

Aspects of Continuity and Change in Leatherwork Indigenous Industry among the Tugen of Baringo County in 1895-1963 in Kenya.

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Abstract

The study examined the approaches that were employed by the Tugen in their knowledge, skills and attitudes acquisition before and during the colonial period of Kenya. The study examined two distinctive epochs from which the understanding of how leatherwork in Tugen land was conducted. The work relied on oral traditions as a primary source. Secondary sources were utilised, such as unpublished works like articles, books, and thesis. Archival sources from Kenya National Archives were extensively used to supplement the sources from primary and secondary. The study described the distribution, methods, techniques, and procedures used in leatherwork. It further assessed the types and uses of leather products. This study established the forces that led to the dismantling of the industry during the early periods of colonial rules, such as taxation, forced labour, settler farming, and western education. Leatherwork in the 1930s underwent re-organisations in the form of labour innovativeness, cultural transformation, marketing strategies etc. These were analysed to ascertain the forces behind the persistence of the industry. The Tugen devised ways of survival to compete favourably with the British colonisers, which led to the Tugen transformation of the leather industry from 1945. The main problem that this study advanced is that Tugenland, like other African societies, is regarded by some people as having not had any form of industry or organisation before the arrival of the colonialists. This paper raised an argument against this position. The study has recorded the Tugen leather industry for posterity purposes.

Key Terms: Indigenous industry, indigenous knowledge, leatherwork, colonialism, independence.

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INTRODUCTION

Since ancient times, the hides of wild and domesticated animals have been part of the important treasure trove of materials used by people worldwide to make garments. Leather is one of the oldest materials used in Africa to make clothing and utensils by nomadic, hunting and pastoral African tribe. Communities identify solutions to address local development problems. For communities to realise their development choices, it is critical to enhancing their capacity to deliver and manage these problems. The President of Tanzania Julius Nyerere remarked that African communities and farmers have always coped with changing environments and that communities not only have knowledge about practices, they also have knowledge of how to adapt to adverse environments, institutions, and policies. The Tugen were basically mixed farmers, and they kept a variety of livestock, mainly goats, sheep and cattle, in the varied terrain. Apart from domesticated animals, several wild animals provided hides used to make clothing. Clothing was a family responsibility (Orchardson, 1961:58.) The style and type of clothing depended greatly on climatic conditions. Naturally hides with the largest possible size, stiffness and thickness such as antelopes, snakes, elephants and giraffes were preferred.

Animals were slaughtered on many occasions in an individual's life among the Tugen, and this ensured the ready availability of the skins to be used. Hunting for wild game in the many forests was a continuous process. Slaughtering was done in style to get the desired shape of the skin. Thus the supply of skins was continuous. It is important to note that animals were slaughtered purposely to provide skins and provide meat, blood, and even horns to be used by man. The hair, teeth, whisks, muscles, bones, horns and fur was also utilised for other purposes by man.

The skin and the tegument (inner lining) of individual animals had to be prepared and treated in the most

different ways. The skin of higher animals is divided into an outer layer (epidermis), middle layer (dermis, corium) and bottom layer (sub-Curtis). The animal skin was the most common traditional African cloth. Different communities wore different animal skins and processed them in various ways. The most common was the cowhide which was used to make cloaks, aprons and skirts. Among the Maasai, the most outstanding was the lion skin, which was worn by warriors as a sign of bravery. Humanity has always sought more knowledge to feed families, stay healthy, arguing with neighbours, and understand their immediate environment, among other issues, since the dawn of history. Before the scientific approaches of knowledge discovery emerged, local ways of solving problems were already strongly established.

