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Investigation on Contributions of Cooperative Unions towards Improvement of Peasant Welfare in Magu and Kwimba District Mwanza Region from 1920s to 2000s, Tanzania

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Abstract:

Basically this study aimed at investigating the contributions of cooperative unions towards improvement of peasants' welfare in Magu and Kwimba districts Mwanza region from 1920s – 2000s. The study has two specific objectives: to examine people's perceptions on cooperative unions in Mwanza region and integration of Kwimba and Magu district; to identify roles of cooperative unions to peasants; in Kwimba and Magu districts.

The data for this study were collected from 51 respondents who included 40 peasants, 6 village cooperative union leaders, 2 cotton ginnery managers 1 Regional administrative officer and 2 Nyanza Cooperative Union leaders. Methodology of this study drew on qualitative approach based on different methods of data collection such as interview, questionnaire, focus group discussion and documentary review.

The study revealed different perceptions basing on cooperative union that; during colonial rule the cooperative unions were targeted as a tool to liberate peasants from both poverty and the chain of exploitation from Indian cotton buyers. While post colonial era mainly Nyanza Cooperative Union and other cooperative unions in Tanzania are voiceless in fighting for the welfare of peasants. The study also revealed that, cooperative unions in Mwanza region from VFCU and NCU played fundamental roles to improve peasants' living standard such as securing reasonable cotton prices. However cooperative unions in Mwanza region from 1920s to 2000s are facing various challenges which include privatization policy under globalization which has left peasants frustrated without a special organization to chain their problems. Currently, Private companies have dominated the peasant market for their agricultural produce without granting them subsidy

The study recommends that, the government should grant peasants with subsidies and prepare an enabling environment for peasants to acquire inputs on reasonable credit. Nyanza cooperative union and other cooperative unions in Tanzania should be re- established and introduce farm class for peasants.

Keywords: Cooperative union, peasants, welfare

1. Introduction

Existence of humankind is associated with production in order to earn a living. The habit of living by agriculture, growing food instead of hunting game and gathering wild plants began from the Neolithic (Davidson, 1977:7).

Ogutu and colleagues (1997:54) reveals that traditional African agriculture was geared towards subsistence and not towards commercialization. Ingle (1972:39) argues that before Germans came to Tanganyika in the 19th century, the population, which was largely Bantu had contacts with Greeks, Chinese, Arabs and Portuguese. The foreigners made no attempt to change traditional behavior or agricultural patterns (Ingle, 1972:39). The principal form was subsistence agriculture, which entailed using a plot of land for a few seasons and then shifted to new and often virgin land once soil fertility was depleted (Ingle, 1972:39). Such type of crop production continued up to arrival of colonialist in Tanganyika and changed it.

During the German colonial rule, three of the following most productive areas of modern Tanzania began to export commercial crops: Sukumaland located in northwestern Tanzania on or near southern shores of Lake Victoria (Figure 3.1); Buhaya located in northwestern Tanzania bordering Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi (Ndembwike, 2006:31); and Kilimanjaro located in the Northeastern part of mainland Tanzania (Malocho, 1998:1). Cotton industry in Sukumaland began in the 1900s when a settler established himself in Nela Chieftdom and arranged a share cropping scheme with local headmen (Kimambo and Temu, 1969:135). Young Wasukuma settled on their land, received free seed, cultivated cotton and sold cotton very cheaply. In addition, around 1906 Wasukuma were tired of such a profitable system (Kimambo and Temu, 1969:135). Instead, the government began to encourage and often compelled people to grow cotton as a peasant crop. Nasa Chieftdom was the first to benefit, and then as one Sukuma remembered that, 'other Chieftdoms seeing the profit in it began to demand seeds as well, and 163,334 pounds of raw cotton were exported through Mwanza during 1911' (Kimambo and Temu, 1969:135).

Ingle (1972:42) reports that World War I (1914 – 1918) brought German rule to an end and led to establishment of the British colonial regime. Mwikikagile (2006:10) argues that British took over what became Tanganyika following German defeat in World War I. According to Nguni (2005:65), during the British administration there was little emphasis on rural development because events outside the territory shaped the policy such as effects of the World War I, the Great Depression of 1930s and World War II. Since the colonies were meant to produce raw materials, the main emphasized sectors were mining and agriculture.

After colonial conquest, African land was expropriated. For example in Tanganyika, the 1923 Land Ordinance placed all unoccupied land and land occupied by Africans under British crown. That meant if any piece of land was needed for building a road, a school or sinking a mine, the Africans had to be kicked off (Nguni, 2005:65).

Thus, British colonial system from 1950 encouraged agricultural system through special development schemes so as to increase productivity of peasant farmers (Ingle, 1972:43). Rodney (1972:154) argues that a peasant growing cash crops or collecting produce had his labor exploited by a long chain of individuals, starting with local businessmen. In every part of colonial Africa, the depression years followed the same pattern (Rodney, 1972:154 – 158). Again, in Sukumaland, price of cotton dropped in 1930 from 50 cents to 10 cents per pound (Rodney, 1972:154-158). But peasants worked for large many hours to produce a given crop, and the price of the product was that of those long hours of labor. In that way, primary produce from Africa always received low prices. In due regard, buyer and user of raw materials were involved in massive exploitation of peasants (Rodney, 1972:154 – 158).

Excessive exploitation of peasants provoked profit and exploitation as Mwijage (2004:271) argues that African peasants, workers and elites expressed their grievances during the depression in many ways. Peasants formed Cooperative Unions so as to get rid of middlemen in the marketing boards of cash crops. For instance, in 1924 Bukoba Co-operative Union was renamed Bukoba Native Growers Association and the Kilimanjaro Native Planters Association was established in 1925 (Kuyela, 2011 70). Victoria Federation of Co-operative Unions was established in Usukuma between 1950 and 1955 (Ogot, 1975:305) and Usambara Native Coffee Growers Association was established in 1931 (Illife, 1979: 294).

