

Pre- and Colonial Influence on Work Ethics of Africans: A Case of Tooro, Western Uganda

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Abstract: *The study was aimed at tracing the evolution of work ethics in Tooro Society from pre-colonial to post-independence time, as guided by the following objectives: to identify the work ethics of the people in Tooro, explain the different reasons for working in the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial era in Tooro society, and establish how influential colonialism was on the work ethics of the people in Tooro. The survey research design and specifically qualitative methods were used on the local people aged above forty five years. The study established that, work ethics of the indigenous people of Tooro were imbedded in taboos, proverbs, customs, tales, and stories. Tremendous changes have taken place in the traditional work ethics since the colonial era which introduced terms and conditions of work, contradicting with Tooro values and purpose of work. While pre-colonial purpose of work targeted society welfare, colonialism introduced new civilization and monetary economy which targeted individuals hence changing the work ethics among the Batooro. Conclusively, the post-colonial Tooro work ethics which continued to post-independence is a hybrid of both pre- colonial and colonial era. Therefore there is need to uphold good work ethics of the Batooro which made work meaningful to everybody, but also respect the introduced terms and conditions of work in order to reduce on redundancy of a section of the population.*

Key Words: *Pre-colonial, Colonial, Work Ethics, Rituals, Taboos*

I. Introduction

Tooro is one of the kingdoms in the inter-lacustrine region to the West of Uganda bordering with kingdoms of Bunyoro Kitara to the North, Buganda to the East and the Kingdom of Rwenzururu to the South and West, and Bundibugyo to the North West. Tooro kingdom has evolved over time; it started as chiefdom under Bunyoro-Kitara kingdom. It became independent in 1890 under the leadership of Kaboyo Kasunsu-Nkwanzu ((Mulindwa & Kagoro 1968). Rwagweri put it that Tooro was a newly formed kingdom expanding to cover tribes of Bakonjo, Bamba, Banyabindi, Babwizi, Basongora, Batuku and Banandi¹ under the leadership of Kaboyo Olimi. The original Tooro kingdom was made up of two counties: Burahya and Bunyangabu, (Rwagweri, 2003), but today it covers districts of Kabarole, Kamwenge, Kyegegwa and Kyenjojo with several counties.

According to Akingbade, the 1900 agreement between Captain Johnston for the British Protectorate Government and Kaboyo the king, helped in annexing other territories namely Mwenge, Kyaaka, Kibaale and Kitagwenda, to add them on the original Tooro which was made up of two counties (Akingbade, P.I.1967).²

The people of Tooro in the pre-colonial period:

Tooro consisted of three main ethnic groups as stated above, namely the Batooro speaking Runyoro/Rutooro, Bakonjo speaking Rukonjo and Bamba speaking Rwamba while other minority groups like Banyabindi, Batuku and Basongora spoke Rutooro. These ethnic groups lived together in a homogeneous society within the kingdom of Tooro. The Bakonjo and Bamba could be employed by the Batooro well-to-do families and sometimes chiefs of the king took them on as slaves, (Rwagweri, 2003).

i) The Bamba

The Bamba are Bantu speakers living in the isolated area of Uganda on the western foothills of the Rwenzori Ranges, (Langlands, B. 1971). They were part of Tooro Kingdom until Uganda became a republic in 1967. Akingbade reports, Babwizi were Batooro who intermarried with Babulebule who migrated from Congo to produce the Bamba, (Akingbade (1967) It implies that originally Bamba were half-Batooro and one other ethnic group of Tooro kingdom.

¹These tribes spoke their own dialects on addition to Rutooro, a language commonly used in the kingdom

² The two counties were predominantly occupied by indigenous Batooro, and have remained under Tooro Kingdom to-date. Busongora and Bwamba as part of Tooro then had Bakonjo and Bamba respectively and today they are outside Tooro Kingdom.

ii) The Bakonjo

The Bakonjo formerly occupied the low-lying area of the rift valley floor in western Uganda. Johnston reported, “Bakonjo were once powerful and numerous tribe. They dwelt in the plains at the base of the mountain fearing no one. But Kabaleega killed many of them and forcing the rest into the forest to live without houses, without sheep and goats. It was also reported that some were made to live amongst the snows” (Johnston, 1901) They were forced to run escaping from the raids of Kabaleega’s troops in 1880s, to the foothills and middle slopes of the Rwenzori ranges at a height of 10,000ft above sea level (Langlands, B. 1971). They expressed a hope that they will return to the plains.

