system in. You put the tap root right down to the bottom, you put your feeler roots along the side, press in the soil and get the tap root fixed. We'd have a stick across to try to keep the thing upright. Quite a lot of them planted their trees below ground level, so that when the soil subsided like that, the tree went down in, the rainy seasons filled up in this dip, and the tree rotted, it died. What a waste of money, What a waste of time (Thurston 1987: 119).

All farmers who planted coffee had to join co-operative coffee societies, and each society had one or more factories. Coffee Officers appointed under the Swynnerton Plan designed the factories, constructed with Agricultural Land Development Loans (referred to simply as ALDEV Loans). These loans were recovered from members' profits. Factory employees

were trained to pulp, ferment, wash, dry, grade and process the parchment coffee. It was then sent in batches to the coffee Marketing Board for an initial payment and hulled in Nairobi by the Kenya Planters' Co-operative Union (hereafter referred to as KPCU). Each society became a member as if it were an estate, and when KPCU sold the coffee at auction the society received a second payment which it paid out to its members (Thurston 1987).

In 1957, the last of the Coffee Board restrictions preventing Africans from growing coffee within five miles of European estates was lifted. This helped African farmers in Kiambu to plant special varieties along European boundaries so that theft could be monitored (Thurston 1987). During the same period, Africans in Kiambu began to get support from government to grow coffee. The Ministry of Agriculture, in particular, proposed that coffee production should be increased in the Kiambu District at the rate of 5,000 acres per year for four years thus bringing the total district acreage to 23,500 acres. The agricultural and financial implementation of this was worked out as a plan was submitted for approval. Meanwhile, preliminary work in new nurseries and planting of seedlings had commenced (KNA/ MAI/12/49 Kiambu District Annual Report 1960:4).

Africans began planting coffee without approval of agricultural officers which made it difficult with time to know the actual number of coffee planted in the district. A record planting of 1,720 acres was achieved in April and May, 1960, bringing the total surviving to 4360 acres. Further planting took place in the short rains, but these had not been considered as there were many growers buying seedlings from surrounding estates and so

many growers planted without permission that the only way to keep track of the acreage was by census (KNA/ MAI/12/50 Kiambu District Annual Report 1961:4).

Thus, African coffee growing in Kiambu County surpassed the ability of agricultural and administrative colonial officials to monitor and supervise. Coffee farmers depended at times on their own wisdom regarding how to tend their coffee trees. As a result, there was a poor harvest as most of the African farmers did not have experience in coffee growing. From March until September there was no permanent coffee officer, nevertheless the turn out of the factories was as good as could be expected from the cherry that went into them. The drought resulted in large proportion of fights which were accentuated by poor field cultivation which was however better than some districts which were visited in the province during the year (KNA/ MAI/12/50 Kiambu District Annual Report 1961:4).

More Africans demanded seedlings as their zeal for growing coffee had spread far and wide in Kiambu District. The seedling supply caused constant concern first, it was clear that it was impossible to state the demand in one year. The million seedlings did not do it, to a great extent the situation was saved by private controls (societies and individuals who purchased from outside) but the situation was unsatisfactory.

Noteworthy politicians and administrators had urged the planting of coffee, so the demand had risen from what it was even the year ago and was probably about 5,000 acres. Chief Magugu took upon himself to encourage the head men to plant coffee. He would do this during barazas and due to his persistence Komothai area where he hailed from became known for coffee production (Gitau Kuru, O.I. 2016). Yet no society had stirred itself to find and develop adequate nursery space and eventually it was decided that only a central

nursery of 100 acres, growing two million seedlings a year would meet the situation. This did not produce seedlings until 1964 (KNA/ MAI/12/50 Kiambu District Annual Report /1961:6).

The attempt by the societies to solve the problem of having adequate seedlings for the farmers only created another problem of quality. The societies were determined to plant their seedlings straight into the beds vacated by the previous crop, thereby providing their members with seedlings either too young or which had been severely restricted by competition in the seedling bed. Society seedlings thus got a bad name among the members (KNA/ MAI/12/50 Kiambu District Annual Report 1961:6).

To tame the growing of seedlings which had not been sanctioned, the District agricultural officers approved farmers to carry out the exercise. Twenty farmers in the district were approved for the growing of seedlings for sale to societies. For the first group, the societies had provided ten of them with seeds. The societies applied for over 2,500 lb of seed but owing to shortages in the coffee Research Station, this was cut to 1,355lb. Indigent accusations of favoritism towards nursery men were made but the cut was colony wide and the societies now had insufficient land into which to plant out their seedlings (KNA/ MAI/12/50 Kiambu District Annual Report 1962:6)

Mechanisation was done in order to do away with tedious work of irrigating the seedlings manually. However, this was done without having agricultural officers to effectively monitor the nurseries. Ten nurseries were provided with powered overhead irrigation, seven were provided with hand pumps systems. Nevertheless, waste of labour, inadequate watering and terribly slow planting were features of all nurseries. All these faults were a

contribution of old challenges and they could only have been overcome by continuity in the posting of cash crops officer (KNA/ MAI/12/50 Kiambu District Annual Report 1961:6).

Application of farm inputs was encouraged under the recommendations of the agricultural officers. Emphasis was on the use of chemical fertilisers, insecticides and fungicides. The majority of the agricultural staff members were well versed in this. Few growers had realised yet that they could call on the staff with confidence, for the staff had understandably paid attention to those farmers who took their advice. It was realised that chemicals in their own were not the answer; in fact many shambas proved that good results could be obtained without them (KNA/ MAI/12/50 Kiambu District Annual Report 1961:7).

Coffee production was supposed to be done in a manner that its quality was not compromised to ensure the best grade was obtained. With the allowance of Africans to produce the crop some of them had failed to maintain the standards. Pests and diseases were of secondary importance. This was not a district where coffee could be left to itself and still one to have expected to get high grades. Throughout the drought one found the same features; (a) a well-tended coffee farm had healthy trees and a large crop of large cherries, each with two fat beans inside (b) a badly tended shamba had weak, spindly trees with yellow leaves and die back, and a small irregular crop of small cherries with one T.T bean and a silver of parchment. By the end of the year, these features were recognised by society committees and the better farmers congratulated while some bad farmers were disqualified by their societies from delivering in the next season (KNA/ MAI/12/50 Kiambu District Annual Report 1961:7).

Of paramount importance became educating the farmers on the best practices of coffee farming that guaranteed best grades were achieved. The main aspect of the education was courses for farmers and their wives, and the agricultural field staff. In addition, during the period when it was inconvenient for farmers to attend courses were held for coffee union assistants, produce inspectors and various contractors. This included farmers and their wives, departmental staff and coffee union and others. As a result of popular demand from the farmers, the length of farmer's courses was increased to 3 weeks in 1963, in the first instance and having been satisfactory, the length of each course was made to be 4 weeks, as requested by the farmers.

The syllabus was arranged to suit the ecological zones where the courses were drawn from, and if it was brought into line with the Kiambu District standard recommendations and provincial policy. The syllabus for the departmental staff was arranged to refresh and instruct them on a particular aspect which the department wished to encourage within the district. The departmental officers gave their full support and assisted with the instruction at the institute, also outside lecturers from commercial firms continued with an increasing scale that gave their support to the betterment of coffee production in the district (KNA/MAI/12/51 Kiambu District Annual Report 1962:1).

By 1962, African farmers began to reap from the crop planted in 1959 as it yielded 5,387 lbs of cherry. This inspired more farmers to continue planting following the guidelines given by the agricultural officers. The coffee had been treated throughout the year according to provincial policy and was very good, but for a few trees planted in 1959 and in 1961, which were not of uniform variety and increased to overbear, and were poor. A further 2.3 acres had been prepared for the 1963 planting and this continued with a hope of

completing the coffee planting programme (KNA/ MAI/12/51 Kiambu District Annual Report 1962:2).

It did not take long before the coffee production accumulated to levels that factories were struggling to manage. The overcrowding of coffee factories resulted in excessive fermentation of coffee berries, thus leading to low quality of the export crop from the province. The coffee berry disease remained a hectic menace which also helped to lower the quality. However, by creation of the Coffee Development Authority and the enactment of the necessary amendment to the coffee cultivation and processing rules, efforts were made to improve the standard of husbandry and processing in order to raise the quality and thus maintain a high price. Uncared for coffee had to be uprooted; this had already been started in parts of Kiambu. As a matter of policy there was to be no newer planting except for the 2 percent annual in filling. This was meant to limit any expansion of production but instead concentrate on the improvement of quality through better husbandry and processing (KNA/ MAI/12/51 Kiambu District Annual Report 1962:26).

4.7 The Role of African Coffee Cooperative Societies in Colonial Kenya

Some members of the colonial office had favored developing cooperative marketing for African produced coffee, but they held back because of the many conflicts between London and Nairobi over the coffee growing issue. Europeans in Kenya were worried about the re-absorption of African ex-servicemen into the colonial structure after the war. This concern compelled policy makers to think that cooperatives would be ideal organizations for demobilised soldiers: cooperatives would provide new jobs, open new leadership positions

for ambitious people and serve as a general channel for economic advancement (Barnes1976:137-138).

In pre-colonial Kenya, Africans worked through the spirit of the cooperative movement. Hunting activities as well as farm work were done on a communal cooperative spirit. So when the colonial government came up with encouraging coffee cooperative societies among Africans, this was not a new invention. By 1960, the number of coffee cooperative societies in Kiambu County increased to eight in the year with Kiambu Division having one, Githunguri two, Gatundu three and Kikuyu two.