These ways have persisted to date and comprise what is known as indigenous knowledge. As society scientifically developed, IK became a neglected area whose potential as a resource in development was forgotten. This neglect has led to socio-economic challenges affecting food security, environmental conservation, health and social cohesion, among others. The need to rediscover and mainstream IK in development is excellent. This need is anchored on the understanding that IK is the basis for local-level decision making in agriculture, healthcare, food preparation, education, management of natural resources, and a host of other activities. Regardless of the growing number of studies on and interests in IK in Kenya, the issue of its protection is poorly addressed. For instance, literature on indigenous leatherwork in Kenya is scanty. This paper analysed the existing knowledge on leatherwork in Kenya and particularly in Baringo County to ascertain the changes that have occurred in the sector from the pre-colonial period and give recommendations that will address the challenges and restore the industry to its rightful position in the society.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section entails the critical and relevant literature review of Leatherwork. The literature review was able to acknowledge the contributions of other scholars on themes on leatherwork in the world and Baringo County in particular. It analysed the literature related to the study, which formed the basis for research questions and objectives in order to broaden the ideas on the topic to be studied. It also addressed historical gaps that needed to be filled in the study. Ajahn stressed that community's changes with development. He mentioned that culture is dynamic. Culture constantly undergoes changes, modifications or adjustments either for better or worse. Culture is transmutable, meaning, as it is being transmitted, it undergoes changes that may be subtle or extreme. Discontinuity or change of industries may be in the form of abandoning, adding or altering the materials, colour, styles of material used. For instance, discontinuity of meaning (hill) states that, until recently, beadwork was lavishly applied on men's and women's daily wear. The dress included leather, cloaks, headbands and jewellery. Today some of the artefacts are reserved for special ceremonies like initiation ceremonies.

Kettle presents an analysis of the social organisation and marriage alliance rules which underlay the kinship systems of the Tugen of Kenya. From the review the author was able to document the social organisations and further derive its influence on their social built forms which will show the connections with the Tugen indigenous industries, which the current research seeks to, unravel. Hodder attempted to give an elaborate explanation on why material culture varied from one region to another in Baringo County. He argued that many of the usual interpretations of material culture patterning are inadequate because they do not take into account the ability of groups and individuals to use artefacts as a medium for the communication of information about, for example, one's membership of identity groups and status

groups. The importance of the symbolic nature of artefacts for the structuring of material culture distributions is shown at the boundaries between spatial identity groups and in the distributions of male-and female-associated items. This work helped to explain the context variation of material culture in Baringo, such as leatherwork.

Osborn (1996) examined systemic context(s) for symbol use among the Il Chamus in the Lake Baringo region of Kenya. The systemic context for symbols and material culture consists of the environmental constraints and behavioural responses that characterise pastoralist life in East Africa. He argued that symbols and their use in East Africa could be more productively explained from a materialist perspective. Specifically, the symbols affixed to certain Il Chamus and Tugen material culture reduce the uncertainties of food allocation within pastoralist compounds. The systemic context for symbol use includes a number of "bottlenecks" or constraints that affect the production and the distribution of essential livestock products. This argument will unravel the challenges the Tugen encountered in acquiring animal products for making leather products. It helped to produce reliable knowledge about past human existence. Reliable knowledge, unlike "common or folk" knowledge, is a systematically-unified and conceptually based account of the material world (Ziman, 1978).

Little suggested that the Tugen interacted with their neighbours and subsidised their products through trade. Ne argued that increased dependence on pastoralism occurred in the context of regional trade networks in which Nubian, Indian, Swahili, and Somali traders bought, traded, or sold maize, millet, goats, and cattle (Little 1992:40–41). The stability of this regional economic system was subject to problems created by fluctuations in grain prices, market quarantine restrictions imposed by colonial governments, severe droughts and famine relief programs, and expansion of lands used for the production of cash crops,

e.g., coffee, pyrethrum, wheat, onions, and red chillies (Little 1992:37–38). Little (1992:98–104) suggests that the Il Chamus commit themselves to limited agriculture for three reasons: (1) to reduce their dependence on an unpredictable grain market; (2) to purchase livestock after droughts and associated declines in herd size; and (3) to secure and to maintain access to land and water. This ensured continuity of leatherwork in Baringo despite the challenges.

Anderson in his work eroding the Commons, noted that in the 1930s, Baringo was the first district in which development programs were implemented. It was a testing ground for ideas on how reform should be implemented. He further noted that in the years after the Second World War, as the colonial government carried an enlarged programme of rural development, Baringo became an important reference point for others. The work will be very useful in the current study in tracing the origin and culture of the Tugen.