In 1961 the Bakonjo organised a rebellion commonly referred to as “Rwenzururu” against the king of Tooro. This caused mistrust between the Batooro and Bakonjo, escalating into war amongst the three tribes, the Batooro, Bamba, and Bakonjo and even dividing the kingdom into three zones respectively.

iii) The Batooro

The Batooro are a Bantu speaking tribe, whose origin has been traced in the Congo region. They live in the foothills of the Rwenzori Mountains, the greater part of Tooro Plateau, present day Kyegegwa and Kyenjojo districts of Western Uganda. The Batooro form the majority of the people living in Tooro kingdom and their Runyoro/Rutooro language dominates all other languages spoken in the kingdom. Batooro are classified in two groups: Abahuma and Abairu. The two groups lived symbiotically despite some small differences in their kind of livelihood, but had a lot in common, for example, language, dress and food. The Bahuma reared animals whereas the Bairu cultivated crops. Different kinds of work created variations in lifestyles and utensils used in the different homesteads, (Mulindwa & Kagoro, 1968).

The Bahuma provided the needed milk, meat and butter while the Bairu provided the needed agricultural produce like millet, bananas and cereals. Today, the line of demarcation between the two groups is growing very faint (<http://www.torokingdom.org/people.htm> 30/9/2013). Almost all homesteads have cattle and grow crops. A lot of intermarriages have taken place among families; mixing up and blending those different characteristics and lifestyles.

The Study Objectives

- Identify the work ethics of the people in Tooro
- Explain the different reasons for working in the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial era in Tooro society.
- Establish how influential colonialism was on the work ethics of the people in Tooro.

II. Methodology

To achieve the study objectives, the researcher used the survey research design. Methods used include participatory observation, interviews and questionnaires concerning their experiences and nature of work they do, the behaviours and attitudes of people of Tooro region on work in the period before colonialism and after colonialism. The researcher interviewed only those of 45 years giving a total of 88 people across Tooro Kingdom particularly in the districts of Kabarole, Kyegegwa and Kyenjojo.

III. Results

The research findings have been analysed qualitatively and discussed under the following sub heading: Patterns of work in Pre- colonial and Colonial Tooro: Purpose and related Taboos, Work in the Colonial period and Post-Independence Tooro.

Table 1.2: A summary of the findings about work in Tooro, purpose, patterns of work and related ethics

Considerations	Pre-colonial	Colonial	Post-colonial
Population composition	Batooro Bakonjo Bamba	Batooro Bakonjo Bamba	Batooro Bakonjo Bamba Bakiga
Leadership	King, Chiefs, Family head	King, Chiefs, Family head	King, Protectorate Governor, Chiefs, and Family head
Purpose of work	Society & royal family’s welfare, Community building,	Family welfare, Money, and Individual development	Family welfare, money, and Individual development

Patterns of work	Cattle related work by Abahuma, Crop cultivation by Abairu, Administration by Abahuma	Cattle related work by Abahuma, Crop cultivation by Abairu, Administration by Abahuma	Both Abairu and Abahuma rear animals and cultivate crops, Social services, Local, district & Central administrators
Source of Livelihood	Abahuma to provide milk, ghee, meat, meat and animal skin, Abairu provided cultivated food stuff	All Batooro cultivated crops & reared cattle, Employment in kingdom and Protectorate offices, Employment in Towns and mines	Cattle and crop farming, Employment in offices, towns, mines and tea estates
Work ethics	Hard work, time management, team work, community convenience	Hard work, time management, team work, family and individual satisfaction	Hard work, timely payment, total payment, individual work, family and individual satisfaction
Common kind of work	-Drum, handcraft & bark cloth making, -house construction, -hunting, -brewing beer.	-Drum, handcraft & bark cloth making, -house construction, -hunting, -brewing beer.	Employment in offices, tea estates & civil service, -Petty employment in towns -minimum agriculture

Patterns of work in Pre- colonial and Colonial Tooro: Purpose and related Taboos

a) Pre-colonial Period

Patterns of work in pre-colonial Tooro followed the different livelihoods of the people, that is, cattle keeping and crop cultivation. Work ethics of the indigenous people of Tooro were imbedded in taboos, proverbs, customs, tales, and stories

i) Abatooro Abahuma

The cattle keepers known as Abatooro Abahuma dominated Mwenge County and the rift valley floor of Busongora present day Kaseese plains. Later Busongora became infested with tsetse flies that chased out the people and their livestock, leaving the area to be occupied by wild game. Later the Central Government established Queen Elizabeth National Game Park (Langlands, B. 1971). The Bahuma reared cattle from which they obtained milk and milk products which were part of their diet; goats and sheep which were mainly for meat and hides used for wearing and sitting on by women and children. They also carried out minimum crop cultivation.

ii) Abatooro Abairu

Crop cultivators known as Abairu on the other hand were born and raised in that kind of background. Their other activities which complemented cultivation included local beer brewing, craft making, bark cloth making, drum- making and hunting among others. Rwagweri asserts that Abairu were supposed to be poor simply because they cultivated crops which were not marketable, (Rwagweri 2003).