Apart from fighting against the middlemen, low prices for their produce and land alienation, co-operative unions played a vital role in struggling for independence in Africa and Tanzania, in particular. The most important Cooperative Union, the Victoria Federation of Cooperative Unions, registered in Mwanza in 1952 under the leadership of Paul Bomani who had previously been the secretary of Mwanza African Traders Cooperative Society a group of traders in Mwanza town (Coulson, 1982: 67). Thus, Cooperative Unions were to become instruments in the struggle for national Independence (Coulson, 1982: 67).

Since independence in many parts of Africa, government and public Cooperative Unions have been intervening in agricultural development along modern capitalists and a few along socialist lines, government controlled Cooperative Unions which mushroomed everywhere in the country (Owusu, 1999: 323). In Tanzania, for example, during post Independence, peasant societies in which farmers worked for themselves and their families were helped and protected from exploitation by co-operative marketing arrangement (Nyerere, 1968: 117).

In order to do away with peasants' grievances in post Independent Tanzania, Arusha Declaration was adopted in 5th February 1967 by the National Executive Council (NEC) of TANU in Arusha (Havnevik, 1993:47). According to Havnevik (1993), the Declaration guided the country to build a socialist society. Also, rural development outlined the process of building socialism in rural areas and more importantly formation of *ujamaa* villages where people could live together and cooperate mutually in agricultural production as the backbone of Tanzanians development. (Havnevik, 1993: 47). Nyerere (1968:97) argues that villagilization sometimes was accompanied by laws to regulate agricultural practices and other aspects of rural life.

Nyerere (1968:143) comments on *ujamaa* village that all advantages of traditional African democracy, social security and human dignity *ujamaa* villages were to grow through self-reliant activities and would be created by people themselves and maintained by them. Thus, the government role would only to help people succeed for works and their decision.

When implementation of villagilization was finalized in 1976, the government banned Cooperative Unions (Havnevik, (1993:48-49). Instead, an agricultural marketing system was established in which each registered village acted as a primary society while crop authorities were given sole responsibility for crop purchases, processing and sales (Havnevik, 1993:48-49). However, having witnessed agricultural production in 1980s accompanied by extreme scarcity of goods and services, people were involved in corruption, racketeering and sabotaging of government distribution system (Havnevik, 1993:49).

Aiming at solving peasants' grievances, Havnevik (1993:23) argues that in 1980s, Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP) designed by the World Bank were introduced mainly to a recipient governments in the third world by employing mechanisms of aid coordination. Havnevik (1993) further argues that there was pain experienced by Tanzania when the Nordic Countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden) in November 1984 closed the door for the country's strategy of relying on more sympathetic likeminded countries for expansion of development assistance.

In 1986, the government re-established Cooperative Unions and in early 1990s, government allowed foreign investments and privatization of parastatals through official signing of SAP conditions so as to get rid of her economic predicaments (Mihanjo, 2005:51).

SAPs included a series of elements with some of the following: producer price reforms, removal of subsidies, internal and external trade liberalization new foreign exchange usually including severe devaluation, introduction of cost sharing for state supplied services, privatization and contradiction as well as restructuring of government institutions (Havnevik, 1993:23).

Therefore, with implementation of SAP, Cooperative Unions faced competitions from private owned companies in dealing with crop marketing (Mihanjo, 2005:52). In spite of presence of many Cooperative Unions in Tanzania, which increased after independence, agricultural stakeholders lamented badly on their operations. Even peasants in Mwanza region have their own Cooperative Union Nyanza Cooperative Union (NCU), which does not quench their thirsty of meeting peasants' welfare including fair agricultural prices and provision of inputs during this age of globalization.

1.1. Objectives of the Study

1.1.1. Main Objective

The main objective of the study was to find out roles and perceptions of Cooperative Unions towards improvements of peasants' welfare in Kwimba and Magu Districts, Mwanza region from 1920s to 2000s.

1.1.2. Specific Objectives

The study had the following specific objectives:

- To assess people's perceptions towards Cooperative Unions in Kwimba and Magu Districts;
- To identify roles of Cooperative Unions to peasants in Kwimba and Magu Districts;

1.2. Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

- What are people's perceptions towards Cooperative Unions in Kwimba and Magu Districts?
- What are roles of Cooperative Unions to peasants of Kwimba and Magu Districts?

1.3. Statement of the Problem

In responding to colonial economy, African peasants decided to form their associations aiming at addressing peasants' discontents such as low wages, low prices for cash crops grown by Africans, land alienation and forced cash crop cultivation (Maluka, 2008:27). During 1950s, a great stride toward in the establishment of African Cooperative Unions took place (Havnevik, 1993:180). Havnevik (1993) argues that Cooperative Unions were also to become instruments in the struggle for national independence. For example VFCU joined TANU to struggle for national independence in Tanganyika. After independence, there was a Cooperative Union in almost every region of Tanzania so as to protect peasants' rights (Itono, 2013). However, with adoption of SAP in early 1990s the government of Tanzania allowed foreign investments and privatization of parastatals with the aim of solving economic problems such as corruption, low agricultural prices and shortage of inputs to peasants through Cooperative Unions (Mihanjo, 2005:52). With introduction of privatization and Trade Liberalization, Cooperative Unions still operate among peasants of Tanzania (Mihanjo, 2005:52). Therefore, this study aimed at investigating contributions of Cooperative Unions towards improvements of peasants' welfare in Kwimba and Magu Districts, Mwanza region from 1920s to 2000s.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Grounding

This study was guided by Postmodern Paradigm on social institution Theory. According to Kendall (2009:23), Postmodern Paradigm is based on the assumption that rapid social change that occurs as societies move from modern to postmodern (or post industrial) conditions has a harmful effect on people. Also, one evident change is a significant decline in the influence of social institutions such as family, religion, and education on people's lives. Those who live in post modern societies typically pursue individual freedom and do not want structural constraints that are imposed by social institutions (Kendall, 2009:23). In addition, collective ties that once bound people together become weakened, placing people at higher levels of risk- probabilities of physical harm due to given technological or other processes than in the past (Kendall, 2009:23). According to postmodern theory, there is a relationship between risk and the class structure. But also, wealth accumulates at the top and risk at the bottom such that social inequality and class differences increase as people in the lower economic tiers are exposed to increasing level of personal risk. In turn, produce depression, fear and ambivalence (Kendall, 2009:23). In connection to Postmodern paradigm, it was revealed from the study that peasants in Magu and Kwimba districts in 2000s are no longer benefiting from their Cooperative Union (NCU), because of getting low prices on agricultural produce which they produce, poor storage of the produced agricultural products and getting inputs at high prices. Also it was observed that Cooperative Union leaders benefits greatly through corruption and embezzlement leaving peasants hopelessly. With regard to postmodern paradigm, wealth in the age of privatization is centralized in the hands of few individuals' mainly union leaders leaving majority peasants occupying lower economic ties that consequently make them frustrate