Gleave, gave an elaborate explanation of the development of indigenous industries in Africa. He stated that manufacturing in Africa was represented by small scale craft industries which existed throughout pre-colonial tropical Africa. For example, most African cultures were familiar with ironworking, pottery, woodcarving, the products of which ranged from elaborate carvings to simple tools and utensils. Africa also had the curing and preparation of animal skins and their manufacture into various articles from clothing to musical instruments and the manufacture of bark cloth. Kate Moore acknowledges the importance of culture and cultural differences in research as a decolonising process to balance Eurocentric thinking. He dealt with traditional knowledge and local values, which he discussed with the understanding that they are hybridised through connections to colonial, western and other African societies and evolving through cultural and environmental change. From this review, the

author documented the interactions that the Tugen had with the British colonisers and the Tugen neighbours, which are crucial in the study.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Leatherwork

Steps in Leatherwork

Once obtained, skins were dried with the inner part facing the sun for about two to four days, depending on the weather conditions. To dry the raw skin, holes were pierced at the sides and sharp sticks pinned to the ground, helping to stretch the skin to the desired size and shape. They then pegged it on the ground using small pieces of sharpened sticks. Skins were sun-dried in order to kill the fleshy parts in the skins, which could cause decomposition. One of the processes employed by the Maasai people of Kenya was the stretching of hides on a wooden rack, where it remained until dried and stone hard. One widespread method used in Africa was pegging hides to the ground to dry and to keep their shape or to stretch it. While the skin was sun-dried, the adipose layer was also scrapped using a stone knife, and this removed the remaining flesh from the skin. This called for precision in order to avoid tearing the skin. To facilitate this, the flesh was removed, whereby the adipose layer was rolled on a piece of wood. This rolling technique is quite an early development in the tanning industry, for it ensured that the skin gained some evenness and smoothness qualities that customers valued in their garments.

The furs on the skins were either shaved using a sharp stone knife depending on the purpose the skins were meant for or removed either by plucking or scrapping. After drying in the sun for about four hours, it is soaked in water to facilitate the removal of the fur. Both sides must look the same. The instrument for removing the fur varies from place to place. In the lowlands, they used stones, while in the highlands; they used sharp objects acquired through trade from the Nandi. The Nandi stole the metal to

make sharp objects from the Europeans constructing the Uganda railway (Kipkorir & Ssenyonga, 1985). The epidermis was also removed so that when the tannin was added chemical reaction would take place, and it will produce leather. The craftsman understanding of the crude chemical reaction shows development in chemistry among the Tugen and the vast understanding of their surroundings. The craftsmen had some basic knowledge of treating this skin and making it suitable for human clothing and other uses.

The leather specialists' noble invention was further demonstrated by the use of tannin.¹⁰Tanning is the process of dressing and curing hides and skins to leather. Tanning is one of the oldest crafts practiced by humankind. The technique used for tanning is unique to each community. It involves using the bark of trees, ash, lemon or fermented bran. Leather tanners are specialized and respected members of the community as the craft has cultural importance amongst these ethnic groups. The development of tanning among the Tugen reflects on the people's advancement in technological development during the pre-colonial era. Tanning was done majorly by men who made a variety of items for both men and women. It was not a specialist activity and was carried out in most homesteads. Almost every family had a person who prepared their clothing.

Tanning was not done in particular workshops but carried out under granaries or any shade within the homestead (Zezeza, 1997). The skills in leather tanning were learnt through apprenticeship. Skin craftsmen instructed the youths on the basic skills. The process of instruction ensured that the skill was passed on from one generation to the next. Tanning required a short period of training. It lasted for about one to two years, depending on the learners tanning techniques, designing the various leather garments and other important goods.

Depending on which tannin agent is used, the distinction is made between fat tanning and vegetable tanning. In fat tanning or oil tanning, the Tugen rubbed milk butter or fat into the hide. This was regarded as the most straightforward process. The specialists used certain vegetable plants such as sap plants or extracts from barks such as Solonum in Cunum and Vangeuna to provide tannin. Tannin was obtained by pounding the leaves of various plants. The skin was then rubbed with tannin in the process of rubbing, which ensured that the living matter on the skin was removed through the process of corrosion. To make it soft, the upper surface was rubbed between the hands until it became soft, and a little oil was added.