Each work had a special purpose; elders explained the reasons for work as mainly to get food for eating in homes and create wealth for the family and the clan.³ The concept of wealth varied from one society to another and from time to time, but the principal remained constant. Rwagweri defined wealth as a volume of one's valuable belongings in accordance with the beliefs and values of a particular society. Parameters of wealth varied from one society to another mainly land, cattle, children especially girl children. In traditional Tooro for example, one who owned a hundred heads of cattle was considered wealthy, (Rwagweri2003) because cows were a source of milk and ghee, adding value to food, but also used as medication in case of burns, and cosmetics for women in particular.

All food was locally produced and plenty of food for the family was a sign of security in a home. A balanced meal of cereals and vegetables was the objective of every woman. The diet in the old days was balanced with plenty of meat and cereals⁴. This aspect of wealth made people work hard to acquire and maintain

³Kaija, S. 84years,(Kasogi-Kabonero) in interview 17/8/2013, Kabanuubi 86years(Kitumba) interviewed15/8/2013

⁴ Kaije, J. 74 years(Kasogi) interviewed on 28/8/2013

it, hence such a saying which encouraged one to work as; “*Omugara alisweera nkaha?*” literally meaning; where will lazy people marry? He will not be welcomed in any home as a prospective son-in-law. There was barter trade; the Batooro traded fruits and vegetables, weapons and tools, pottery, and cattle with other tribes especially Bamba and Bakonjo. (http://www.angelfire.com/pro/social_studies_an/-30/9/2010) Land as one form of wealth gave one control over production and over other people who had small pieces of land or no land at all. Akingbade 1967 and Rwagweri, 2003 describe the land as ultimately owned by the king in trust for the people of the kingdom. “the ruling class, the princes and princesses, chiefs in all their different levels of administration were granted land by their status in society. All other land belonged to the people, passed on from generation to generation. Other largest land belonged to the clan and their dependants.” (Akingbade, 1967)

Cattle related work

Among the Bahuma, that is cattle keepers, women in particular housewives had more responsibility over their household than the men. Their work included feeding the family and the entire hygiene of the homestead plus processing milk into ghee. A woman’s day would not end until she served supper to her family’s satisfaction. Often she sat aside and watched as the rest of the family members ate, only to eat after. When food got finished from the serving tray or basket, she would be asked for more, hence the saying “*ekyakwihire owanyu*”, intimating that she got married to feed the family of her husband and her children. In support of the practice, the Tooro proverb says: “*Akuheer’enda oikara omumanyire*”. The saying literally means that one who caters for your stomach’s needs should be remembered. Elders described the woman’s schedule with passion: the first to wake up and last to sleep, making sure that everything in the house is in order⁵. Mulindwa and Kagoro explained the sound of churning milk in calabashes was another signal to the crowing cock, that morning is about to break, (Mulindwa and Kagoro, 1971).

Well-polished lined up milk vases (see diagram 1) was the woman’s early morning key tasks: a source of pride to the husband among his fellow men because it indicated a hardworking, clean and organised woman. The opposite was a disgrace to the husband because it depicted the wife as untidy, disorganised and reckless hence despised and disrespected by society.

Picture 1: An illustration of assorted milk vases (*omugamba*)

Picture 2: Place where rubbish has been burnt



Picture 1



Picture 2

The wife had a responsibility of cleaning the house and the calf’s shade (*ekiraaro*), burning the cow dung to eliminate flies and other insects (see diagram 2) noting that calves had a room in the same house with human beings. According to Mulindwa & Kagoro a clean environment was one of the strong needs to the household members (Mulindwa & Kagoro, 1971). Women ensured that this was achieved by practicing time management and hard work as strong work ethics.

Men with cattle would employ fellow men to do masculine work like mending the kraal, tending the banana plantation, clearing the bush around the home, to mention but few. In their administrative roles, men supervised work, corrected, advised or ridiculed members of the household, fathers settled disputes among children as reported to them, talked to the children and showed them love.⁶ The saying encouraging the practice was, “*Nyineeka abwabyamira akalimi, enyana ibyamira esaabu.*” interpreted that when the head of the household does not talk, the calves sleep on dirty and muddy ground

Children were taught values of a home, family and tribe through work; each gender with specific assigned duties. In support is the saying; “*Embwa tereka misitamire ya nyinayo*”, directly translated to mean that a dog always squats like her mother, intimating that children had to emulate the behaviours of their parents. In this spirit, children were trained to do all the work. In support is the saying;

⁵Kabanuubi, J.J. 86 years and Kaboha, B. 93 years

⁶Jaawa, C. 83 years (Kibiito) in an interview on 19/8/2013

“*Omwiru bamuzaara, n’omuzaana bamuzaara*”, which simply means that male and female servants are born, never bought. In a way this made each person clear about the roles and consequences of good work ethics as supported by Ebonyu, F. (2004)

According to Parinder, rituals revealed the religious values and doctrines of faith, (Parinder, 1974). In all kinds of work, there were rituals and taboos to be observed. And that all African people have important ceremonies at the time of sowing and harvesting. The first fruit ceremony’s essential principle was for the spirits to eat the first fruit before men partake of them, (Parinder, 1974).