2.2. Empirical Studies

2.2.1. The Concept of Cooperative Unions

This part presents the concept of Cooperative Unions. The Cooperative Unions had background from colonial rule as described in the foregoing:

Cooperative unions were peasant associations formed during colonial rule for the purpose of addressing farmers' grievances such as low wages, low prices for cash crop grown by Africans, land alienation and forced cash crop cultivation

(Maluka, 2008:27). Omari (2005:40 – 45) argued that Africans resisted all means of oppression and exploitation which impinged on their rights such as taxation and forced labor. Also Omari (2005:40 – 45) argued that first it was difficult for the government to make Africans produce cash crops in order to solve this problem but missionaries collaborated with the colonial state in persuading Africans to produce cash crops.

The missionaries taught their converts that Christianity and production of cash crops were inseparable, but the tactic did not yield the required quantities of cash crops (Omari, 2005:40 – 45). Thus the colonial state resorted to use force to break self sufficiency of the African economies. African chiefs and headmen were ordered to force the Africans to produce cash crops. Seeds or seedlings were distributed and planting was supervised and many cases, large farms were established whereby villagers had to work in them without being paid for a given number of days per week (Omari, 2005:40 – 45).

Ogot (1975:305) in his studies reported that, farmers were better organized for tribal politics, also output of crops and wealth of the country increased rapidly for example, in 1945, Tanganyika produced 7632 tons of raw cotton; in 1952, 14332 tons, and 1960, 34,789 tons (Ogot, 1975). Furthermore, in 1945, coffee export earned Pound Sterling (£) 896,000; in 1950, £ 3,471,000; in 1955, £ 6905, 000. Such prosperity led to growth of cooperative movement (Ogot, 1975:305).

Also it was argued that cash crop peasants never had any capital of their own. They existed from one crop to another, depending on harvest and good prices such that any bad harvest or fall in prices caused the peasants to borrow in order to find money to pay taxes and buy certain necessities (Rodney, 1972:155). As security, they mortgaged their future crops to moneylenders in the middlemen category (Rodney, 1972:155). Non-payment of debts could lead to their farms being taken away by the moneylenders. The rate of interest on loans was always fantastically high amounting to that is known as usury (Rodney, 1972:155).

2.3. Reasons for Emergence of Cooperative Unions in Africa and Tanzania

This sub - section presents various reasons for emergence of Cooperative Unions in Africa and Tanzania. As argued by various scholars, formation of Kikuyu Association in Nairobi Kenya in 1920, which became Young Kikuyu Association, was primarily against payment of low wages to Africans and low prices for primary commodities (Maluka, 2008: 28). Kuyela (2011:58) argued that in Tanzania, Cooperative Unions were formed by peasants to replace Indian middlemen in buying cash crops produced by African peasants. Also, middlemen were exploitative and provided a good link between rural peasants and the colonial state by promoting colonial production. Cooperative Unions helped peasants in selling their crops at reasonable prices and ensured that all farmers got a conducive environment of producing cash crops (Kuyela, 2011:58).

In Kilimanjaro, peasants needed to cooperate in order to prevent crop disease, facilitate marketing, and generally advance their group interests (Shillington, 1995: 373). Usambara Native Coffee Growers Association was formed in 1931 aimed at building stores, buying sprays and insecticides, and negotiating on overall prices at which individual growers sold to a single buyer (Illife, 1979: 294). Meru and Arusha coffee farmers organized rather earlier in the late 1920s, where the main function was to improve the quality of the crop and coordinate marketing (Illife, 1979: 294). Kimambo and Temu (1969:136) argue that Shambaa coffee farmers organized in 1932 and elected a committee to negotiate price with local buyers. Also then built a store house, weighed each member's crop, and paid an appropriate portion of the total sale price (Kimambo and Temu (1969:136).

2.4. Roles of Cooperative Unions to Peasants

In 1924, Bukoba Buhaya Union was one of the first African movements to be established, under the leadership of Clemence Kiiza (Davidson, 1977:77). Then it was renamed Buhaya Native Growers' Association in 1936 (Odhiambo and Ouso, 1997:145). This was an organization for social and economic improvement by encouraging literacy education and coffee growing (Kuyela, 2011:70). On other side, Odhiambo and Colleagues (1997:145) put that it opposed privileges of the chiefs under the new system of indirect rule and the Nyarubanja land tenure system. The Native Planters Association formed in 1924, was a Chagga enterprise that organized growing and marketing of coffee (Odhiambo, 1997:145).

Similarly, the authors (Odhiambo *et. al.*, 1997:145) commented that Lake Province Growers Association (LPGA), later became the Victoria Federation of Cooperative Unions was set in Mwanza (Usukuma) between 1950 and 1955 under the leadership of Paul Bomani, S.A Kandoro, I.M Bhoke Munanka and S.A Maswanya. Similarly, apart from fighting against Asian middlemen in cotton marketing, Victoria Federation of Cooperative Unions engaged in nationalist movement in modern Tanzania. For instance, its clerk named Bhoke Munanka drafted a document from Tanganyika African Association (TAA) Mwanza branch condemning the settlers' supremacy in ruling of Tanganyika, mainly because of their terribly shocking cruelty as seen in such neighboring dependencies like South Africa, Rhodesia and Kenya (Ogot,1975:306). The paper reminded the government of its promise to hand over the rule of the country to them as soon as they were ready for it (Ogot, 1975: 306).