In the beginning, these societies faced a challenge in having capable staff to manage them but with the time in training and experience they began to stand on their own. All society secretaries generally were not capable of performing their duties without the close supervision of the cooperative society's inspectors. The rapid expansion of coffee societies in particular had created a dangerous situation which had to be tackled. With time, these societies began to take initiative to salvage the situation through training of staff. This was noted by the District Commissioner in his report of 1960 thus:

It was very pleasing to see that many societies were becoming increasingly aware that the cooperative inspectors cannot and could not run their societies for them and were now eager to send their staff on the various courses offered (KNA/MAI/12/49 Kiambu District Annual Report 1960:3).

To expand the societies, borrowing funds became inevitable. But therein, in borrowing loans, also lay a myriad of problems which came to hinder proper development of the African cooperative movement among coffee growers in Kiambu County. Most cooperatives in Kiambu would borrow but repayment was a problem. The cooperative societies thus, began to accumulate debts (KNA/ MAI /12/49 Kiambu District Annual

Report 1960). While some cooperatives financed their own development, others depended entirely on borrowing. In 1961, for example, the District Commissioner for Kiambu noted that “Kiambu and Kabete societies financed their own development while Komothai and Gititu depended on borrowing” (KNA/ MAI/12/50 Kiambu District Annual Report 1961:5). The differences in financial performance of cooperative societies in Kiambu County very much depended on the quality of management. Equally important, to the development of cooperative societies, was the level of supervision from the Colony’s Agricultural Department. In 1961, Kiambu County got its first African agricultural and cash crops officer. This brought efficiency and experience which at the time were very critical as most of the African coffee farmers needed a lot of guidance. This experience showed that the government had to continue supporting the societies with the service of a good officer (KNA/ MAI/12/50 Kiambu District Annual Report 1961:6).

Societies faced various challenges, one being the payment of the farmers. The enormous development programme had put a severe strain on the society’s finances and loans (KNA/MAI/12/50 Kiambu District Annual Report 1961:6). Drill and discipline were needed in all the coffee factories, and this was difficult to instill. It comes to mind, though disturbingly, that:

African-owned coffee factories did not employ high powered general managers. The factory supervisor was often of low education and rather slow. [In addition,] he divided his time between factory and nursery work and had inadequate powers of disciplining the staff, who had poor timing of operations and inadequate turning of beans while drying as their main faults (KNA/MAI/12/50 Kiambu District Annual Report 1961:7).

Worse still, the policy of the ministry of agriculture at the time of regarding the training and dispatching the field staff was cumbersome and ineffective to be of much help to the

farmers in 1961. Even when field officers were employed to create a link between the cooperative society, the factory and the farmer, the industry was still small with many developments, commitments and this took up a great proportion of their income (KNA/MAI/12/50 Kiambu District Annual Report 1961:8). It was unfortunate that when the coffee sector continued to expand transparency and accountability became a mirage. Some of the factory operations had to be put to a halt. Work in factories was suspended whilst the society reviewed their financial status. Audit reports did shed light for instance, in one of the reports the following was laid in to the open;

It would appear from information they gave me that their loan of shs 25,000 is not yet available, whilst they have debts amounting to shs11, 000.They will require about shs. 16,000 to cover the purchase of 100 trays,100 yards of sisaltex,100 yards of heavy gauge polythene,150 coffee bags and the employment of labourers and a foreman during the first six months of the processing season (KNA/MR//2/28 Kiambu Coffee Growers Co-operative Society Limited 1959:1).

The level of dishonesty in the societies was growing and with time it became difficult to distinguish a genuine mistake from outright fraud by co-operative staff. Farmers who had given all their effort to fighting for the right to plant coffee trees found themselves fighting another battle altogether. Inept leadership both at the factory level and the society had exposed the farmers to the rot both at factory level and in the societies during annual general meetings.

Consequences of disillusionment to a system that the farmers had hitherto trusted began to set in when they failed to tend to their crop. In several occasions coffee had been classified as grade II while when delivered to K.P.CU was regarded as grade I (KNA/ MR/2/20 Komothai Coffee Growers Co-operative 1962:18).

Mismanagement escalated in the years that followed for instance members who deducted debts from their payments were not provided with receipts. This made it impossible for the members to know the position of their accounts with the society. This left room for farmers to be exploited. The co-operative department checked on the matter which led to the jailing of the culprits, though there were no proper measures of accountability or a shift in policy on how coffee was managed that took effect. Thus, the cooperative movement which was thought to have answers to economic problems of coffee farmers was not a solution during the colonial period.

Cost of living rose, irredeemably making farmers to diversify their farming prowess. The matters did degenerate after political expediency began both at factory level and the society level. The fraudulent ways of Kenya Planters Co-operative Union began and this did not help as far as accountability was concerned. One of the ways that was used to undercut the farmers was through the grading system which farmers could not ascertain and had to contend with what they were told. Secondly, coffee marketing was done by marketers who did not have coffee and thus they could not fathom the challenges the farmers were undergoing so as to better remunerate them (Kariuki, O.I. 2016).

4.8 Chapter Conclusion

In as much as the government in this case the executive wanted to relax the laws on cash crop production among Africans, the white farmers voice in colonial government had become dominant due to their position in the Legco. Even when Africans were allowed to grow coffee on experimental basis in the 1930s this was only meant to cushion white settler farming that had suffered during the economic depression of the early 1920s. In the period

1931 and 1937 Sir Joseph Byrne the governor at the time was receptive to African agricultural development. This gave way to coffee production in Kisii and Meru. In Uganda and Tanzania, settlers were not as pronounced as Kenya and this may explain why there was greater commitment to developing small holder agriculture. Before the passing of the coffee plantations ordinance of 1918, there had been a number of abortive efforts to produce coffee among Africans. Chief Koinange tried his hand on Coffee production later on, though he had to pull it down. In 1930s, his efforts and that of Harry Thuku immensely advanced African coffee production. Kiambu was not yet free from Mau Mau rebellion and hence those allowed to produce the crop were mainly chiefs, headmen and others who showed loyalty, friendship and support to the colonial government. There were conditions set for Africans to produce coffee which included, joining a cooperative society, planting the trees following a given methodology, growing coffee at a distance of 5 miles from European estates and putting up an irrigation mechanism for the crop. As the demand from coffee seedlings increased and the number of agricultural officers became inadequate poor quality seedlings were planted. It is crystal clear, as discussed in this chapter that corruption had began to take root with the farmers on the receiving end of its impoverishment. The next chapter examines how the independent government handled different problems that African coffee farmers experienced in the colonial period and the impact that coffee had on the socio-economic welfare of Africans.

CHAPTER FIVE

AFRICAN COFFEE GROWING AND THE ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION OF KIAMBU COUNTY 1963-1978

5.0 Introduction

As we have examined in the preceding chapter, Africans did not derive much economic benefits from coffee production during the colonial period. This is because the colonial government favored white settlers. As a result, colonial support for coffee growing was accorded to Europeans at the expense of Africans. We have also examined in the preceding chapter that the existence of Kiambu County close to Nairobi led many African farmers in Kiambu to grow food crops which they sold to the ever-increasing population of Nairobi. This chapter examines the contribution of coffee growing and its economic transformation of Kiambu County between 1963 and 1978. This is bearing in mind the fact that coffee was Kenya's major export and foreign-exchange earning crop between the stated period.

5.1 The Place of Coffee in Kenya's Development at Independence

According to Maxon (1992:273), "agriculture continued to be the most important sector of Kenya's economy after independence" because, in 1964, an estimated 1.5 million families in Kenya derived their living solely from the land. This being the case, the government of Kenya recognized the important place that agriculture, especially coffee, had on the country's development.

Of the cash crops grown on small farms since independence, coffee has been the most important in terms of quantity and value returned to the grower. The great expansion off small-farm coffee growing actually began in the 1950s and continued until early 1970s...coffee production rose rapidly

“averaging an annual rate of increase of 7.5 percent between 1964 and 1977 (Maxon 1992:287).

There was an increased expansion of acreage under coffee on small farms since the end of the 1960s. Coffee farmers responded to the increments in coffee prices during the period between 1975 and 1977. The table below illustrates the expansion of the small-holder share of coffee production between 1966 and 1982.

Table 1: Small farm coffee production as percentage of total production

Year	Estate	Small farm	Total (tonnes)
1966	50	50	56.9
1968	47	53	39.6
1976	53	47	80.3
1982	40	60	86.9

Source: Maxon 1992:287

The significance of coffee production, since independence, to Kenya’s economy lay in the fact that it was an export crop. Kenya badly needed foreign exchange earnings with which it would be able to import machinery and oil from other countries. Of the major foreign exchange earners, coffee and tea took the lead.

The contribution of these two crops [coffee and tea] to the value of recorded marketed production is exported, thus making them very significant earners of foreign exchange (Maxon 1992:288)

The table below illustrates Kenya’s cash crop share of recorded marketed production as a percentage of total production of marketed crops.

Table 2: Cash crop share of recorded marketed production (%age of total production of marketed crops)

Crop	1974	1978	1982
Coffee and tea	48	73	60
Sugarcane	5	7	8
Pyrethrum	4	2	4

Source: Maxon 1992:289

This increased production of coffee was in line with the government's stated development goals at independence. In its development plan for the period 1964-1970, the government stated that the "major burden of ensuring Kenya's economic growth during the 1964-70 will continue to be borne by the agricultural sector" (Government of Kenya, Development Plan 1964-1970:45). The agricultural sector had accounted for 39 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) and 89 percent of exports in 1962. Thus, in terms of importance, agriculture continued to be the major point of focus for Kenya's development at independence just as before. In realising the importance of the Agricultural sector to the country's development, the government stated that:

Dependence on agriculture will not be significantly reduced by 1970 and hence rapid economic growth over the next six years can only be achieved if the agricultural sector expands at a healthy rate (Kenya Development Plan 1064-1970:45).