In the case of Tooro, millet was the staple food and it was a wife’s responsibility to cultivate millet every year. The wife would sow millet, then the husband and thin out the soil to make the ground levelled (*kukandura oburo*). The wife served her husband with grains of steamed pre-mature millet (*obusiinsa*). The practice encouraged the husband to perform rituals on millet before any other being even birds ate on the millet. The husband would follow serving his family deities first before eating the grains; then later share grains with his wife⁷.

The head of the household had to perform many rituals, like *kuburarra*⁸. Sex starts off life through reproduction; likewise sowing of millet was a mark of starting a season and a new life commonly referred to as a new year. To the family the first millet marked the beginning of a new year, entered into with celebration in which the head of the household kicked off the celebration on his bed with his wife and the climax at a meal. It was a significant opportunity for the head of the home to express his authority as given him by God. The season was a moment of building relationship especially between the wife (*nyinabwenge*) and the husband (*nyin’eeka*) as well as the rest of the family members. Further, those rituals of the first fruit were purposed to remove the danger that would be incurred in eating the new harvest, as well as a blessing, (Mbiti, J.1975)

Picture3: Grain Store



Picture 4: A winnowing tray and a basket (endiiro)



In basket making, a woman held the basket needle in a specified manner to avoid tilting and piercing her thigh. Hence holding a needle in a tilted manner was taboo. Private parts of a woman were never exposed to people. Once pierced, the woman would have no alternative, but to expose it for treatment which is still unethical to- date. Furthermore, it was taboo for a woman to take an unfinished basket (*entaanga*) to her parents’ home and return either to complete it at her home or return it finished. Also if she started making a basket while pregnant, but delivered prior finishing it, she was obliged to resume making the basket within three or four days in case the child was either a girl or boy respectively. It is taboo to continue making the basket at another time one wished: such a basket would not be used to serve food to the husband and the boy-children. The ritual emphasised completing work within the time schedules, also not to over work a delivered mother. When completing a basket, the edge of the basket was woven to completion in one day; if not, the basket would be kept outside the house to be completed the next day. It was taboo to eat from such a basket: “*Ekiibo nikizira*”.⁹ The woman was compelled to work and finish the basket because keeping the basket outside made it soak in the dew and get discoloured.

Community and Relationship building

It was explained that in Africa and Tooro in particular, people were expected to live in harmony with one another. With some division of labour, the men cleared bushes in preparation for cultivation, hunt wild

⁷ Kaije, J.74years

⁸Ruhweza 93 years(Nyamabuga-Bugaaki) interviewed on 20/8/2013:*kuburarra* intimates that a husband has to make love to his wife on the eve of sowing millet as well as the day it was harvested

⁹ Kabacwezi, 63 years (Kasogi-Kabonero) interviewed on 17/8/2013

animals, collect fruits, and construct houses¹⁰. The man played a key role in the storage of food, where he would make granary (see Diagram 3) for storing the millet and other food stuffs. He would climb in the granaries to receive and press to compact the millet collected by the women from the threshing ground. Harvesting of millet a speciality for women, with the help of other women built good relationship in the community. The grandmother's position as the mother-in-law was an indication of leadership positions. Since a mother-in-law's millet was harvested and eaten first before the millet of the daughters' in-law, it followed that the daughter-in-laws had to help the mother-in-law sow millet early in the season. In case the young lady's millet got ready earlier, she was not allowed to harvest it before the mother-in-law harvested hers. Therefore the mother-in-law would get some millet flowers (*obusiinsa*) and steam it on any other food cooked, serve it to substitute the first millet harvest. This set free the daughters-in-law to harvest their millet.¹¹ For emphasis, one elder shared the experience in her extended family setting where her brother's and cousin's families would unite at her mother's home to share the first millet meal "*omuganuro*"¹²

i) House Construction

An adult man was considered responsible when he built a house and married a woman. House building demanded unity among clansmen and close friends. Like other kinds of work, house construction had taboos and rituals to follow. On the eve of the day set for house construction, a man had to make love to his wife and together with his wife ate millet and mushroom souse (*esabwe*), the traditional dish in Tooro culture. On the day starting construction, the father or uncle to the owner of the building would lay a foundation pole "*omuganda*", the action symbolized transfer of authority to the young man, also prepare him for a position of an heir¹³. From then on, the young man acquired a responsibility of lying a foundation pole for his other brothers should they plan to build. The wife prepared food for the builders; millet with meat was served. The house was constructed to completion within a day and made ready for occupation. If construction was not completed in a day, the owner would roast and eat bananas of special specie (*enkara*), eat it in the house to prevent any wrong doing of an enemy. Even when built to completion in a day, the real time for occupying the house would be the following day, together with his wife and son.¹⁴ The mother-in-law transferred her power to the daughter-in-law as demonstrated by laying cooking stones while saying '*Ocumbe mwana wange, buli muntu omucumbirege*'. This was advice to a daughter-in-law, to cook for her family and visitors. The whole idea was to welcome her in-laws back to their brother's home and keep the families united, which was the responsibility of a wife. From then on the daughter-in-law got authority as a wife and mother in her own right within her household.