The skins were sometimes smoked to make them more weather resistant. Often combination-tanning methods were employed. This made the skin to be tender, reduced the weight and left the fibrous part of the skin intact. The under skin maintained the tanned skin in place, and it gave strength, while the middle skin gave the leather an admirable smooth look. The tanners applied castor oil on the skin and rubbed the skin to ensure that the skin became soft. Any stubborn fleshy remains were removed using a rough stone. One of the 'vegetable tanning' plants used in Southern Africa is called the Eland-bean (*Elephantorhiza elephantina*). The underground rhizomes/roots are dug up and used in rural areas for dyeing and tanning. The bark is removed in the Kalahari Desert region, and the root pounded to a pulp, with a little water added. The paste is then smeared on the hide to help in making it soft. By continuous rubbing the skin over a tree branch or by hand till the skin is soft (www.Gateway-Africa-Com).

Among the Swazi people in South Africa, the semi-finished skin is beaten on rocks till it is soft; the 'Ndebele', however, use wooden hammers to make it pliable. After the skins were ready, they were cut into various garments for

various purposes. The following section addresses the products which were made out of leather.

Uses of Leather Products

Leather tanned using a variety of methods was used for making many items ranging from belts, bead wares, wallets, traditional skirts, prayer mats, sword holders, beddings and covering material for traditional housing, among other uses. Garment made varied for men and women.

Clothing

The study also established that there exists a distinct difference between a man's and a woman's attire. While a man's dress was in the form of a gown, the woman's is a wraparound topped with a shoulder gown with decorations around the lowermost hem. The Tugen community were also renowned for their traditional clothing, which essentially consisted of animal skins of either domesticated or wild animals. The clothes differed for men and women. Studies from other parts of Africa indicate that animal skins were used especially by those in dry Northern and Western zones such as the Hausas, Arabs and Bororos who practice nomadism/animal husbandry own herds of cattle, goats and sheep and use their skins for clothing; bags, shoes, jackets, seat covers, water bags because they do not radiate heat and prevent possible evaporation and also to make knife/dagger/sword sheathes, shoes, caps and horse/donkey/Carmel saddles.

Women

The Tugen people prepared a special belt called *legetyo* for a new mother who the midwife tied on the new mother's waist and can only be removed in a special cleansing ceremony after two years. It was made by cutting a sizeable piece from a strong cowhide and shaping it to fit the new mother's belly. The main reasoning behind this interesting culture is to implement family planning and also to ensure that the child is given enough care before getting

pregnant with another child. Other belts were made for decoration purposes and were combined with cowrie shells and beads. A belt with one row of cowrie shells was worn by a girl. When she got married, a second row was added, and when she became a mother, a third row was added. A grandmother will wear one with four rows of beads. This ensured that women could easily be identified by the belts they put on.

Another garment was referred to as *sir* or *skirt*. This was a body cover that was of great value to the Tugen. It was made from several soft goatskins, which were stitched together to make a triangular skirt. To the front of the skirt are attached several strings of leather through which are threaded beads and bone ornaments. The *sir* is a women's body cover received from the mother's home at the time of initiation and marriage. In fact, a traditional married Tugen woman wore this beautiful skirt with many strings until she became a widow. When the husband dies, the strings are ceremoniously cut off, leaving the bare leather surface. The undecorated skirt was then a sign of widowhood. A full dress made from the skins of a goat was made for ladies who were elder and were going for circumcision. Girls undergoing initiation ceremonies wore it for a long period ranging from a month to one year. In their initiation ceremonies, they were taught so many things, among which was how to decorate the skins, treatment, sewing and drying.

Men

Young boys used traditional attire at certain times of the year or on particular occasions only. When they go for initiation and are in the camp, they are kept away from any other form of dress. It acted as both cloth and a blanket. It was continuously oiled to make it soft and flexible. The more elderly men have attire made from cow skin sewn together from the middle. He uses it to cover the chest and back. During the day, when he is travelling or herding animals, the garment is wrapped around his body

in such a way that the right arm is trained to use a tool like a club or a spear and in case of a sudden attack by wild animals or enemies the pastoralist is ready to defend himself. In addition, he had long beaded leather straps hanging. Others wear gowns and headdresses, clearly showing his social status in his community.