Emergence of nationalism in colonies was associated with contradictions in colonial rule (Illife, 1979:480). Occurrence of the World War Two (1939 -1945) and devastating depression between them led to intensification of exploitation and oppression in the colonies (Mlahagwa, 2005:104). But also in opposing colonial exploitation and oppression, African cooperative societies were established to facilitate production and marketing of export crops. Moreover, Yeager (1989:16) comments that at the close of the colonial period, a large number of marketing, servicing and credit cooperatives were operating to handle problems to supply and distribution of farm products among small holder farmers (Yeager, 1989:16). Evolution of cocoa growing in Ghana and Nigeria, and coffee in Tanzania by Africans were

greatly advanced by cooperatives which, among other things provided marketing, storage, pulping, and transport as well as credit facilities (Yeager, 1989:16).

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study used qualitative research approach and a case study strategy. The case study allowed an investigation to retain holistic and meaningful characteristics of realized events such as individual life cycle, organization and managerial process of Cooperative Unions toward improving peasants' welfare in Kwimba and Magu districts, Mwanza Region.

3.2. Sample and Sample Sampling

This study involved eighty peasants, six village cooperative union leaders, two cotton ginnery managers, two Nyanza Cooperative Union leaders and one regional Cooperative Union leader. All respondents were involved in the study because they were direct stakeholders of Cooperative Unions and they were regarded to have the relevant information required by the study.

Sampling procedures employed in this study included probability and non probability sampling. From probability procedures, simple random sampling was used to get wards in the study area. All names of the wards were written on pieces of paper and placed them into a box. Thereafter, the box was shaken and four pieces of paper were picked ready for knowing the ward to be investigated.

On the side of non- probability sampling procedures, the researcher used purposive sampling in getting respondents with titles (positions) such as village Cooperative Union leaders, cotton ginnery managers and Nyanza Cooperative Union leaders. Snow ball sampling procedure was employed to get the peasants through their homestead after being identified by village leaders. Also snow ball sampling procedure helped the researcher to get old peasants who were also former VFCU or NCU members.

3.3. Data Collection and Analysis Methods

Data collection methods used under the study included observation, interview, questionnaires, and focus group discussion. Secondary data included already published information such as books, journals, magazines, newspapers, publications from central government and associations as well as reports.

This study used both semi- structured and unstructured interviews in getting data from the key respondents such as peasants, and village cooperative union leaders. Semi - structured interview helped the researcher to rectify the questions where then were not clearly understood by the respondents by making them clear. This study used open- ended questions by distributing them in advance and later on obtained data from respondents such as Regional Cooperative Union leaders and cotton ginnery leaders. The open- ended question enabled respondents to answer freely without interference from the researcher's bias. This study used four FGDs one from each administrative ward consisting 8 to 10 respondents. Documentary review was employed printed materials pertaining to Cooperative Unions from Mwanza Region Library, Zonal Archives Office in Mwanza, Nyanza Cooperative Union offices and Assistant Registrar of Cooperatives in Mwanza region. For the purpose of checking validity and reliability of research tools, the researcher conducted a pilot test at Bulale village in Nyamagana District, Mwanza region. Also the study used multiple data collection instruments such as questionnaire, Interview and Documentary Review. Qualitative data were organized and arranged in thematically areas. Then they were subjected to content analysis.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Introduction

This section presents the results and discussion which includes respondents' profile; people's perceptions on Cooperative Unions and roles of Cooperative Unions to peasants.

4.2. Respondents' Profile

The analyzed profile of respondents of Magu and Kwimba Districts was based on sex, age and work experience. This study involved ninety one respondents covering various categories as presented in Table 4.1.

Categories of Respondents	Sex			
	Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage
Peasants	42	46	38	43
Village Cooperative Leaders	4	4	2	2
Cotton Ginnery Managers	2	2	0	0
NCU Leaders	1	1	1	1
Regional cooperative leaders	1	1	0	0
Total	50	54	41	46

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Sex
Source: Field data (2018)

Table 1 shows respondents by sex composition. First, 50 percent male and 46 percent female respondents were involved in the study. Second, 46 percent and 43 percent of respondents were male and female peasants. Third, the study revealed that 4 percent were male and two female village Cooperative Union leaders whereby 2 percent of the respondents were male cotton ginnery managers. Fourth, 1 percent male and 1 percent female respondents were NCU leaders and 1 percent composed of male regional Cooperative Union leader. Moreover, all respondents argued for existence of Cooperative Unions in their residential areas. However, respondents were fairly represented in terms of sex in the study area (Table 1 Distribution of Respondents by Sex)

4.3. Age of Respondents

The age of respondents was categorized into five age intervals as shown in Table 2

Age Interval	Number of Respondents	Percentage
20-29	0	0
30-39	20	22
40-49	30	33
50-59	31	34
60 and above	10	11
Total	91	100

Table 2: Age Analysis of Respondents
Source: Field Data (2018)

Table 2 shows that 34 percent of respondents were aged between 50 and 59 years old whereby 11 percent comprised respondents with 60 years and above. The findings in Table 2 reveals that 33 percent of respondents were aged 40 and 49 years old and 22 percent had the age between 30 and 39 years. However, age category between 20 and 29 years was not involved in the study.

4.4. Work Experience of Respondents

Respondents were categorized in terms of members experience in Cooperative Unions as shown in Table 3.

Work Experience in Cooperative Unions	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Nil	20	22
1-10	11	12
11-20	15	17
21 and above	45	49
Total	91	100

Table 3: Membership Experience of Respondents
Source: Field data (2018)

Table 3 shows that 49 percent of respondents had work experience between 21 and above years, while 22 percent had no experience in Cooperative Unions. Also, Table 3 reveals that 17 percent of respondents had work experience in Cooperative Unions ranging from 11 to 20 years and 12 percent had Cooperative Unions experience of 1 and 10 years. Table 3 shows that respondents with experience and no experience in Cooperative Unions were involved in the study. With that mixture, the researcher obtained relevant information in relation to contribution of Cooperative Unions toward improvements of peasants' welfare.

4.5. People's Perceptions on Cooperative Unions

This sub-section presents people's perception on Cooperative Unions of Mwanza region. Proper understanding of people's perceptions on Cooperative Unions should be traced historically from the origin and development of Cooperative Unions from colonial to post independence periods in Tanzania.