ii) Hunting

Hunting wild game was another team activity. According to Byaruhanga, S. 83 years and Kifumu 71 years both retired hunters, hunting was done in defence of the society, livestock and crops from wild animals, or to get game meat to supplement meals because people lacked animals to slaughter for meat.¹⁵ The hunting session involved women and children, directly or indirectly. Indirectly, when men went hunting, the women/wives and children remained excited preparing a lot of millet, collecting firewood and getting ready to cook a lot of meat expected from the hunting expedition¹⁶. One wife of a hunter happily explained her role in the hunting experience of her husband. That she would wake up early in the morning to prepare her husband's breakfast and some food to pack for the long journey. Dry food stuffs like roasted cassava, corn, groundnuts and plantain which would stay longer without going bad were carried along, especially when men were to hunt far away from their villages. She emphasised that dogs were very important in a hunters' life, because they were

¹⁰http://www.angelfire.com/pro/social_studies_an/-30/9/2010

¹¹Kabakiddi.E. 83 years (Kamengo Hakibaale) interviewed on 28/8/2015

¹²Kabakiddi.E. 83 years (Kamengo- Hakibaale) interviewed on 28/8/2015

¹³Kabacwezi, 63 years (Kasogi-Kabonero) interviewed on 17/8/2013

¹⁴The son not a daughter was taken along because while a boy can stay away from the house to give time for the parents to have quiet time, the girl would fear and keep around the parents. The boy can be sent on some errand more easily than a girl

¹⁵ Among cattle keepers, meat was taboo. One wishing to eat meat was interpreted as a wish to see cattle die. So goats were reared alongside the cows for purposes of providing meat. However even the goat would not be slaughtered anyhow, there had to be a very good reason like for a great visitor or a woman who has given birth or to sacrifice to the gods. Otherwise the animal had to fall sick and with little hope of its recovery in order to be slaughtered. In the case of cows, male calves would be killed to provide meat to the family rather than leave them to suckle the mother and reduce on the milk for the family. Only one bull was required in the kraal; other bulls would be un-necessarily expensive to bring up.

¹⁶Kabakiddi, E. 83years emphasized plenty of dry meat kept in homes of hunters

used as a buffers between the prey and the hunter. The dogs were collared with collar belts and rattles, which made sound for the hunter to easily locate their direction. One prominent hunter addressing religious meaning behind the collars, explained that many hunters used those collars to fix in fetishes for protection to the dog or and make them extra tough and courageous.¹⁷ And that those fetishes protected the hunter from danger while in the wilderness hunting.

Dogs were served food first before cooking for the rest of the household otherwise dogs would eat up the prey they catch once on the hunting ground, making the hunter return home with no meat. To ensure that the practice was well grounded in the home the family would be denied food once the dogs were not served first¹⁸. Hence, the saying;

“Mbere bwanurra, ngu cwaho obw’embwa”

Literally meaning that at a time when children are enjoying eating millet with meat, the father reduced it by serving a good portion for the dogs.

To get more protection and blessings in the hunting expedition, hunters sacrificing to the gods of the earth by directing the blood of the animal killed on to the ground, throw pieces of roasted meat in different directions while invoking the spirits to share in the success of the hunting expedition before the hunter ate on the meat. The philosophy behind was unity with the gods who grant success in the work of man. In case a large animal was killed meat was taken home, and some of it served to the gods in the shrines. One retired hunter said, *“Ohiiga na Kaliisa, ohongera Kaliisa”*¹⁹ This indicated that Kaliisa the god or the patron of hunters accompanied the hunter and this qualified him for a share of game meat. Family members would embark on eating the meal only after gods are sacrificed to. In other words religion played a very important role among the Batooro work ethics. Every kind of work united people with the spiritual world and the creator. In hunting cultures, sex preceded the hunting exercise, as a sign of conquest or success.