Ceremonial attire was also made for the Tugen men. It was made from a Columbus monkey skin. In the Tugen hills, there lived wild animals, namely the Columbus monkey, bush babies, monkeys and baboons. Many of these animals were hunted and killed, and their skins were converted into ceremonial costumes. The skins were dried in the sun, oiled with castor oil and sewed into a hat and overcoat and kept in the house for ceremonies. The colour combination of black and white provided the beauty aspect. The hat got from the skin of a Columbus monkey is called *kutwet*. They also made attire that covered the whole body. They were made by joining two or three skins skilfully. They were also for ceremonies and referred to as *sambut*. It was worn by specific members of the society and signified authority and power. Although many African communities wore animal skins or leather clothes, a number had developed the art of weaving and spinning cotton and other fibres to make cloths. In several parts of Africa, a variety of fibres were employed in the manufacture of cloth such as bark, bast, raphia, silk, wool and cotton (Picton).

The Berbers of North Africa on the other hand, made their woven rugs by blending wool and goat hair with esparto grass, dwarf palm and rush. Among the Baganda, clothes were made from the bark of trees, and the product was commonly known as barkcloth. They used Bast fibres and Raphia in central Africa, obtained from the marsh or swamp vegetation. Silk production was done in Nigeria and Madagascar, where various species of moth of the genus *Anaphe* were found. It was obtained from the larvae of these moths, which were bred on tamarind trees—details of the preparation process of cloth varied from place to

place. The Yoruba, for example, built furnaces of four feet high or five feet wide to prepare the potash for the alkaline medium. Dyeing was carried out either in large earthenware pots or pits in the ground (Zezeza, 1997). Apart from leather clothes, other products were made from animal skins and hides, such as sandals, bags and beddings, which were designed for that purpose. The Tuareg, the Beja, the Somali and the Ajar made their shelter or tents out of animal skins. The hard work in leather has been associated more with the pastoralist communities.

Dismantling of Leather Indigenous Industry between 1912 and 1930.

The study examines how the indigenous industries were developed articulately. Still, when the colonialist arrived, they started dismantling them through policies and disarticulation such as taxation, competition, legislation and structural changes in the economy because they wanted to establish a colonial economy. As the Tugen struggled to maintain their industrial base, they encountered challenges that adversely affected their natural raw materials. The British found this to be an opportunity to further dismantle their industries by coming up with alternative products, which the Tugen used out of desperation. This continued up to the end of World War Two in 1945. During this period, the Tugen indigenous industries were disarticulated by the British Colonisers, who were interested in imposing their capitalist system on the Tugens.

Land Alienation and the Creation of Reserves

The usage of land in the Tugen community was mainly communal and was owned by clans. The clans were given different rights on how to exploit it for various purposes. The acquisition of these rights was basically through inheritance. The process of land alienation began in 1903 with the granting of a concession in the Lembus forest to the west of Eldama Ravine to Messrs Lingham and Grogan, who wanted to establish a timber industry in the area. In

1907, the allotment of the first group of Rift Valley farms was made where forty-seven farms, each approximately 5,000 acres, had been alienated, surveyed and allocated to European claimants. These included lands in southern Baringo in Eldama Ravine to Kisanana in the East (KNA. Lands and settlement political reports). In allowing the alienation and settlement of these areas, the colonial administration had failed to realise or perhaps had chosen to ignore the historical fact that Baringo had always functioned as a pastoral community. Restricting the Tugen to reserves could not give them the skins to support them because it interrupted grazing and expansion to new grazing lands. The alienation of land and the creation of reserves affected the Tugen domestic economy. Land, which was a source of livelihood for the Tugen community, was now converted into a commercial asset. The majority of the Tugen gave up leatherwork as others looked for alternatives, even changing their economic activity.