Two things happened at independence which favored the development of African agriculture in Kenya in general and coffee growing in Kiambu County in particular. The first was the exit of European farmers who over the colonial years had worked against African farming. The second, and related to the first, was the availing of much land left by

European farmers for Coffee growing by Africans. With these two factors in mind, the government of Kenya stated its intention to “promote vigorously increased African participation in every sphere of the nation’s economy” especially in agriculture. Africans had not participated fully in agriculture (and coffee growing) during the colonial period. To correct the situation, the government emphasized the:

...effort needed to correct the imbalance that can be traced to two fundamental causes. First, many of the economic opportunities which have existed in Kenya have not been available to Africans. Second, many Africans have lacked the education, experience, resources and incentives to take full advantage of those limited opportunities open to them. In order to achieve increased African participation, therefore, government will ensure that Africans have the education, training and resources to develop those opportunities (Kenya Development Plan 1963-1970:41).

One of the crops which the government of Kenya promoted, due to its potential to generate income for African households and to spur economic growth and development, was coffee. Whereas production of coffee was approximated to stand at 37,000 tons in 1964, the government intended to increase this production to 70,000 tons by 1970 (Kenya Development Plan 1964-70; 49).

In order to find market for increased production, the government of Kenya, in 1964, stated its intention to “subscribe to the International Coffee Agreement” (Kenya Development Plan 1964-1970:49). Prior to the granting of independence, the country’s quota as a dependent territory of United Kingdom was 30,100 tons plus annual exports of 5,000 tons to Britain. Thus, by joining the International Coffee Agreement, Kenya hoped to find a market for increased coffee production abroad (Kenya Development Plan 1964-70). In addition, the government also sought to find new markets in areas not covered by quota restrictions.

Coffee was for a long time Kenya's most important agricultural export not only in Kenya, but also in Kiambu County for much of the early years of Kenya's independence, accounting for as much as 40 percent of the total value of exports in some years (Mitchell 2011). However, the period between 1963 and 1970 did not achieve the intended economic transformation of the country occasioned by coffee growing.

Monetary agriculture accounted for 14.7 per cent of total gross domestic product in 1968, compared with 15.7 percent in 1964. This drop in the overall share of the industry had not been expected and is explained by the fact that production fell short of the planned target. However, having regard to the unexpectedly severe setbacks to coffee and sisal, in the first case due to the heavy incidence of Coffee Berry Disease in 1967/68.... (Kenya development Plan 1970-74:31)

Kenya experienced an expansion in coffee growing during the first five years of development. "In 1968, the area planted to coffee was estimated to be 81,000 hectares comprising 31,000 hectares on the estates and 50,000 on smallholdings. Production of coffee in 1967 amounted to 48,000 tons, worth K£14.0 million" (Kenya Development Plan 1970-74:244).

It would appear that, all the major export crops recorded a drop in marketed agricultural production during the first five years after Kenya's attained independence as shown in the table below:

Table 3: Quantity of marketed cash crops

Marketed crop (in metric tons)	1964	1968	Target 1970
Coffee	41,407	39,601	71,127
Sisal	67,430	50,280	67,063
Tea	20,241	29,280	30,981

Source: Kenya development Plan 1970-1974:31

From the table above, we establish that coffee, tea and sisal fell seriously behind the expected rate of progress. In spite of the drop in marketed coffee, this crop contributed immensely towards economic development of the country. The crop had, in the first development period (1964-1970):

Contributed about 25 percent of total Gross farm revenue and about 30 percent of the value of overseas exports. The coffee industry also provided wage employment to about 100,000 people.

Compared with other export crops, coffee took the first place in generating foreign exchange for the country between 1962 and 1970 as shown in the table below:

Table 4: Kenya's agricultural exports 1962 and 1970 (in £ million)

Crop	1962	1970
Coffee	10.78	19.18
Tea	5.80	9.71
Sisal	4.32	6.82
Cotton	0.44	4.46
Pyrethrum flowers and extract	3.16	4.00

Cereal and cereal preparations	2.93	3.67
Meat and meat preparations	3.26	3.04
Wool	0.53	2.13
Hides and skins	1.37	2.00
Fruit, fruit preparations and nuts	1.01	1.08
Vegetable and vegetable preparations	0.71	1.01
Dairy products	2.16	0.47
Others	2.64	1.56
Total	39.11	59.13

Source: Kenya Development Plan 1964-70:134

Agriculture and coffee production in particular, contributed immensely to Kenya's development in the period 1964-1970. Indeed:

...judged from its contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) exports and employment, agriculture is the most important sector of the economy. In 1967 the non-monetary sector of agriculture was estimated to have contributed about 21 per cent to GDP, the monetary sector 13 percent, or agriculture in total, 34 percent. About 60 percent of the total value of exports was derived either from raw or processed agricultural products and agriculture [coffee in particular] provided more than one third of all wage employment. Most important, about three quarters of the population depended on agriculture for their livelihood (Kenya Development Plan 1970-74:191).

A close analysis in marketed Kenyan coffee helps in the understanding of the role of coffee growing in the economic transformation of Kiambu County during the first five years of Kenya's independence. This is examined in the next section.

5.2 Coffee Growing and the Transformation of Kiambu County 1964-1970

As examined elsewhere in this study, Africans were officially sanctioned to grow coffee in Kiambu in 1951. Many obstacles however, stood in their way and, as such, Africans in Kiambu did not benefit much from coffee growing especially the small scale producers. This is bearing in mind that, there were limits on acreage and number of coffee trees that an African farmer would grow. The other obstacle, and perhaps the major one, was the outbreak of Mau Mau rebellion in 1950s. The third obstacle was, the poor performance and mismanagement of coffee cooperative societies.

At independence, African coffee growers in Kiambu expected much progress. The government of Kenya, on its part, was determined to see African coffee growers benefit from coffee growing. In order to achieve this, the government decided upon reversing the obstacles which African coffee growers had experienced in the colonial period. Perhaps the most important of the government measures was the transfer of land formerly held by European settlers, to African farmers.

In the years immediately before and after independence much of the government's effort in the agricultural sector was devoted to the land transfer and resettlement programmes in the former Scheduled Areas (Kenya Development Plan 1970-74:192)

The transfer of former European farms to Africans helped ease population pressure in areas which had experienced population density such as Kiambu County. This ease in population pressure on land was of benefit to coffee growing.

That coffee growing was of much economic importance to Kiambu residents is shown by the interest which banks began to take in coffee farming. Indeed, banks began having

interest to carry out civic education, though disguised as a marketing strategy, to help farmers to be knowledgeable and hence have wisdom not to accumulate more debt. Mr. Shaw of the standard bank who had formerly been introduced to the committee by the chairman gave valuable advice on bank loans. According to Mr. Shaw, coffee farmers were the most important people in the country because economically the country depended on farming.

For that reason, he thought that farmers should be helped by the banks to get sufficient money in order to develop their farms to the best possible standard. To do this, a method was to be found in which the bank and cooperative society committees worked together and helped the farmers to get loans and at the same time help the bank to get its money back (KNA/ MR/2/20 Komothai Coffee Growers Co-operative Society Ltd 1962).

Coffee cooperative societies, on their part were so ambitious judging by the manner in which they sought to acquire assets such as land. Farmers of the Gatundu Coffee Cooperative society, for example, were told to contribute shares in order to buy the Gatua-Nyaga farm. Apart from acquiring assets, Kiambu coffee production was one way through which the farmers could obtain money and be able to pay for education of their children between 1964 and 1970. Moreover, the farmers were able to move from grass thatched houses to semi-permanent houses and eventually for some, permanent houses (Wanjiru, O.I. 2016).

Coffee farming also created employment not just for farming households, but also for the workers of the cooperative societies. Coffee clerks, accountants and managers became the first people to work in the villages. This constituted a drastic change from the manual work

that most Africans were used to before. Africans were allowed to grow coffee later on and co-operative societies hired those who had obtained education to manage them. Africans also got education as field officers. The progress on farms was mainly because of hard work of the field committees, which had greatly improved. The factory management had also been improved and that's why Komothai coffee farmers had won the Kenya Coffee Board competitive cup for the first time in Kiambu District (KNA/ MR/2/20 Komothai Coffee Growers Co-operative Society Ltd 1962).

The growing economic importance of coffee farming led many youths to undergo courses that would land them jobs in the coffee industry. The role of trained coffee officers became highly valued that co-operative societies began to demand for them. The following plea was made on Government:

In order to help you carry out this enormous development program with due care but with speed and in order to assist you in the same time with the maintenance of quality of your coffee and of high yield per acre through following proper cultural methods, the Government must engage more staff (KNA/ MR/2/20 Komothai Coffee Growers Co-operative Society Ltd 1962).

Coffee farmers were not always smiling as a result of their farming activities. Sometime, for example, their dues would be delayed. These delays would have a spiraling effect bearing in mind that most of them depended on coffee payments to pay their children's school fees. When dues were delayed, children would either be delayed from reporting to school or they would be sent away from school.

The advent of the monetary system did create a new way of measuring a person's wealth. Previously, wealth was determined mainly by having hectares of land and a big number of livestock. Colonialism had already wiped out the key pillars that supported African

socialism. Individualism did set in, driven by capitalism, whereas traditionally wealth was to benefit a community, this came to a halt. Having learnt from the colonial masters the art of exploitation the elite managers in the coffee sector began to take advantage of the ignorance of farmers.