The community supported hunting by respecting the hunting grounds and following regulations about hunting grounds. Langlands explains the Rift Valley floor of Busongora as good for hunting, Langlands (1971). Other hunting grounds including swamps and forests mainly were communally owned. Since different methods of hunting were used, like use of spears, but also lying traps, digging trenches within the area; the herdsmen were forbidden from grazing their animals from those hunting grounds or else the cattle would fall victim to the hunting methods. For example, the bush would not be set on fire unless a family planned to clear it for farming. The population would not complain when hunters chased their prey through any field like gardens and plantations, rather expected to mind its homesteads against fleeing animals. It was taboo for hunters’ prey to enter a house escaping from the hunter. If it occurred, the owner of the house had to compensate the hunters with a goat and the animal allowed to escape back to the wilderness, a practice that taught community members to be security conscious.

iii) Bark cloth making:

The bark cloth was for women to wear and was also for beddings. The bark cloth was obtained from tree barks of a special tree called ‘*omutoma*’, planted around the home, making a home very significant. It was taboo for a woman in hermenstruation to look at the bark cloth material and children were equally forbidden. The woman was considered unclean not suitable to interact with the deities who protected the work of the craft man. Should she do the contrary, deities representing the creator would be displeased then cause bad results to the cloth, like not turning to the coffee brown colour.

iii) Drum making

A drum was a means of communication in the community. Different sounds of the drum communicated different messages, for example messages of celebration, calamity, bereavement, or even a call to communal work. Drum making was a masculine job which required timber and animal skin as raw materials which created a symbiotic relationship among people of different livelihoods in Tooro.

Like a hunter, a drum maker respected the environment because a drum required hard wood of mature trees. Kahwa explained that once in the forest, one is to remain sceptical about sounds heard, scent smelt or any awkward thing seen. The philosophy is that the creator made everything in their environment and deserves respect and protection in their own rights. According to one drum maker, specific trees used were ‘*omujugantara*’ and ‘*omutumba*’, but ‘*omusisa*’ and ‘*omutumba*’ are said to be the best because they are hard and cannot be easily attacked by weevils²⁰. Therefore the crafts man had to take time off and go to the forest where he would fell the tree, cut it into portions appropriate for the size and number of drums planned. If the

¹⁷ Kifumu, J. 71 years (Kitumba, Fort Portal) 16/08/2013

¹⁸ Kabacwezi, B. 62, Kasogi, Kabonero) interviewed on 17/08/2013

¹⁹ Byaruhanga, S. 83years(Kasogi, Kabonero) in the interview on 17/8/2013

²⁰ Kahwa, Y. 58years (Kasogi, Kabonero) interviewed 28/7/2015

forest was far, the man would visit it several days until the logs were obtained and worked on to become hollow. The whole work on the logs depended on time management, in case of delays the wood would dry up making it difficult to work on.

As explained by the drum maker the ritual of that small stone “*ikura ly’engoma*” thrown in the hollow wooden structure making the process complete has been maintained to-date even when the meaning behind it is not known²¹. The ritual is maintained out of respect for the tradition and out of fear of what may happen just in case it is omitted.

Picture 5: Drum making and assorted tools used



v) Local Brew making (*Kuhiisa amarwa*)

The Batooro made local brew from the bitter banana species, *embiira*. The decision was taken by the head of the household- to brew beer mainly for religious functions and entertainment. Several rituals had to be done, for example the head of the house hold had to “*kurarra ebitooke*” that is make love to his wife the night before putting the bananas in a pit from where they would ripen. The role of sex in the brewing process, one lady explained was very important,

“*anyakuraire kubi tahanika bitooke. Nobwabihanika, nabwo abirarra kumara ebiro bibiri. Kandi omukazi takunya mugusa hamarwa obwagukunya gakona, tigahya.*”²²

The taboos intimate that one must be happy and contented sexually in order to start the process of brewing local beer (*tonto*). Also that it was taboo for a woman to mix sorghum with juice in the brewing ark; the juice would not ferment to make good beer. Other rituals involved a special variety of banana ‘*enkara*’ placed in the ripening pit (*embiso*) first without splitting it as done to other bananas. “*Enkara*” variety of banana has always had great value attached to it. It is used in other ceremonies like naming of children, celebration of developing the first tooth among children, and child birth.

Kuhiisa amarwa that is brewing local beer demanded team work. All members of the household and sometimes the friends and neighbours on the village had something to contribute. While children and women fetched water, the wife roasted, and ground sorghum to be added on the juice in the brewing ark. The man on the other hand squeezed the bananas to extract juice. Even when the beer was ready, the wife played the responsibility of cooking for the visitors.

The head of the family sacrificed to his family deities before serving juice on the day of squeezing bananas and even serve beer after brewing it for two days. With a beer sacrifice the family head would repeatedly invoke family spirits to partake of the drink. The purpose of the sacrifice was to cool the potency of the beer which would make people unruly when drunk. It was after serving the deities that the host would continue serving beer to guests starting with elders. The rest of the beer was put in pots and calabashes to take and drink from home by many guests, men and women attracted by the drink would stay the whole day drinking. Often the drinking would go into the night, accompanied with dancing and singing. Kabacwezi explained the role the wife in the celebration to include among others, cooking food for the visitors²³. Sometimes a rich family would slaughter a goat for visitors to drink gravy and reduce on the effects of over drinking beer.