4.6. Cooperative Unions during Colonial Era 1920s - 1950s

German colonial rule in Tanganyika brought cotton in Sukumaland as a cash crop (Odhiambo.*et. al*; 1986:138). According to Odhiambo and his fellow authors (1986), Germans forced Africans in different parts of Tanganyika to grow cash crop whereby in 1914, cotton was grown successfully by Wasukuma in Mwanza and parts of the Rufiji valley. Kuyela (2011: 54) argues that in 1919, British took power over Tanganyika and established small agricultural farms, where Indian middlemen began exploiting peasants through buying cotton at low prices and used wrong scales during cotton weighing. Thus, by 1920, peasant Cooperative Unions began as a bridge to link peasants and cash crop buyers so as to eliminate exploitation by Indian merchants (Kuyela, 2011:54).

Through interviews, one of the respondents described the origin of Cooperative Union in Mwanza region mainly, Magu district by saying that after the Second World War, chief Kapongo of Nasa in the then Kwimba district visited Uganda where he found very well organized peasant Cooperative Unions buying cotton from peasants. Also, he realized the highest degree of exploitation done to his home (Sukumaland) by Indian merchants when weighing cotton. Having arrived back

home, the chief called for the elder peasant meeting at Nyangili village and told them on how Cooperative Unions bought cotton from peasants in Uganda at reasonable prices.

Similarly, in opposition to the Indian middlemen, peasants of Nasa agreed to form the cooperative society and later on the formed cooperative society was transformed into union commonly called '*kigunabahabi*,' literally meaning (helper of the poor). Furthermore, Indian middlemen were kicked off from buying cotton and remained only processor when '*kigunabahabi*' with its many members, the founders decided to invite educated personnel for good administration, 'Paul Bomani was invited to join and become the manager of the newly formed union called Victoria Federation Cooperative Union (VFCU)'. The quotation reveals that the tendency for Indian middlemen to control cotton marketing and cheating peasants in weighing cotton compelled the indigenous (Wasukuma) to form a Cooperative Union in Magu and Kwimba districts. Responses from interviewees and Kuyela (2011) revealed that after the Second World War, the British colonial state in Tanganyika started two main campaigns to facilitate improvement of each cash crop production in the colony.

Interviewees added that at regional level, the colonial state forced Africans to cultivate a specific cash crop. For example, cotton in Mwanza and Shinyanga, cashew nuts in Lindi and Mtwara, Tobacco in Ruvuma and Tabora, coffee and tea in Kilimanjaro, Kagera and Arusha, groundnuts in Dodoma as well as sisal in Morogoro and Tanga. Similarly, since cash crop production was oppressive and exploitative in nature, various cooperative unions were formed to champion for the rights of peasants. For example, in 1954 Victoria Federation Cooperative Union was formed covering Mwanza, Shinyanga and Mara regions.

With regard to people's perceptions, Cooperative Unions during colonial era in Sukumaland started with Nsayu Cooperative Society, '*kigunabahabi*' and Victoria Federation Cooperative Union. All were considered in a positive way as means for liberating peasants from the chain of exploitation of Indian cotton buyers. Also, through Cooperative Unions, peasants got education on how to prepare land, select good seeds, and apply both fertilizers as well as pesticides (Kuyela, 2011: 54). Moreover, one of the interviewees on 20th March, 2018 presented that cooperative unions in Magu and Kwimba districts were considered a voice of peasants against colonial exploitation and ultimately, they improved the welfare of African peasants through selling cotton at fair prices. Due to this, peasants opposed openly monopolization of both cotton marketing and ginning by Asian traders (Hayden, 1980: 59). In connection to that, one respondent said that Cooperative Union in Sukumaland was a very strong weapon against parasitic system of Indian cotton buyers who lived on the sweat of Africans during colonial era. Based on the respondents' views, the researcher realized that the Cooperative Unions that were formed during colonial period began from cooperative society to Cooperative Unions. All aimed at opposing colonial exploitation towards peasants' cotton selling at low prices. The VFCU greatly participated in the struggle for independence in Tanganyika.

4.7. Cooperative Unions during Post Independence from 1960s to 2000s

Attainment of independence of Tanganyika (now mainland Tanzania) in 1961 did not mark the end of Cooperative Union operation (interview March, 2018). Thus, through interviews, it was revealed that Cooperative Union persisted. By 1960s and 1970s Cooperative Unions were gaining much influence to the peasants in Tanzania. Through questionnaire and interviews, the respondents presented that by 1970s Victoria Federation of Cooperative Unions gained more and more power in Lake Zone and such situation endangered the position of the new independent government. Respondents revealed that the government decided to ban all Cooperative Unions deliberately so as to sustain its central position because peasants were demanding high agricultural prices and free provision of inputs.

Through FGD, the respondents at Sumve in March 2018 presented that when Cooperative Unions were banned, the government formed Tanzania Cotton Authority in Lake Zone covering Mwanza, Shinyanga and Mara. Also, Tanzania Cotton Authority provided peasants with inputs, bought cotton and marketed cotton abroad (world market). This study revealed that after independence of Tanganyika mainly, in 1970s, the government lost confidence over VFCU because its demands persisted to the newly independent government.

With regard to banning of Cooperative Unions by the government of Tanzania by 1970s, two different perceptions emerged out of the peasants as said in the FGD conducted in March, 2018 all wards. Such perceptions are presented in the foregoing: government supporters viewed Cooperative Unions as threats to national peace and security and thus, forming Pan Territorial Organization, Cash Crop Authorities could cement national unity and solidarity as well as have an equal distribution of agricultural inputs and dissemination of education materials equally to all peasants. On the other hand, peasants thought banning Cooperative Unions and Victoria Federation of Cooperative Union, in particular, discouraged peasants from intensive cash crop production.

It was viewed as depriving peasants from their weapon to fight against exploitation inherited by the government from colonial regime. Thus, some Tanzania Cotton Authority (TCA) workers and other ordinary people accessed resources owned by the former Cooperative Union (VFCU). They began engaging in embezzlement of funds. So some peasants termed themselves as orphans after banning of their mother VFCU. All in all, respondents showed the necessity of Cooperative Unions against Tanzania Cotton Authority formed through government initiatives. It was revealed that after banning VFCU, cotton producers in Mwanza, Shinyanga and Mara regions began becoming voiceless towards demanding fair prices for their produce from the government.