Coffee production which had begun to transform African lives became a burden slowly but surely, the farmers began to lose confidence with their managers. Some members whose coffee was categorised as grade two due to bad farming were said to have been paid more than grade one. In some instances, farmers' coffee would be received as grade II when in actual fact it was grade I. Misappropriation of coffee farmers' money by managers of the cooperative societies was denying farmers the inputs with which to develop their farming. Indeed, farmers were being denied fertilizers with which to spray their coffee and this lowered the quality of their coffee (KNA/ MR/2/20 Komothai Coffee Growers Co-operative Society Ltd 1962).

To promote the quality of coffee produced and processed, various measures were put in place but this was not done by farmers' cooperative societies. At the beginning of the 1967, the Coffee Development Authority started to function. In Central province a senior coffee officer and four District Coffee Extension Officers were posted together with coffee inspectors in order to put coffee industry in a better shape. Coffee had deteriorated especially due to inadequate processing facilities and therefore the first action taken was construction of new factories, enlargement of some of the old ones and the construction of more and better drying tables and stores. By the end of 1969, new factories had been completed (KNA/Central Province Annual Report 1967:30). Mismanagement was not the only handicap that faced coffee farmers in Kiambu County.

Coffee production became a major economic pillar even when the crop was faced with vagaries of the weather and disease. The crop continued to dominate the economy of central province, and Kiambu County in particular, despite devastating damage of the coffee Berry Disease (C.B.D), the prolonged drought experienced early in 1967, the falling price of coffee and the rising cost of chemicals. During the year coffee crop fetched the growers the sum of over sh.73, 000,000/- giving an average income of about sh 750/- to coffee growers. Processing facilities were greatly improved during the year and the crop was given its full extension services following the recruiting of coffee extension staff (KNA/Central Province Annual Report 1967:32).

The government through the coffee Board began to curtail more planting of coffee through guidelines which farmers were expected to follow. Planting of coffee had more or less completely been forbidden except for the infilling of gaps in the 1960s (Kenya development Plan 1964-70). During the long rains farmers were permitted to plant 2 percent of the total number of trees already planted by them. This 2 percent was equivalent to 10 trees per acre. During the long rains it was directed that all the seedlings in society and union nurseries in excess of the 2 percent were to be uprooted, compensation was made at the rate of 120 cents per seedling by the Coffee Board. A total of 62,692 seedlings were accordingly burnt (KNA/Central Province Annual Report 1967:32). As if deceiving farmers through the grading system was not enough, the members deducted debts from their payments were not provided with receipts. This made it impossible for the members to know the position of their accounts with the society. The manager of Komothai Coffee Growers Society, for example, reported to the committee about a visit he and some members of the committee had taken to Nairobi where they had traced all the societies merchandise bills and deductions. He told members of the society that his opinion:

He did not think that the society would receive any money in the final payment after all the deductions in Nairobi including the development loans and the county council cess deductions (KNA/MR/2/24 Komothai Coffee Growers Co-operative Society Limited 1968).

There were, also, cases of corruption involving coffee cooperative society officials. In one instance, farmers began to collude with clerks and cases were reported whereby “cherry clerks were allegedly being given money by some farmers so that they can add some kilos to their cherries”. In addition, there were also cases of “selling of the society materials unlawfully” (KNA/MR/2/24 Komothai Coffee Growers Co-operative Society Limited 1968). Operations in other coffee co-operative societies was not different for instance the chairman of the Gititu Coffee Growers Co-operative society limited decried the level of fraud in annual general meeting of 1965 when he said that:

The accountancy for payments to members is incomplete as continuous trading accounts and liability accounts for the amounts due to members are not maintained. There is a very considerable volume of transactions in regard to the delivery of cherry and Mbuni by members not being accounted for. It has not been practicable in some cases for us to verify the payments to members due to absence of control totals for amounts calculated as due and for deductions. All societies rely very heavily on their machines for purposes of addition. The absence of page totals and the loss of machine list have contributed to our difficulties in this respect (KNA/Gititu Coffee Growers Co-operative Society, annual general meeting of 1965).

Coffee berry disease continued being a menace to farmers especially in 1968, whereby the production dipped significantly. In 1968, it was a very bad coffee year because of the outbreak of C.B.D. As a result, production dropped from 18,232 tons in 1966/67 season to 7,293 tons in 1967/68 season. The value in money similarly dropped from 3,666,042 in 1966/67 season to 2,303,220 in 1967/68 season. It was reported that in general coffee quality improved considerably and there was little coffee in penal standards (KNA/Central Province Annual Report 1968:45).

Coffee Berry Disease was especially bad in Kiambu District where a lot of coffee was either thrown away or sold as mbuni. There was less congestion in factories because of the drop of production and also due to the fact that the number of coffee factories had gone up to 182 in 1967 to 205 in 1968 (KNA/Central Province Annual Report 1968:45).

For most of the small scale coffee farmers in Kiambu, the cost of insecticides and fungicides that were effective were beyond their reach. Spraying against pests and diseases was not satisfactory. A few farmers used captaful and they were convinced that captaful was a more effective fungicide. The price of captaful was however prohibitive (KNA/Central Province Annual Report 1968:46). The total acreage of small coffee growers remained at 62,201 acres at the end of 1968 while there was a total of 526,930 coffee seedlings for infilling.

One of the most challenging aspects of coffee production was the grading of coffee, whereby the farmers were not involved and had to contend with what they were told as the grade of their coffee. Grading formed the basis under which the price of coffee was tagged. A good case in point was 1968. It was unfortunate that the quality of coffee for the year 1968 could not be favourably compared with that of the previous years because since 16th November, 1967 the Coffee Marketing Board and the K.P.C.U reverted to more or less the old system of classifying into standards after grading the milled coffee. Whereas before the above mentioned date, the crop had been classified as an ungraded sample (KNA/Central Province Annual Report 1968:46).

5.3 Coffee Growing and Economic Transformation of Kenya 1970-1974

Agriculture continued to play an important role in the development of Kenya's economy during the five-year development planning period of 1970-74. Having encountered a drop in coffee production during the first five years of independence, the government embarked on initiating measures that would improve this sector. In spite of this, the government continued to regard this sector, during the second period of Kenya's development (1970-1974) coffee as "the most important cash crop in Kenya" (Kenya Development Plan 1970-1974:243). At the start of 1970, the government hoped to increase production of coffee to 64,000 tons worth an estimated K£16.8 million (in 1967 prices). This expectation was not based on expansion in the area planted under coffee" (Kenya Development Plan 1970-74: 244).

No further expansion in the area planted to coffee is expected over the plan period. On the contrary, yields are expected to increase sufficiently to enable the 1974 production target to be obtained from an area of coffee perhaps 7,000 hectares less than the 1968 level.

The 1974 production target was considerably higher than the existing coffee export quota to Kenya under the International Coffee Agreement. The government thus worked on expanding its quota of coffee exports during the 1970-74 period.

As noted in the period 1964-1970, coffee was affected by the Coffee Berry Disease. Having registered a drop in marketed value of agricultural products, the government invested a lot of funds in agricultural research as from 1970 onwards noting that "in addition to substantial ongoing research programme on coffee berry disease control, research on coffee breeding and selection and coffee quality and nutrition will be expanded" (Kenya

Development Plan 1970-74:225). Of the funds allocated for agricultural research, coffee took the lion's share as shown in the table below:

Table 5: Development expenditure on agricultural research for selected crops (in Pounds)

Item	1969/70	1970/71	1971/72	1972/73	1973/74	Total for plan period
Coffee	222	146	159	143	105	775
Sugarcane	52	38	15	-	-	105
Grain legumes	-	-	32	50	46	128
Horticultural crops	30	80	20	24	-	154

Source: Kenya Development Plan 1970-1974:225

Government's huge expenditure on agricultural research in general and on coffee research in particular did yield results. During the stated period (1970-74), the government of Kenya stated that:

Coffee is Kenya's principal cash crop and export. In 1972, marketed coffee production amounted to K£23.1 million and coffee contributed 33 percent of gross marketed crop production and 27 percent of the value of domestic exports. The coffee industry was also a major source of wage employment. In 1972, coffee production amounted to 62,000 tons and considerable progress had been made towards reaching the production target of 64,000 tons in 1974 (Kenya Development Plan 1974-78:237).

On a general note, coffee production led to economic transformation of the Kenyan economy between 1970-74 development period. The next section zeros down to the economic contribution of coffee growing in Kiambu County between 1970-74.

5.4 Coffee Growing and the Transformation of Kiambu County 1970-1974

Coffee growing continued to be the chief economic asset for the farmers in Kiambu County between 1970-74. However, much of the problems which had been witnessed in the period 1964-70 had begun to mature during the period 1970-74. One area which presented a problem and a hindrance to economic transformation to coffee households in Kiambu, lay in the area of credit. Farmers had begun taking loans against their coffee shares in cooperative societies in the 1960s. As the 1970s approached, it became evident that some of the farmers were unable to repay their loans and some of them were threatened with auctions.

For example, Mr. Githuku's wives came before the Komothai Coffee Growers Cooperative Society committee and presented a letter from the chief of the location which showed that the late Mr. Githuku's land had been threatened to be auctioned by the Industrial and Commercial Development Corporation (ICDC) where Mr. Githuku had secured a loan which together with interest had amounted to sh. 9,371/10 (KNA/ MR/2/35 Komothai Coffee Growers Co-operative Society Limited 1972).