b) Work in Colonial period

Much of the work that was done in the pre-colonial period continued in the colonial days because the Batooro’s lifestyle was maintained. King Kyebambe encouraged his chiefs to send their children to school, to discover the white man’s secrets. He set an example by sending his own two sons, Princes Hosea Nyabongo and

²¹ibid

²²Kabacwezi, 62 years

²³Kabacwezi, 62 years

George Rukidi. Prince Nyabongo went on to excel academically and became one of the world's best educated individuals, (<http://www.uganda-visit-and-travel-guide.com/batooro.html-30/9/2013>)

The King's seriousness on education and religion was noted in his demand that all chiefs be baptised, have a church at their headquarters and a lay reader stationed there. He is on record for refusing the wife to the Saza chief for Bundibugyo who happened to be a Lay-Reader not to go with the husband because the Saza headquarter in Bwamba County did not have a church. The husband had to build one very quickly so that his wife would join him²⁴.

The evolution of monetary economy in Tooro

The money economy was introduced in such valuable items that cost money and with introduction of poll tax. People appreciated civilisation and were determined to acquire it through participating in all kinds of work. Comparably, according to Kakongoro the changes colonialists brought in Bunyoro were more negative including disrespect for the monarch and work (Kakongoro M. L. 1993). Kasaija, M. 52 years commented on the monarch as an institution that to some extent contributed to low development among Tooro society because people were committed to working for the monarch than themselves. However small the harvest was, people were obliged to take a portion to the king, therefore reducing on family food store. The royals themselves were extremely relaxed because they always received needed goods and services from the populace which was obliged to provide, a position many commoners admired and emulated! The slogan of the day was; "*Omusana guroho bagwota*"²⁵ meaning that sunshine is there to be enjoyed by busking in it.

Poll tax and the condition that it has to be paid in time was yet another demand for hard and extra work in Tooro society. Chiefs ensured that poll tax was paid in time, because their success as chiefs was reckoned by the amount of tax one was able to collect. According to Jamal, the exercise left Ugandan men with no choice but to engage in the production of these primary products, (Jamal, V.1978). Rwagweri explains;

"In traditional Tooro, people worked to meet basic human needs like shelter, food and clothing. Others knew the required size of the garden to produce for the family substance; and so after achieving the target, they stopped cultivating. The traditional people acquired a sense of satisfaction, and slowed down activity after meeting their basic needs" (Rwagweri 2003)

This changed with the monetary economy in Tooro. Furthermore, it was the wish of some parents to pay for their boys' formal education and have them dress in pair of shorts, and shirts well tacked in.²⁶ Jaawa, C. added that speaking English and working in offices were great incentives for education in Tooro,²⁷

In order to get money, young men went out to seek jobs outside their homesteads, leaving the old men in their homes to work on their traditional trades. Elders confirmed the fact that some older children and men considered working outside their households where they were assured of a pay in cash, than working on their own farms which never brought in money directly. However Abahuma particularly never sought employment because they had enough from their farms; not only keeping cattle, but cultivated money generating crops like coffee and tea²⁸.

According to Akingbade, the committee of inquiry for the protectorate government gave several recommendations among which was for the ruling class to educate their children the idea of working for their own living and not to look for assistance of the common man. Furthermore, the king should try to maintain his relatives' privileged position as members of the ruling family from his large free holding and not from the contribution of the peasants (Akingbade, 1976). Also the people had an obligation of taking their children to school as well as meet family demands that had now increased with civilisation, their contribution to the chiefs and the king reduced too.

According to Byaruhanga-Akiiki, kings were closer to the creator, the source of authority, offering not only political leadership, but also spiritual and social through the hierarchy of leadership in the kingdom.²⁹ The relevance of leadership in the leaders which include guidance, advising, teaching and educating reduced to some extent drifting towards the schools. This situation contributed to a change in work ethics of the Batooro; instead of working for community welfare, the family and individuals were targeted³⁰. One aimed at producing more than the family required so that there is some extra to sell for money. Akingbade further explained that the colonial period particularly before the Second World War encouraged the indigenous people and the Uganda

²⁴ Baguma, A. 84 years (-Fort Portal) interviewed on 09/12/2014

²⁵ Kaboha, B. 90 years, (Kacwamba-Fort Portal) interviewed 15/8/2013

²⁶ Baguma, A. 84 years (Fort Portal Municipality) in a discussion with the writer on 9/12/2014

²⁷ Jaawa, c. 83 years (Kibiito Town Council) interviewed on 19/8/2013

²⁸ Byaruhanga, S. 83 years and Kaija, S 84 years (Kasogi-Kabonero) interviewed on 17/8/2013

²⁹ Prof. Byaruhanga – Akiiki A.B.T. (Gaba-Kampala) in an interview on 31/6/2015

³⁰ Kasaija, M. 52 years (Rubona) in discussion on 23/3/2013

Protectorate government to be self-sufficient, (Akingbade 1967). This challenge was responded to with the introduction of cash crops and peasants took them on with great enthusiasm.