Forced Labour

Another effective instrument or strategy which destroyed the Tugen indigenous industries was the use of Forced Labour. The Tugen were forced to work in the colonial plantations and industries. Since the Tugen were not used to colonial economy and system of production, there was a need to compel them by force to work for the colonialists. This is because, since the new economy is alien to them, there was no way they could give their labour force willingly and voluntarily. In any case, the Tugen culture advocated for the use of family labour for production. To force the Tugen to work in the plantations and industries, the colonialists employed a number of strategies to compel them to make their labour force available. Commenting on the colonial order and the use of forced labour in Africa. (Chinwezu, 1978) observed that “having by conquest become masters of the continent, the European rulers of Africa began to seize resources and to organise their rule for long and profitable stay.”

Taxation

Another important development in the early period of colonisation was the implementation of taxation policies. At first, a series of regulated pressures were applied to secure the necessary labour. These included the imposition of taxes and the use of administrative officers to persuade or coerce able-bodied Africans onto the European farms. The earliest measures were an attempt to subject Africans to a crude form of wealth tax via the hut tax regulations of 1901 (Mcgregor, 1968). The colonial authority insisted that Africans should pay their taxes in colonial currency. The implication of this was that Africans would be compelled to work either in the colonial civil service or in the colonial farms in order to earn their colonial currency to pay their tax. The colonialists imposed taxes on the Africans for two reasons; the first was that it was a source of labour for their farms, and the second was that they wanted the colonies to bear the cost of the personnel and the administration. The colonialists were not ready to use their funds to run the colonial territories and administration. The Tugen had accumulated wealth in cattle and farm produce, which the colonisers did not acknowledge because it would mean not utilising them for the much-needed labour.

Influence of Colonial Education and Missionary Education

The missionary education, which was basically colonial in nature, was not rooted in African culture and therefore could not foster any meaningful development within the African environment because it had no linkage. The Tugen accepted it because they were facing a challenge. Furthermore, missionary education was essentially literacy, and it had no technological base and therefore had no idea for industrial development. Missionary education aimed at training clerks, interpreters, produce inspectors and artisans, which would help them in exploiting the rich resources in the region. The missionary activities further interfered with the indigenous industries, especially when they started missionary education where they offered

western formal education, which was not in line with the Tugen informal education. They introduced industrial training for the Africans where they started courses such as tailoring, carpentry, bricklaying, masonry and agriculture.

Continuity of Indigenous Leatherwork during Post-Economic Depression Period up to 1945.

Continuity in clothing, on the other hand, after 1930, was influenced by customs, values, cultural gatherings, raw materials and advances in technology. The value for ethnic identity dictates that the Columbus monkey skin remains the most important material employed in the construction of cloaks (*sambut*), headdresses (*chepkulet*) and bags (*motoget*). (Kabarnet museum) The study revealed that the Columbus skin has remained unchanged as the material used to construct the indigenous attire – *sambut*. Their distinctive black and white fur has made them status symbols for tribal ceremonies, although taboos on reckless killing have also helped preserve them. Likewise, the colonial system of administration was biased, and at the lower levels, chiefs were made to be in charge of the political administration. This gave them the opportunity to put on the *sambut* during ceremonies. In any case, the British colonisers did not have a ready replacement for the *sambut*. The Columbus monkey was only found in tropical regions and not in the temperate regions; thus, the practise of hunting them for their skin continued uninterrupted.

The inferiority complex among the Tugen brought about by prejudice from neighbours led to individuals abandoning their attire. One informant mentioned that he could not wear his attire anywhere, even to the market, for fear of being labelled insane. The ethnic Tugen attire mainly comprised of adornments such as *sanai*, earrings, bracelets and necklaces. The men had their ears pierced, and earrings, which were rounded rings were worn. This culture of piercing the ears and wearing earrings was abandoned, and therefore the making of earrings for men was also abandoned, and there were no alternatives. The Tugen

Women only pierce their lower earlobes, but they do not stretch them. The earlobes which are hanging are not appreciated by the younger generation, who prefer small holes in the lower earlobes. Moreover, the earrings which were obtained through trade from the Europeans were for small earlobes. Most of the traditional attire and beads were only worn during occasions such as *tumdo* ceremonies and wedding ceremonies.