It was getting clear to some farmers that the monetary gain they had expected from coffee farming had turned over the years to be just a dream. As cited in the Gititu Coffee Growers Co-operative society. It was evident that committee members had found a fraudulent way of accumulating wealth by taking advantage of the coffee management laws (KNA/Minutes of Gititu Coffee Growers Co-operative Society Limited 1973).

In spite of the loan repayment problems to which coffee farmers in Kiambu County were subjected to, the tempo of coffee planting did not subside especially after the high earnings

of 1972. This was because the Brazilian coffee got infected with Brazilian frost resulting to shortage of coffee in the world market. A total of 959 hectares were reportedly planted in Kiambu making the demand of seedlings rise to an extent that those other districts begun to supply Kiambu. The District's coffee cooperative unions continued to receive seeds from coffee research stations to produce seedlings for their member societies. As mentioned earlier the demand for seedlings was very high during the year and unions were not able to supply enough to meet this demand. The farmers ordered seedlings outside the province either individually or through their respective societies (KNA/Central Province Annual Report 1977:68).

While this was going on, it was members of the cooperatives' committee members who were holding most of the loans, especially in Mikari Society. Committee members, instead of serving their respective members of their respective cooperative societies, went on a spree of benefiting themselves first. This is because committee members or cooperative officials were usually the first people to know when loans were available and, as a result, were the first to apply for these loans. In most cases, whenever they applied, they were treated by the union banking committee as ordinary members and got the loans. Secondly, it is these committee members who were in a habit of commanding the society and the union employees not to deduct their loans and debts during payouts resulting in a lot of non-loan repayments among committee members.

The failure for co-operative societies to educate the farmers about wise use of money and risks involved in taking of loans did compound the already existing challenges that were beginning to bedevil the coffee sector in the early part of the 1970s. It beats logic to have continued advancing loans to farmers who were already defaulting. A case in point being

Gatundu Coffee Growers Co-operative Society Limited where the following pledge was made to farmers;

It has once again become necessary for us to write to you seeking your assistance in obtaining repayment of outstanding loans in the bank owed to us by some of your members if will notice from the list below, there are still a number of your farmers who have who have very old debts in this bank. It is our intention to take legal action against these people with a view to saving their farms in order to recover the outstanding debts (KNA/Minutes of the Gatundu Coffee Growers Co-operative Society Limited).

The farmers had been naively made to believe that by becoming members of the co-operative bank of Kenya, they would reap substantially. They had failed to appreciate the dynamics of capitalism and seemed to have a hangover of African socialism which was slowly dying. In the season that followed the 1975/76 coffee year, the cooperative sector produced 5,165,417 kgs of clean coffee which earned the district shs. 100,183,491. Despite the unpredictability of coffee prices in the world market most of the farmers continued producing the crop. Unfortunately, it was mismanagement and lack of accountability, which began to cripple the coffee sector in Kiambu. Natives began making momentous decisions to take loans to develop their coffee farming. It was unprecedented decision for farmers to risk their ancestral land for monetary gain. The tragedy though was the managers of coffee factories and the whole chain of coffee marketing had begun to take advantage of the farmer's misery and economic naivety.

The market forces also had a contributing factor to the dwindling fortunes of the coffee farmers, as the introduction of the private millers complicated the already fragile situation of accountability especially in government run Kenya Planters Co-operative Union. Instead of steam lining the sector and instilling confidence the powers that be only created a leeway

for private entities to fully exploit the farmers. Government policies failed to cushion farmers from exploitation, as the farmer had very little say in the whole chain of coffee processing and marketing. Due to lack of alternative economic opportunities to utilize land and the sentimental attachment that some of the coffee growers had, it was difficult for them to wholly abandon the crop. The farmers nonetheless, failed to tend the crop as instructed by coffee inspectors, thus a fall in its production (Mwangi, O.I. 2016).

As highlighted earlier the capitalistic nature of mode of production was by now ingrained into the Africans economic life. Instead of facing lack of transparency and inept leadership in the societies head on, the elite devised new ways of processing and marketing their crop. Alas, the co-operative movement began to diminish as large scale coffee producers began to apply for pulping licenses. The criteria put in place did dissuade the small scale producers, as one had to have a title deed for his farm, coffee trees of about 5 acres and a source of water for irrigation for the Coffee Board of Kenya to grant one a license (Gitau Kuru, O.I.2016).

It was not all gloom however, since the monetisation of the economy, some of the coffee co-operative societies began making investments by buying acres of land and real estates. In 1976, for example, the annual general meeting of Gititu Coffee Growers Co-operative Society the treasurer gave the following feedback of a task they had been given in 1973:

“During the annual general meeting on 17/11/73, you authorized the committee to borrow money to buy houses and lands. The transaction was taken by the committee who visited the land at Kitale owned by a European. The farm is 909 acres. The farm is developed and there are more than 200 dairy cattle with good paddocks of 40 acres each.” This was an

ingenious way for the members to diversify their investments given the fact that coffee earnings were dwindling (KNA/Minutes of the Gititu Coffee Growers Co-operative Society 1973).

As time tickled towards Kenya's third planning period (1974-78), coffee growing was raking in revenue to both the country's economy and households in Kiambu County but few were reaping the benefits. The next section examines the economic contribution of coffee growing to Kenya's economy during the period 1974-78.

5.5 Coffee Growing and Economic Transformation of Kenya 1974-78

The government of Kenya, in its continued recognition of the role in economic development, allocated a bigger portion of the budget to the agricultural sector in the development period 1974-78. While the area planted under coffee had been more or less constant since 1963, when new plantings were banned, the government envisioned increased coffee yield from the then existing coffee plantings (Kenya Development Plan 1974-78).

Apart from allocating a bigger budget, the government decided to improve agricultural productivity in the period 1974-78 through:

a wide range of measures including land reform, the introduction of new cash crops and expansion of established ones [like coffee], provision of credit, agricultural education, research, availability of new inputs, improved marketing facilities, etc. (Kenya Development Plan 1974-78:57).

Due to its role in economic development, the government embarked on the expansion of the acreage under coffee by between 33,000 and 35,000 hectares by 1979. In 1976, coffee covered 86,389 hectares of farmland in Kenya (Kenya Development Plan 1979-1983:264).

The government also continued to invest in agricultural research, especially with regard to coffee in the period 1974-78.

The transformation of agriculture calls for the introduction of new husbandry practices, new crops and disease control. To provide these, an extensive network of research operations has been established throughout the country.... Disease control is a vital area of agricultural research... One of the achievements in this respect is the treatments to combat Coffee Berry disease which has been brought under control after ravaging coffee field for several years...(Kenya Development Plan 1974-78:61)

There was, as a result of expanded land area under coffee and heavy investments in coffee related research, increased revenue accruing from exports. Expanded coffee growing in such areas as Kiambu (in central Province), unlike elsewhere, contributed to economic transformation. This is bearing in mind the fact that “Central and Eastern provinces ... produced 76% of smallholder coffee” (Maxon 1992:291). Table 6 below shows the economic contribution of coffee growing to Kenya’s economy.

Table 6: Gross marketed cash crops production (in K£)

Crop	1970	1971	1972	1978
Coffee	21,814	18,922	23,122	26,105
Sisal	1,715	1,519	2,362	2,293
Tea	13,838	11,803	16,034	29,487

Source: Kenya development Plan 1974-78:58& 231

Having examined the role of coffee growing on economic transformation of the Kenyan economy in general, the next section examines the role of coffee on economic transformation of Kiambu County in particular.

5.6 Coffee Growing and the Transformation of Kiambu County 1974-78

Coffee growing in Kiambu County continued to be the main economic mainstay for households during the period 1974-78. In addition, coffee growing attracted other forms of development that boosted the economy of Kiambu. Coffee growing areas received, from government, “improved transportation, marketing and incentives to growers” which other areas did not receive (Maxon 1992:291).

The government established the Ministry of Cooperatives in 1974 (Bager 1980). This constituted one of the many measures which the government put in place since independence to boost agricultural marketing. Indeed, the number of coffee cooperative societies increased such that by 1977, coffee cooperative societies had membership and turnover that exceeded all other cooperative societies put together as shown in the table below.

Table 7: Membership turnover and market share of the most important agricultural marketing cooperatives¹ in Kenya by activity (1977)

Crop	Membership	Turnover	% of Market share
Coffee	349,000	1,777,000,000	54
Pyrethrum	75,000	52,000,000	91
Cotton	91,000	49,000,000	94
Dairy	72,000	52,000,000	25
Sugarcane	15,000	36,000,000	31
Multipurpose	75,000	79,000,000	-

Source: Bager 1980: 28

Most of the cooperative societies were concentrated in central Kenya, in such areas as Kiambu, Meru and Embu.

Pyrethrum and coffee societies were and still are highly concentrated geographically to what is now called Kisii District, Central Province and Eastern Province. It seems as if the regional distribution has remained surprisingly stable during this long period. A closer look at Central and Eastern Provinces reveals that the societies also are highly concentrated within these provinces. Districts like Meru, Embu, Kiambu, Nyeri and Muranga dominated in 1961 and still dominate (Bager 1980:29).

The government of Kenya noted marketing as one of the major obstacle that faced the country with regard to expanded coffee growing. In order to empower coffee farmers in Kiambu to reap maximum benefits from coffee growing, the government initiated several measures, both policy and legislative, in the coffee cooperative movement since 1964 onwards.

The marketing of most of the major export crops will remain in the hands of the statutory boards. Cooperative societies will have a major part to play in marketing, especially those crops produced on small holdings, and the government will encourage the growth of these societies (Kenya Development Plan 1964-1970:46)

While appreciating the role of cooperatives in marketing agricultural products, the government recognized the management problems which had contributed to inefficiency in cooperatives and promised to address them.