In connection to that, problems of converting TCA intensified through embezzlement TCA Officials bought fake cotton, there was favoritism in employment opportunities based on tribalism and integration of TCA into policies dominated by the ruling party Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) and then Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM). Respondents added that when peasants presented more complaints to the government, and the government having realized the greatest loss in subsidizing cotton production and marketing, TCA ended its operations. Thus, the government

allowed formation of smaller Cooperative Unions in terms of regions. Another respondent put that through former VFCU, three smaller Cooperative Unions emerged. They included Nyanza Cooperative Union (NCU) for Mwanza, Shinyanga Region Cooperative Union (SHIRECU) for Shinyanga and Mara Cooperative Union (Mara co-op) for Mara region (Interview, March: 2018). Nyanza Cooperative Union (1984) Limited was inaugurated on 21st April, 1984 by three hundred and forty members covering the current regions of Mwanza, Geita, Simiyu and Shinyanga (Nyanza Co-operative Union 1984 Limited by – laws: 1-2). On top of that, the NCU by- law stipulated that the headquarters of NCU (1984) Limited are found Pamba ward, along Kenyatta road in Mwanza city.

Through questionnaire, one respondent presented that formation of NCU greatly revolutionized the peasants' lives in Lake Zone. Cotton production increased through family labor and local units known as '*malika*' for production, supply of agricultural inputs, free seed supply, reasonable cotton prices and quality education on agricultural production. Thus, peasants enjoyed fruits of independence because they accumulated much wealth after selling cotton. Such pattern led to emergence of various slogans such as '*pamba ni pesa*,' meaning that cotton is money, '*pamba nidhahabu*,' meaning that cotton is gold and '*igembe sabo*,' meaning that the hoe is wealth among Wasukuma (interview March, 2018). Moreover, NCU (1984) Limited reached its peak and intensity in 1990s after adoption of free trade in Tanzania (Interviewee March, 20th 2018). One respondent through questionnaire wrote that,

'When the government of Tanzania adopted free market economy, cotton production declined. In 1994, Nyanza Cooperative Union Limited failed to subsidize the peasants like it was before because of accepting the conditionality of Structural Adjustment Programme and private companies to buy cotton from peasants' residential areas without any fixed price. Peasants' morality to provide cotton went down because of lack of specific cotton price, got agricultural inputs at exorbitant prices, bought cotton seeds that did not germinate thoroughly and absence of second payment to subsidize peasants in the beginning of rain/ cultivation season as basic capital. Over 50 percent of peasants got discouraged and stopped from cultivating cotton, mainly, in Magu, Kwimba, Sengerema, Misungwi and Geita districts.'

Another respondent reported that NCU (1984) Limited was no longer economically powerful as it used to be. Before it bought cotton by 100 percent in the producing areas, while by 2010s, it bought only for about 6 to 10 percent of the total cotton production in its catchment areas.

Respondents revealed that peasants in Magu and Kwimba districts had no hope of getting assistance from Nyanza Cooperative Union. Therefore, people's perceptions on Cooperative Unions concur with postmodern theory as argued by Kendall (2009: 23) that rapid social change that occurs as societies move from modern to postmodern conditions has harmful effect on people. For instance, when one event changes there will be a significant decline in influence of social institutions such as: family, religion, and education on people's lives. In addition, collective ties that once bound people together become weakened, placing people at higher levels of risk- probabilities of physical harm due to given technological or other processes that existed in the past (Kendall, 2009: 23).

Also, wealth accumulates at the top, risk at the bottom. So, social inequality and class differences increase as people in the lower economic ties are exposed to an increased level of risk that, in turn, produce depression, fear and ambivalence (Kendall, 2009: 23). One respondent argued that adoption of privatization policy in Tanzania has left peasants without clear collective organization in which they would chain their interests. As a result, top cooperative leaders have accumulated wealth individually through embezzlement of funds, leaders have been corrupt and not paying the exact amount of money to the crops produced by the peasant hence leaving peasants with minimal pay from their agricultural produce. Due to this peasants got frustrated by missing basic needs and consequently, poor standards of living in rural areas ensued as most of them had nowhere to air out their views.

4.8. Roles of Cooperative Union to Peasants

This section presents roles of Cooperative Unions of Mwanza region from independence to present. Both respondents for verifying primary data and authors for secondary data put various roles of Cooperative Unions. Through FGD at Kisesa on 21st March 2018, it was mentioned that another role of Cooperative Union was to help peasants in securing reasonable cotton prices. They disclosed that formation of Cooperative Union in Kwimba and Magu districts among peasants intended to get high prices for their cotton produce. Another respondent, though interview on March 22nd, 2018, argued that peasants' cotton produce was purchased by Indian buyers at low prices.

But, the Indian cotton buyers bought cotton at very minimum price for profit maximization because they came in Tanzania not for survey but to secure more money as opportunities allowed them to do so. When peasants realized that they did not benefit from their sweat of which Indians and Europeans enjoyed, they deliberately decided to form cooperative unions that would buy the cotton at high price. In addition, one respondent, through questionnaire, gave another role of Cooperative Union that it acted as a bridge between peasants and colonial administration in the source of colonial economic production. Such view related by Kuyela (2011:54) who held that Victoria Federation of Cooperative Unions was formed in 1954 for providing a link between rural peasants and the colonial state by promoting colonial production. Although Kuyela does not go in detail, it implies that the colonial state also accepted formation of Cooperative Union so that they could disseminate information and input to peasants to facilitate colonial production.