Leather and weaving enjoyed greater durability because it was mostly a household activity and the organisations' structure and labour were family-based. So they continued making them for the family use. Some of the leather products were prepared specifically for the community, and they were only admired by other communities who had their own. This is primarily due to the various traditional techniques of production being labour intensive and time-consuming and requiring a level of commitment that is very difficult to sustain in a region where poverty is rising sharply. Economically, the processes and labour involved do not commensurate with the financial gain derived from such traditional techniques. Many traditional textile fabric producers (weavers, designers and dyers) survive in difficult economic circumstances (Shaw, 2012).

With the drastic reduction in land ratio, the number of livestock in relation to the population of the Tugen, skin became unavailable for use. Procuring it was equally expensive, thus raising the cost of production of the product. Hunting of wild game had also reduced the number of animals who were to provide skins. Skins of wild animals were also very difficult to get since the department of tourism had prohibited their killing. These factors have combined to ensure that skins are now even more expensive than the clothes found in retail shops. Thus the Tugen people slowly reduced their interest in these traditional skins, as fewer and fewer people embraced the elaborate traditional attire.

Technological advances in textile production resulted in new mass production of fabrics that were readily available to consumers. Thus cotton fabric was available to be used for the making of cloths with a different design. Cotton growing was introduced in Baringo, and a cotton ginnery was established in salawa. This boosted the production of cotton cloth in the district. However, when faced with a shortage of raw cotton for their mills and a resistant African market, European merchants flooded the region with cheap cotton sheeting while colonial governments levied high taxes on locally made cloth. The combination of cheap fabrics on the market and high taxes on locally produced fabrics pushed Tugen leather producers out of work and, by extension, “freed” them to turn to farming and hence grow cotton for export to European mills (Clarke, 2002). Thus competition in European clothing led to a rapid shift from traditional cultural attire to the embracement of Western attire.

Although traditional knowledge is essential for the above-mentioned technologies, artisans can manipulate their traditional skills to cope with modern demands and to remain relevant. This is possible where the technology is not socially embedded, and the production processes are not considered delicate and hazardous since they do not involve the transformation of the raw material from one state to another through firing. These would include carving, bead working, weaving and traditional architecture. These technologies do not require craft specialisation, and the knowledge is not passed through kinship. Any interested member of a traditional society can learn the skills and practise them as they wish. Therefore, several traditional products that rely on the skill that is not specific to individuals or particular communities are still in production, though not in their pure traditional forms and with a high degree of modifications to suit the changing market demands and cultural dynamics. Thus, poor marketing strategies due to lack of exposure led to a rapid

shift from traditional cultural values to the embracement of Western values.

Post World War II and the Tugen Transformation of the Leather Industry from 1945 up to 1963

The section concern is on the structure of the industries after World War Two, in order to establish how the industries changed shape, colour or form. It then assesses the factors which combined to give rise to the above phenomenon, such as changes in labour, forests, agriculture, trade and production and distribution of the products (Anderson, 2002). Finally, it turns to the extension in the scale of trade and marketing activities which also took place. The study established that in this period, the Tugen indigenous industries continued to survive although the range of goods produced changed based on what was determined by the prevailing market demands.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion: In conclusion, the stability of leather making techniques through time and space can only be maintained through concerted conservation efforts. Such conservation efforts should be the responsibility of community leaders and scholars since leather making techniques attest to a community’s deep-rooted identity. For the states that are struggling with multicultural challenges and ethnic issues of land ownership, leather technology can be used to show unity in diversity by providing evidence of past interactions.

Recommendation: To map out leather making activities in the regions, it is necessary to record all the aspects on video and print. This would help to understand the mechanisms and dynamics of the art and document its aspects for posterity. As demonstrated in the Tugen community, leatherwork is done by individuals who are unable to organise themselves and to find ways of countering emerging challenges. It would therefore be necessary to organise them into groups where they have leaders, create proper records and keep books of accounts. They will put their resources together, which will enhance

their working environment and increase their ability to penetrate the market and negotiate with local authorities as a team. This will ensure continuity of production and, therefore, the conservation of the technology and practice. Leather making could be introduced as an extra-curricular

activity in schools, where teachers could invite practitioners to talk to students and to offer practical lessons on the technology during school club days. This exercise should include different professionals such as anthropologists, archaeologists and historians.

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