Cooperatives are also much involved in agricultural marketing. The government intends to increase its efforts to develop the cooperative movement; for cooperatives have a most important role to play in agricultural development. However, a high proportion of cooperatives have been inefficiently managed, although strenuous efforts are now being made to remedy this situation; but where alternative market institutions exist and cooperatives cannot compete effectively, the government does not intend to give them any special protection or monopoly powers (Kenya Development Plan 1970-74:198)

Our examination of the role of coffee cooperative societies in marketing coffee as well as the general development of African coffee growing in Kiambu in the preceding chapter revealed that these societies had been mismanaged hitherto. In spite of the numerous policy, institutional and legislative reforms in the cooperative sector, marketing of coffee through these channels produced both positive and negative results with regard to economic transformation of Kiambu County between 1963 and 1978 (Harambee era).

Coffee continued to fetch a lot of money between 1963 and 1978. In the Kiambu report of 1974 for instance it was reported that:

This remained the biggest cash earner in the district. Coffee industry continued its upward growth throughout the year (KNA/Kiambu District Annual Report 1974).

In spite of the importance of coffee to the economy of Kiambu, a lot of the money was spent on capital expenditure ventures than in improving economic status of households in Kiambu County. Some of the suggestions made by the Kiambaa Coffee Growers Co-operative Society accounting officer can help illustrate this point as he made investment suggestions:

He introduced the plan of extending Kahawa house being a future development plan. On the blackboard he drew the sketch of the building which could cost two million shillings (KNA/ MR/2/29) Kiambaa Coffee Growers Co-operative Society ltd 1977).

Indeed, a lot of money was being allocated to massive capital investments, members were delayed in getting “money in time in order to pay the school fees” (KNA, MR/2/29) Kiambaa Coffee Growers Co-operative Society ltd 1977). In spite of that, some cooperatives societies invested in the education of children in their respective areas. For

example, the chairman of Gititu Coffee Growers Co-operative informed the members in 1978 that “the purpose of the donations was for these schools; Komothai Girls High School and Gitwe Girls High School”. The donations had been deducted from the members to steer the education forward in the district (KNA/Minutes of the Gititu Coffee Growers Co-operative 1978).

In 1966, the government realized that the rapid quantitative growth in cooperative movement led problems like mismanagement, inefficiency, and many cooperatives were dormant (registered but not active). These are the problems which affected the 820 new cooperative societies that were registered for the period of 1963 to 1966 alone. These problems led the government to enact the Co-operative Societies Act of 1966 (Bager 1980).

This ACT gave the government the muscle to control the sector through the office of the Commissioner for Cooperative Development (Bager 1980). The commissioner would, for example, dissolve elected committees and appoint new ones or even force societies to amalgamate or form unions. The new act also created the office of District Co-operative Officer whose role was to supervise and control the cooperatives, including close control of all financial dispositions of the cooperatives. Hence the European tradition for independence of the cooperative movement from government control has not been followed by Kenya (Bager 1980).

In Sessional Paper No. 8 of 1970 the Government defined its cooperative policy. This policy encouraged consolidation rather than expansion. The same policy was emphasized once again in 1975 via Sessional Paper No. 14. In addition to emphasizing consolidation, the 1975 paper stressed the need to promote cooperatives as "vital agents for opening up

development in less developed areas" (Bager 1980). In spite of the reforms in the cooperative sector, little reforms actually took place within the cooperative movements itself. This is because most of the reforms were aimed at bringing the cooperative sector under the armpit of government control. The government sector was not without its management and inefficiency problems. Just like the cooperative sector, the government also, had a stench of corruption, bad governance and mismanagement problems.

5.7 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has examined how coffee growing contributed to economic transformation of Kiambu County. From an economic point of view, coffee growing produced mixed results for the farmers of Kiambu. There are those who experienced economic transformation while others lacked economic breakthrough. On a general note much economic transformation would have accrued to coffee farmers, if coffee cooperative societies had managed the affairs of farmers prudently. This is bearing in mind the fact that management of cooperative societies was tainted with mismanagement, corruption and inefficiency.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 SUMMARY

Driven by the zeal to exploit African resources the British government gave settlers full support in ventures they engaged in. The need to have adequate revenue for administrative purposes and carrying out of development projects such as the construction of the Kenya Uganda railway, made the colonial government devise all means of cajoling to support the settlers. The missionaries had experimented with coffee production and with time they were able to determine the right altitude that the crop could flourish. Kiambu County merited the right conditions which led to land alienation to accommodate the settlers. Africans inevitably were pushed into reserves becoming a reservoir of forced labour.

Need of revenue led to introduction of measures to fully maximize the earnings from the crop. It is in this line that Africans were banned from coffee production with the argument that they did not have enough experience to produce the crop. The underlying reasons however, for Africans being prohibited from producing the crop were the fear that the settlers would lack labour and furthermore, they did not want to contend with competition from Africans for the marketing of the crop.

As if prohibiting Africans from producing the crop was not enough, the colonial government stepped in by passing different ordinances that gave the settlers an upper hand over Africans. Faced with the challenge of recruiting labor the government introduced the Kipande system. This curtailed the movement of Africans, as Kiambu being in proximity with Nairobi some of the Africans had begun to migrate in search of jobs. Life in the

reserves had become unbearable due to congestion and financial constraints as forced labour was not being remunerated adequately.

With the advent of the Second World War, carrier corps were recruited, thus straining the already dire situation of limited labour supply. Coupled with the colonial government failure to have a policy shift and give concessions that had Africans working without too much coercion, it was impossible in the long run as noted during the research for Africans to just sit back when most of them were aggrieved by the status quo. On their part, the settlers were not much perturbed by the African grievances, after all much labour was only required during the picking season. Furthermore, the colonial government came up with an aggressive method of forcing Africans to work on their farms. It was expected for instance that, by gradually bringing tax collection nearer to the beginning of the year. It may have been possible to stimulate the natives to go out to labour about the time of the picking season

As clock ticked and ushered in 1930, mission educated Africans began to agitate for change. The colonial government had tried to buy time with empty promises. A case in point was during the recruitment for Africans to join the First World War, his Excellency Sir Henry Conway Belfield promised no more interference with African land, but this did not come to pass.

The Kikuyu Central Association perturbed by the failure of the colonial government to relent on its exploitation demanded an end to land alienation and restrictions in the reserves. The term 'reserve' in reality did not mean a location which had been reserved for

Africans, but in practice meant an unfenced detention camp, out of which Africans dared not move with any degree of freedom.

Urban centers that were coming up and in particular Nairobi gave Kiambu natives an opportunity to carry out entrepreneurial activities. In doing so they were able to escape forced labour, however, eventually they had to contend with competition from Indians. The natives from the county were remarkably fortunate in having such a great variety of marketable produce with such close marketing in Nairobi and the thickly populated settled area around their reserve. Apart from the greater revenue producing commodities such as maize, beans, wattle bark and potatoes a very useful source of revenue was made from the sale of vegetables, charcoal, maize stalks, firewood, bananas and dairy produce.

As noted in chapter two, the natives moderately resisted economic exploitation as they loathed the dependency that had been created by colonialism. Harry Thuku was in the forefront, in calling for an end to the economic deprivation that was meted on Africans. Though he was deported to Kismayu, it did not take long before radical elements arose especially after the Second World War. Diplomatic efforts which the chiefs had tried to pursue in an attempt to improve the welfare of Africans had failed, this gave in to demonstrations and strikes demanding for better terms of service in factories and this spread to the reserves.

The Mau Mau uprising made the colonial government awaken to the fact that, imperialism was no longer tenable and had to give in, into some of the Africans demands. Africans in Kiambu as established in the research had agitated for the lifting of the ban to grow coffee, led by Mbiu Koinange. The revolt brought up the impetus needed for the Swynnerton plan

of 1954 to be effected. At first the conditions put forward for those who wanted to grow the crop were stiff, but after independence they were relaxed allowing many Africans to carry out coffee farming in large numbers.

Co-operative societies were set up to help farmers with the best practices of coffee production. In doing this, coffee production became a major economic pillar for the county. Farmers were able to improve their welfare and also carry out investments in various sectors of the economy. Mismanagement, incompetency and fraudulent activities nevertheless, dented coffee co-operative society's image. Private pulping and millers emerged especially among the large scale coffee producers. This was a clear verdict that transparency and accountability had been comprised and thus, elite farmers sought alternative ways of marketing their coffee. Getting approval from the Coffee Board for a pulping license was expensive due to the red tape involved making it difficult for the peasants to obtain the license. Small scale farmers on the other hand, had to contend with the prevailing inefficiencies and ineffective leadership at the factory and in societies.

It was disheartening for farmers who had given their all in terms of fighting for the right to plant coffee to find themselves facing exploitation from fellow Africans. Dependency that had been created by colonialism did not help matters much, as Africans could not process their coffee, but only sold the cherries as raw materials. The independence government failed to salvage the situation yet as indicated in chapter four coffee production was the leading foreign earner in the country at the time.

6.2 CONCLUSION

Oral informants narrated with nostalgia, their experience on coffee production especially in the 70s. Majority made tremendous steps in their economic and social life, as they were able to build permanent houses, pay school fees and also buy assets all from coffee proceeds. Given the fact that Africans had faced economic exploitation due to colonialism one would have thought that in the era of sovereignty they would steer their countries in a path full of accountability and fairness. This was not to be, as discussed in chapter four, the roots of capitalism and dependency were so much entrenched that to uproot them, necessitated divine intervention.