One respondent said that Cooperative Unions were allowed to operate during colonial rule for enabling the colonial government distributed seeds, inputs and information to peasants easily. But, although Africans (Wasukuma) thought that VFCU was for championing their interests, the colonial state indirectly used cooperative leaders to control peasants by penetrating their interests because the union became a stepping stone for both the colonized and colonialists. Also another respondent through interview on March 16th, 2018 revealed that the role of Cooperative Union was to oppose colonial rule though not so directly. The respondent added that Cooperative Union was a way forward towards opposing foreign rule on Africa mainly Sukumaland because Wasukuma opted for peaceful means to do away with the colonial

regime. Elinewinga (1986: 86) argued that Victoria Federation of Cooperative Unions (VFCU) showed peasants' discontents of which could be transformed into nationalist feelings. One respondent, through interview on 17th March, 2018, presented that efforts of TANU in struggle for independence were accepted by VFCU instantly. Union leaders such as Paul Bomani and Bhoke Munanka accepted TANU movement to operate in Lake Zone through distributing TANU cards for spreading TANU message '*uhuru*' (meaning independence) and participating in strikes against colonial exploitative regime. Also, peasants were given good hopes of better prices for their agricultural produce after gaining independence and freedom from forced colonial taxation.

Ogot (1975; 306) argued that apart from fighting against Asian middlemen in cotton marketing, Victoria Federation of Cooperative Union engaged in nationalist movement in Tanzania. For instance, its clerk named Bhoke Isack Munanka drafted a document from TANU Mwanza branch condemning the supremacy in ruling Tanganyika because of their shocking cruelty as seen in such neighboring countries like South Africa, Rhodesia and Kenya. The paper reminded the government about its promise to hand over rule of the country to them as soon as they were ready for it. In due regard, VFCU was at the frontline opposing colonial rule not only in Sukumal and and Tanzania, in particular, but also in other African countries in general (Ogot, 1975: 306).

Respondents, through FGD at Bujashi on 18th March, 2018 revealed that Cooperative Union also intended to provide education on farming so as to enhance maximum agricultural production. Respondents presented that VFCU provided education to peasants on land preparation, right sowing season, spacing, proper time for cotton seedling sorting, weeding, spraying, application of manure or fertilizers, proper storage and marketing of cotton. One of the respondents, through interviews on 20th March, 2018 said that it was very interesting that VFCU provided peasants with proper education based on better methods of farming, sowing, application of fertilizers, and use of pesticides and harvesting of different crops. Respondents reported, education to peasants was provided through seminars, workshops, societal meetings and distribution of books for crop production and animal husbandry. Also songs and poems were used to spread farming education.

However, respondent through interview on 25th March, 2018 revealed that after attainment of political independence of Tanganyika in 1961 including the union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar in 1964, Cooperative Unions went on surviving, having eliminated Asian middlemen in cotton buying and colonialism, the new regional formed Cooperative Union in Mwanza called Nyanza Cooperative Union (1984) Limited added some crucial roles for the better of peasants. Respondents further reported roles of NCU (1984) Limited to peasants that included construction of infrastructures such as road for easy transportation of different crops mainly cotton from peasants to the established zonal union where ginneries were established (Respondent through interview on 25th March, 2018).

Another respondent through interview on 24th March, 2014 put that NCU (1984) Limited bought essential equipment for road construction such as caterpillars because of shortage of such modern equipment in most parts of rural areas by 1980. Similarly, peasants worked together in designing new roads and rehabilitating old roads. They reported that,

'We intended to work together joyfully knowing that we had responsibility for making our own development having chased away colonialists. Furthermore, we carried cotton bags from the fields to our homes and from homes to the selling centers by our heads or shoulders along narrow paths or wide roads constructed either locally or by the aid NCU itself.' Another crucial role of NCU was to construct cotton storage facilities. One respondent, through interview on 21st March, 2014 commented the following,

'NCU aimed at constructing storage facilities for raw cotton in the buying canters found for every primary cooperative society. Cotton is very risky for catching fire, cotton stores were constructed from corrugated iron sheets from bottom to roof. In addition, having picked and sorted the first and second grade cotton, farmers had to transport cotton to the selling centre where storage facilities were commonly found.'

The same respondent added that on every storage centre watchmen were employed against thieves or bad people who could light fire on stored cotton. A respondent, through questionnaire, reported that, NCU had also an intention of looking for better cotton markets outside the country (abroad) so as to enable peasants obtain maximum profits from their sales. Thus, establishment of Cotton Board within NCU made possible to have access to better markets as officials had to go outside the country mainly in the developed countries of Europe looking for cotton market.

It was reported that Cooperative farms were established by NCU where peasants of nearby villages worked together and gained practical skills and knowledge related to modern methods of growing cotton. Thus, peasants practically learnt about cotton growing. Also through focus group discussion, it was reported that in all cooperative rural farms, NCU provided them basic facilities needed for cotton production such as tractors, fertilizers, pesticides and cotton storage facilities. Therefore, it can be argued that Cooperative Unions in Kwimba and Magu districts played vital roles to of peasants' life ways from colonial to post independence periods. One respondent, through questionnaire, noted that, cotton cooperative movement in Lake Regions (Mwanza, Shinyanga and Mara) was spontaneous. It aimed at realizing fair weights and payments for their cotton under the zonal monopoly system. The first move in opposing cotton weighing exploitation was done by forming independent weighters to check weights on a village and chiefdom basis, which was unsuccessful. Although the first move was unsuccessful, it led to emergence of VFCU and later on NCU in Mwanza, Mara Cooperative Union in Mara and SHIRECU in Shinyanga. All Cooperative Unions aimed at improving peasants' living standards through cotton production by attaining better cotton prices and fair weighing scales. Respondents concluded that Cooperative Unions fundamentally aimed at improving the living standards of peasants through collective means. However, the study revealed that peasants implemented their roles through their Cooperative Unions, which were formed in terms of regions after independence mainly from 1970s.

5. Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1. Summary of the Findings

5.1.1. People's Perception on Cooperative Unions

The study revealed that Cooperative Unions operated into two phases in Magu and Kwimba distinctly namely, during colonial phase 1920s to 1950s and post independence phase from 1960s to 2000s. Each phase with its own Cooperative Union was perceived differently by peasants.

Firstly, during colonial era, the famous known Cooperative Union in the study area was Victoria Federation of Cooperative Union (VFCU) that was preceded by Cooperative Society called Nsayu Cooperative Society commonly known as '*igunabahabi*.' The union was perceived by peasants to be a tool to liberate peasants from both poverty and the chain of exploitation from Indian cotton buyers. Indian merchants bought cotton at very low prices and deceived peasants during weighing cotton.