Yes, colonialism did a big blow to African socialism but as seen in chapter five African elite failed to stand tall and guide the pleasantly to a flourishing country devoid of expediency and mediocrity. The path they took, only plaid to the hands of the metropolis, leaving behind a disillusioned farmer who began neglecting the crop after recording huge losses. One cannot blame the farmers for their failure to prune the crop that had metamorphosised into a burden. In the countryside farmers were bombarded with lies, the deception was that large cooperatives were the cause of the coffee woes and that their leaders had become tin-gods (Daily Nation, 21 December 2015). This turned the farmers to be 'prisoners of faith' that, there would be a turnaround which remained a mirage in the years that followed.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the findings, the coffee industry though, had changed the welfare of the Kiambu farmers in the initial stages of Africans being allowed to produce the crop; the young

generation with time could not easily be swayed to grow the crop due to various reasons. First and foremost coffee farming is very demanding and the young people having acquired formal education were not willing to be engaged in such a tedious job with low, unpredictable and unreliable earnings. Some of the first coffee growers having undergone tremendous challenges in planting the crop have hanged on with optimism that there will be reforms that will back the lost glory, of the lucrative nature of the crop. Coffee farming is thus, dominated by the elderly who are taken advantage of, by the managers, who in most cases the study found they are of younger generation.

This study thus recommends, further research be carried out to find out whether government intervention of offsetting the farmer's debts has been adequate, especially in the 1990s in instilling confidence in making the crop one of the best foreign earner as before. Furthermore, has the core problem of fraud and failure to have a clear policy on value addition been addressed, in an attempt to help streamline the coffee industry and be of economic value to farmers. This is due to the fact that, coffee farmers are the last class of economic slaves in Kenya. They are tied by the law and regulations designed to favour processors, traders and marketers. When they pick their coffee and take it to the factory they lose control over their crop. They have no negotiating power, no knowledge and no responsibility over their crop. Other people with a financial interest in the matter decide the quality of the final product ((Daily Nation, 16 November 2015).

Lack of transparency that set in, in the coffee sector especially at the beginning of 1975, should be curtailed with laws and civic education to stem out the farmers and their leaders ignorance which has helped exploitation to flourish. Officials who are well versed with coffee farming should be elected in coffee factories and at societal level.

REFERENCES

PRIMARY SOURCES

ARCHIVAL SOURCES

KNA/Central Province Annual Report 1966

KNA/Central Province Annual Report 1967

KNA/Central Province Annual Report 1968

KNA/Central Province Annual Report 1978

KNA/Kiambu District Annual Report 1977

KNA/K.C.A Kikuyu Central Association letter submitted in 1932

KNA/Kenya colony 1933, Kenya land commission vol 1, Nairobi government printer

KNA/Kiambu District Annual Report 1973

KNA/Kiambu District Annual Report 1974

KNA/Kiambu District Annual Report 1976

KNA/Kiambu District Annual Report 1974-78

KNA, PC/CP.1/4/2 M.W.H. Beech, "Native land Tenure in Dagoretti District,"

KNA/MA1/12/2 Kiambu District Annual Report 1911

KNA/MA1/12/3 Kiambu District Annual Report 1911-1912

KNA/MA1/12/7 Kiambu District Annual Report 1914

KNA/MA1/12/10 Kiambu District Annual Report 1914-1915

KNA/MA1/12/12 Kiambu District Annual Report 1916-1917

KNA/MA1/12/13 Kiambu District Annual Report 1917-1918

KNA/MA1/12/14 Kiambu District Annual Report 1918-1919

KNA/MA1/12/15 Kiambu District Annual Report 1919-1920

KNA/MA1/12/16 Kiambu District Annual Report 1920-1921

KNA/MA1/12/17 Kiambu District Annual Report 1922

KNA/MA1/12/18 Kiambu District Annual Report 1923

KNA/MA1/12/19 Kiambu District Annual Report 1924

KNA/MA1/12/20 Kiambu District Annual Report 1925

KNA/MA1/12/26 Kiambu District Annual Report 1931

KNA/MA1/12/27 Kiambu District Annual Report 1932

KNA/MA1/12/28 Kiambu District Annual Report 1933

KNA/MA1/12/29 Kiambu District Annual Report 1934

KNA/MA1/12/30 Kiambu District Annual Report 1936

KNA/MA1/12/31 Kiambu District Annual Report 1937

KNA/MA1/12/32 Kiambu District Annual Report 1938

KNA/MA1/12/33 Kiambu District Annual Report 1939

KNA/MA1/12/34 Kiambu District Annual Report 1940

KNA/MA1/12/35 Kiambu District Annual Report 1941

KNA/MA1/12/36 Kiambu District Annual Report 1942

KNA/MA1/12/37 Kiambu District Annual Report 1943

KNA/MA1/12/38 Kiambu District Annual Report 1944

KNA/MA1/12/39 Kiambu District Annual Report 1945

KNA/MA1/12/40 Kiambu District Annual Report 1947

KNA/MA1/12/41 Kiambu District Annual Report 1948

KNA/MA1/12/43 Kiambu District Annual Report 1949

KNA/MA1/12/44 Kiambu District Annual Report 1950

KNA/MA1/12/45 Kiambu District Annual Report 1951

KNA/MA1/12/46 Kiambu District Annual Report 1952

KNA/MA1/12/47 Kiambu District Annual Report 1953

KNA/MA1/12/49 Kiambu District Annual Report 1960

KNA/MA1/12/50 Kiambu District Annual Report 1961

KNA/MA1/12/51 Kiambu District Annual Report 1962

KNA/MR/2/25 Komothai Coffee Growers Co-operative Society Limited 1972

KNA/MR/2/34 Gatundu Coffee Growers Co-operative Society Limited 1975

KNA/MR/2/28 Kiambu Coffee Growers Co-operative Society Limited 1959

KNA/MR/2/14 Gititu Coffee Growers Co-operative Society Limited 1960-1962

KNA/MR/2/20 Komothai Coffee Growers Co-operative Society Limited 1962

KNA/MR/2/16 Gititu Coffee Growers Co-operative Society Limited 1965-1968

KNA/MR/2/36 Gatundu Coffee Growers Co-operative Society Limited 1967

KNA/MR/2/24 Komothai Coffee Growers Co-operative Society Limited 1968

KNA/MR/2/15 Gititu Coffee Growers Co-operative Society Limited 1965

KNA/MR/2/19 Gititu Coffee Growers Co-operative Society Limited 1976

KNA/MR/2/29 Kiambu Coffee Growers Co-operative Society Limited 1977

KNA/MR/2/34 Gatundu Coffee Growers Co-operative Society Limited 1977

KNA/MR/2/30 Kiambu Coffee Growers Co-operative Society Limited 1978

KNA/TR/8/316 Gititu Coffee Growers Co-operative Society Limited 1973

KNA/TR/8/310 Gititu Coffee Growers Co-operative Society Limited 1969

KNA/TR/8/37 Gititu Coffee Growers Co-operative Society Limited 1978-79

SECONDARY SOURCES

BOOKS

Akiyama, T. & Varangis, P (1990). *The Impact of the International Coffee Agreement on Producing Countries*, World Bank Economic Review.

Arthur Hazlewood. (1979). *The Economy of Kenya the Kenyatta Era*. Oxford University Press.

Bager, T. (1980). *Marketing Cooperatives and Peasants in Kenya*. Uppsala: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies.

Bates, R.H. (1997) *Open-Economy Politics: The Political Economy of the World Coffee Trade*. Princeton. University Press.

B.A Ogot. (1968). *Kenya Under the British, 1895-1963*. Zamani, Nairobi.

B.E Kipkorir. (1980). *Imperialism and Collaboration in Colonial Kenya*. Kenya Literature Bureau.

Bennet, G. (1963). *Kenya, a political history*. London: Oxford University press.

Benoit Daviron and Stefano Ponte, (2005). *The Coffee Paradox*. Zed books Ltd, Newyork.

Berman, B. (1992). *Control and Crisis in Colonial Kenya: The Dialectic of Domination* Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers.

Mwanzo Millinga et al. (2008) *Black Aroma the Story of Tanzanian Coffee*. Tanzanian Coffee Research Institute.

- Bunche, R. (1939). "The Land Equation in Kenya Colony", *Journal of Negro History*, Vol XXIV, No. 1, January, 1939.
- Berman, B J. (1990). *Control and Crisis in colonial Kenya*. London: Heinemann.
- Clayton, A. and Savage, D. (1974). *Government and Labour in Kenya, 1895-1963*. London: Frank Cass.
- Carolyn Barnes. (1976). *An experiment with African coffee growing in Kenya: the gusii: 1933-1950*. Michigan state university.
- Colin Leys. (1964). *Underdevelopment in Kenya, the political economy of Neo-colonialism*, East African Educational Publishers.
- Elkins, C, E. (2005). *Britain's Gulag: The Brutal End of Empire in Kenya*. London: Jonathan Cape.
- Government of Kenya, (1964), *Kenya Development Plan for the period 1964-1970*. Nairobi: Government Printer.
- Government of Kenya, (1970), *Kenya Development Plan for the period 1970-1974*. Nairobi: Government Printer.
- Government of Kenya, (1974), *Kenya Development Plan for the period 1974-1978*, Part II. Nairobi: Government Printer.
- Government of Kenya, (1979), *Kenya Development Plan for the period 1979-1983*, Part II. Nairobi: Government Printer.
- James M. Minai, (2014) *Coffee Growers Handbook 1st Edition*. Coffee Research Institute Ruiru, Kenya.
- Judith Heyer.etal. (1976) *Agricultural Development in Kenya an Economic Assessment*. Oxford University Press,Nairobi.
- Kiriga, G. (1991). *Historical Study of Social Conflict Among the Kikuyu of Lari in Kiambu District during the Colonial Period*. (M.A. thesis, Kenyatta University.).
- L.S.B Leakey. (1956), *The Economies of Kikuyu tribal life*; East African Economies.