Secondly, the study revealed that during postcolonial era, from 1960s to 2000s Cooperative Unions were perceived by peasants differently. Cooperative Unions were regarded by government as threat towards national unity and solidarity because the new government wore shoes of colonial powers. Then Cooperative Unions were made part and parcel of the ruling government. On the other hand, Nyanza Cooperative Union formed in 1984 was perceived a voice of peasants for better market of cotton and as a tool to improve peasants' welfare by provision of cotton seeds and inputs through loans.

However, with adoption of social changes based on privatization policy and globalization in Tanzania, peasants are left with no clear organization in which they would chain their interests. Hence peasants are left voiceless and frustrated with minimal pay of their produce.

5.1.2. Roles of Cooperative Unions to Peasants

The study revealed that the formed Cooperative Unions in Magu and Kwimba districts played vital roles from 1920s to 2000s. Both VFCU and NCU (1984) Limited had various roles to play. Such roles included replacement of Indian middlemen in buying cotton; helped peasants in securing reasonable cotton prices; acted as a bridge between peasants and colonial administration; and opposed colonial rule by joining TANU nationalist party. Other roles included construction of infrastructure for transporting cotton raw materials from producers to destinations and construction of cotton storage facilities. Cooperative Unions sought for better cotton market and general improvement of peasants' living standards.

5.1.3. Challenges of Cooperative Unions

The study revealed that Victoria Federation of Cooperative Unions and Nyanza Cooperative Union are faced with several challenges in Magu and Kwimba districts from 1920s to 2000s.

During 1920s to 1950s, the challenges of Cooperative Unions in the study area were low prices for cotton raw materials as purchased by Indian and European merchants, which led to creation of poverty among peasants. Also there was opposition from the colonial government by arresting and detaining Cooperative Union leaders and members who were in the front line against colonial rule. Furthermore, poor infrastructures in rural areas made transportation of cotton difficult from producers to destination.

Also, the study revealed that from 1960s to 2000s, various challenges confronted the Cooperative Unions mainly NCU in Magu and Kwimba districts. The challenges of Nyanza Cooperative Union included forced villagization policy that destroyed peasants' properties. Such move frustrated hopes of peasants for enjoying fruits of independence. Thus, the government interfered peasants' interests.

Adoption of free market economy by the government of Tanzania in 1990s hindered effectiveness of NCU because free private companies and individual firms dominated cotton buying as well as supply of inputs on cash. Other challenges of NCU included failure of the NCU to meet demands of its members, lack of capital to implement its objectives, debts and lack of government support to both NCU and peasants.

Moreover, bad administration, corruption and theft is frustrating peasants to continue favoring NCU. NCU leaders are enriching themselves and leave peasants swimming in the pool of poverty hopelessly. Additionally, nepotism based on ethnicity favoring Sukuma people instead of people of other ethnic groups in Nyanza Cooperative Union headquarters and its branches has led to ineffectiveness to serve people properly. NCU officials as well as peasants are affected by the problem of low education level in implementing NCU objectives. The study revealed that through such challenges, more respondents saw no significance of NCU in this world of globalization, where privatization has taken room. A few respondents advocated for NCU under assistance of the central government of Tanzania to enable peasants to have a proper organization for passing through their demands and rights just as how workers have been doing in their trade unions.

6. Conclusions

On the basis of research findings, the following conclusions were made: First, during colonial era, Cooperative Unions were formed for the purpose of liberating peasants from colonial exploitation and oppression. Thus, Cooperative Unions such as VFCU formed in Lake Zone fought against low prices for peasant cash crops mainly cotton. After independence in Tanzania, Cooperatives Unions in Magu and Kwimba Districts commonly called NCU (1984) Limited was

formed fundamentally as a tool to improve peasants' welfare such as better cotton marketing, provision of agricultural education and free provision of seeds as well as inputs like fertilizers and insecticides on affordable loans.

Second, Cooperative Unions had fundamental roles to play to peasants with regard to both colonial and post independence periods. During colonial era, Cooperative Unions in Magu and Kwimba Districts basically VFCU intended to replace Indian middlemen and European merchants in buying cotton. Later on VFCU was used to join TANU nationalists in fighting for independence in Tanganyika. However, post independence era, NCU (1984) Limited was formed so as to facilitate cotton production, construction of cotton stores, ginneries and roads as well as provision of inputs through loans to peasants.

Lastly, Cooperative Unions in Magu and Kwimba Districts are not effectively operating because of various challenges such as corruption, lack of enough funds, depreciation of NCU assets and adoption of privatization policy. Privatization has connectivism and widened individualism. Hence, private companies have begun buying cotton from peasants at less beneficial prices. Seed supplied by individual companies are no longer of high quality. Peasants are forced to buy inputs in cash. All those challenges have discouraged peasants from growing cotton. Thus, NCU is not as strong as before, leaving peasants frustrated by poverty without a proper organization to claim for their rights.

7. Recommendations

Based on research findings, the following recommendations are made:

The government should ensure sustainable development of Nyanza Cooperative Union (1984) Limited by providing enough subsidies and increase budget on Cooperative Unions so that peasants can get inputs on loans and at cheap prices such as fertilizers seeds and insecticides;

The government should take legal actions against all Nyanza Cooperative Union leaders who have used the cooperative property for private gains. The Government should provide second payment to peasants so as to have the spirit of rejuvenating Cooperative Unions and increase production. The government should check tendency of private companies who exploit peasants by purchasing their agricultural raw materials at lower prices so as to promote peasants' interests;

The government should appoint on every Cooperative Union, a farmer as a representative of other farmers in the parliament like other organizations to ensure sustainable development of Cooperative Unions; Nyanza Cooperative Union leaders should avoid using cooperative properties for private gains and peasants should be assisted by NCU in all production;

Nyanza Cooperative Union should provide agricultural education on every village through establishment of farm classes;

Nyanza Cooperative Union should train primary society leaders on Cooperative Unions in order to improve Cooperative Union development and its members;

Peasants should identify and take legal action to all NCU leaders or private companies who exploit peasants through false weighing scales and buy their agricultural produce on credit;

Peasants should not be rigid and instead, they have to be dynamic according to development of science and technology for Cooperative Unions' development.

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