- Leakey, L.S.B. (1977). *The Southern Kikuyu before 1903, in three Volumes*. London: Academic Press.
- Lipscomb, J. F. & Winston C. (1972). *The History of Kenya Agriculture*. Nairobi: University Press of Africa.
- Maina Wa Kinyati. (2008). *History of Resistance in Kenya 1884-2002*. Mau Mau Research Center.
- Mackenzie F. (1989). Land and Territory: The interface between two systems of Land Tenure, Murang'a District, Kenya *Africa* Vol. 59 (1).
- Maxon, R. M. (1992), "Small-scale and large-scale agriculture since independence," in W.R. Ochieng' and R. M. Maxon (eds), *An Economic History of Kenya*. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, PP. 273-296.
- M.F Hill. (1956), *Planters Progress the Story of Coffee in Kenya*. East African Standard Ltd. Nairobi Kenya.
- Monroy L., Mulinge W. and Witwer M., (2013). *Analysis of incentives and disincentives for coffee in Kenya*. Technical notes series, MAFAP, FAO, Rome.
- Mungeam, G. H. (1966). *British rule in Kenya, 1895-1912*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Muruiki, G. (1974). *A History of the Kikuyu, 1500-1900*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press.
- Peter Coughlin and Gerrishon K. Ikiara. (1988). *Industrialization in Kenya, In Search of a Strategy*. Heinemann Kenya limited.
- Peter Wanyande.etal. (2007). *Governance and Transition politics in Kenya*. University of Nairobi Press.
- Reinert, E. S. (1999). *The role of the state in economic growth*. Journal of economic studies (Bradford).
- R.J.M Swynnerton. (1954). *A Plan to intensify the Development of African Agriculture in Kenya*. Nairobi.

- Robertson, C.C. (1997a). Gender and Trade Relations in Central Kenya in the Late Nineteenth Century. *The International Journal of African studies*, vol 30 (1).
- Robertson, C. C. (1997b). *Trouble Showed the Way: Women, Men and Trade in the Nairobi Area, 1890-1990*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Rodney, W. (1972). *How Europe underdeveloped Africa*. London, UK: Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications.
- Smith, L.D. (1976). An Overview of Agricultural Development Policy in *Agricultural Development in Kenya: An Economic Assessment* (eds) Heyer Judith, Maitha J.K., W.M. Senga Nairobi: Oxford University Press.
- Sorrenson, M.P. K. (1967). *Land Reform in the Kikuyu Country*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press.
- Stichter, S. (1982). *Migrant Labour in Kenya: Capitalism and African Response 1895-1975* London: Longman.
- Talbott, I.D. (1990). Agricultural Innovation in Colonial Africa: Kenya and the Depression. *African Studies* Vol. 18. Lewiston/Queenston/Lampeter: The Edwin Mellen Press.
- Talbott, I. D. (1992). "African Agriculture" in W.R. Ochieng' and R. M. Maxon (eds), *An Economic*
- Tignor, R. L. (1974). *The Colonial Transformation of Kenya: the Kamba Kikuyu and Maasai from 1900-1939*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Wanyoike, M. W. (2002). *Markers of Kenya's History: Wangu wa Makeri*. Nairobi: East Africa Educational Publishers.
- Tom Mboya. (1970). *The Challenge of Nationhood*. Heinemann Educational Books.
- Walter O. Oyugi. (1994). *Politics and Administration in East Africa*. East Africa Educational Publishers Ltd.
- W.R Ochieng. (1989). *A Modern History of Kenya*. Evans Brothers Limited.

W.R Ochieng and R.M Maxon. (1992). *An Economic History of Kenya*. East African Educational

Publishers Ltd.

Wunyabari O.Maloba. (1993). *Mau Mau and Kenyan, An Analysis of a Peasant Revolt*. East

African Educational publishers Ltd.

Zezeza, T. (1992). The colonial Labour system in Kenya. *An Economic History of Kenya* (eds.) Ochieng' W.R. and Maxon R. M.

INTERNET SOURCES

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kiambu-County>

Newspapers

Daily Nation 16 November, 2015

Daily Nation 21 December, 2015

Theses

Muchoki F., M., (1988). Organisation and Development of Kikuyu Agriculture 1880-1920. (M.A. Thesis, Kenyatta University).

Musalia, M. W. (2009). Gender relations and food crop production: the case of Kiambu District Kenya, 1920-1985. Ph.D. Dissertation, School of Humanities and Social sciences, Kenyatta University.

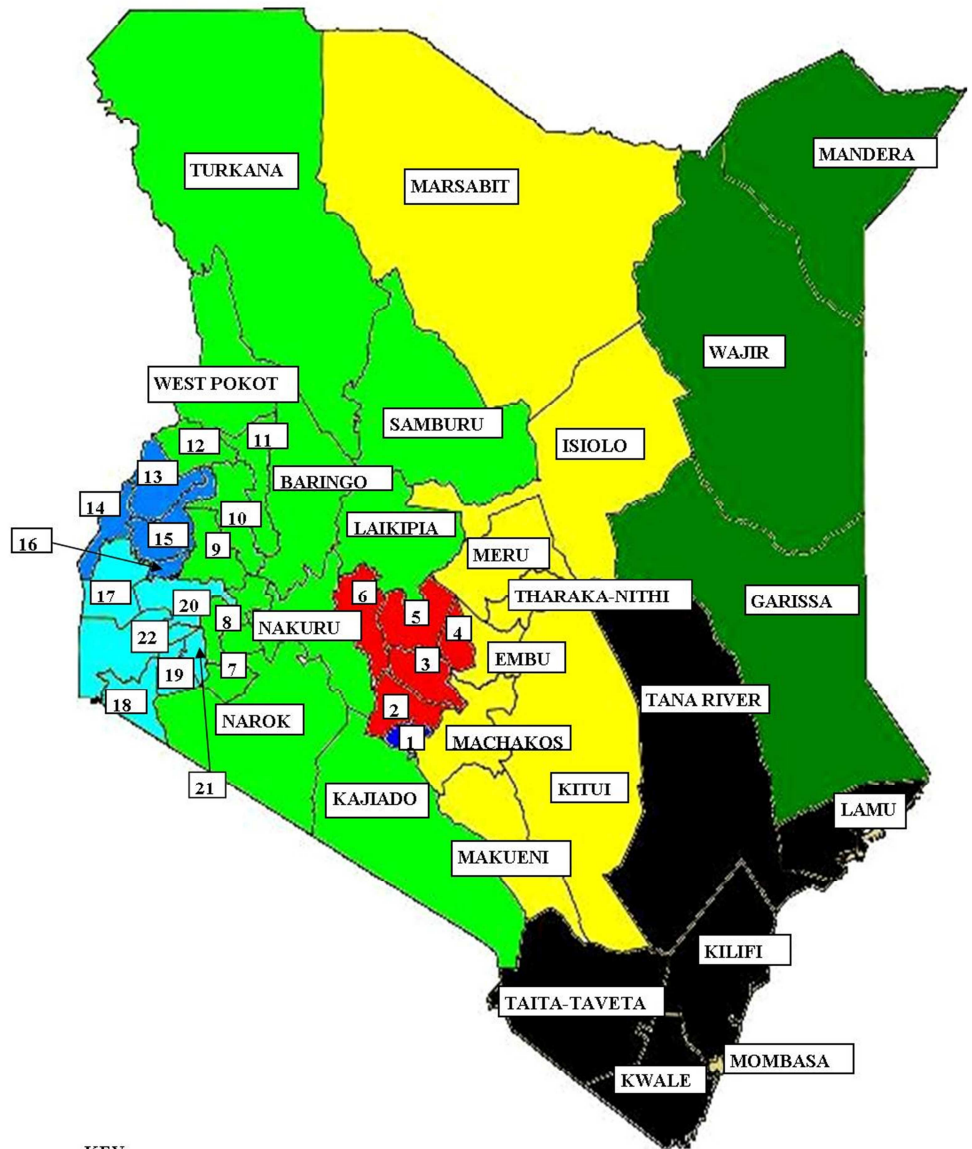
APPENDIX

List of Informants

Name	Gender	Approx. Age	Place of Interview	Year of Interview
John Mwangi Kamau	M	85	Kigumo	2016
Esther Njeri	F	76	Kigumo	2016
Mugo Gitau Kuru	M	80	Gathugu	2016
Joseph Kamau Kiburu	M	78	Gathugu	2016
James Kairu	M	77	Kibichoi	2016
Monica Wanjiru	M	75	Nembu	2016
George Mwangi	M	83	Nembu	2016

Location of Kiambu County in Kenya

COUNTIES OF KENYA



KEY

- | | | | |
|--------------|---------------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1. NAIROBI | 8. KERICHO | 15. KAKAMEGA | 22. HOMA BAY |
| 2. KIAMBU | 9. TRANS NZOLA | 16. VIHIGA | |
| 3. MURANG'A | 10. UASIN GISHU | 17. SIAYA | |
| 4. KIRINYAGA | 11. ELGEYO-MARAKWET | 18. MIGORI | |
| 5. NYERI | 12. NANDI | 19. KISII | |
| 6. NYANDARUA | 13. BUNGOMA | 20. KISUMU | |
| 7. BOMET | 14. BUSIA | 21. NYAMIRA | |