The sayings/proverbs to encourage copying and learning new helpful ideas include;

“*Rutahanulirwa, ayombeka nigagwa*” meaning that one who refuses advice, does not build strong house.

“*Mboha nyenka akamara ebigogo mu bitooke*”, literally interpreted as one who ties a bundle alone will use more banana fibres for tying instead of a few. The proverbs encourage one to seek more advice when taking on a difficult assignment.

“*Nyantagambirwa akaheeka orunaku*”, directly translated as, the one who disregards advice carried an octopus “ten-legged” creature on one’s back. Intimating that one who refuses advice, ends up carrying the burden alone.

Therefore the Batooro accepted new ideas and learned new skills for improved production and increasing wealth. With more labour obtained from as far away as Kigezi South Western Uganda, (Akingbade, 1967), the local people took advantage and got seriously involved in work for personal gains than community benefit. Ndoleriire 67 years³¹ pointed out how the Bakiga proved more hard working than the Batooro by being resilient in manual work. The Batooro learnt how to value land from the Bakiga especially as they realised the Bakiga creating wealth by using their land in a short period of time than the locals who had the land for years. Money employment encouraged development of terms and conditions of work as acceptable measures for quality services. Both the employer and employees identified their rights to be complemented by either party. In Tooro both men and women sought for paying jobs outside their villages. In the same period of time, the minority groups of people realised abuse of their rights, escalating in the rebellion of 1962 (Akingbade, 1967)

IV. Discussion

Work ethics of the Batooro was enshrined in taboos, proverbs customs of the people. Work in the pre-colonial was for the convenience of fellow members of society and the community. Without timetables and regulations, people still worked hard because they had a purpose and understood the reason to work. To ably achieve this, some work demanded team spirit hence the communal work observed is some jobs like house construction, hunting, harvesting millet and brewing beer.

Furthermore, in pre-colonial era, work had a religious meaning, which was demonstrated in the sacredness of tools for various kinds of work, people who worked on certain skills, and rituals in each work. Family deities or gods were involved in family life and activities, hence the emphasis of certain rituals and taboos.

The coming of Whites or colonialism was welcomed in Tooro because it ushered in civilization particularly education, Christianity, civilization, cotton cloth replacing animal skins and bark cloth, as well as introduced cash crops like tea in 1936/37 by captain Neil. Sir Husketh Bell introduced cotton and coffee; the later picked up in the region more than cotton.

Post-Independence Tooro registered hybrid work ethics of pre- and colonial factors. As people work very hard on their land- rearing animals and growing crops- it is difficult to differentiate Omwiru from Omuhuma. Both have cows, drink milk and sell the surplus milk for money. Also observed are some of those formerly rich families in the colonial days and early years of independence have been out competed and displaced by those which were traditionally poor. Elders are of the view that those children from affluent backgrounds continued in the past glory of their families and parents, but not worked hard to maintain the status³².

Sande in support explained the ethics of work that should be emphasized in the republic of Uganda and Tooro in particular to include: time management; hope, where one invests in time hoping to reap much in the future. His very words were, “*torukitayo hati okakigesa nyenkya*”; meaning that people have to be patient. Ethical values like hard work; team work and co-operation; persistence and continuity are emphasized and where these have been practiced at family and community levels, people are happy with their work and achievements and are proud to belong to such communities. The reverse is true of such families and individuals with the opposite work ethics. However, one elder Ruhweza, F. said that much as work plan has remained almost the same, from pre-colonial days to post independence, the size of the land has dictated what people should do. For example, rearing of animals on free range changed to fencing land and making paddocks and reducing the herdsmen’s work³³. Large scale cultivation of food crops has also reduced to relatively small holdings.

³¹ Ndoleriire O. 67 Years(Makerere, Kampala) in an interview 2/7/2015

Karamagi, C.74years (Fort Portal) interviewed on 07/08/2014³²

³³ Ruhweza, F. 93 years(Nyamabuga- Bugaaki)

V. Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings on the influence of pre and colonial eras point out that the Batooro's work ethics were engrained in the taboos which pointed out very clearly 'what is' and 'what is not to be done'. The justification of such guidance is in the meanings of the very proverbs which people interpreted and adapted to suit their contexts.

People found great happiness in working for the community, an explanation for deep involvement of the community in work and working on, with or without pay. The introduction of monetary economy made the purpose of work focus on individual benefits than the community. People worked out of demand not convenience, with conditions attached to every work that was done instead of being happy with individuals' contribution to community and family welfare. The need for remuneration took root, with the increasing needs of money; a question of remuneration is asked before one takes on a job so that s/he is sure of the monetary benefits.

The writer recommends that Tooro work ethics need be integrated with the monetary benefits of work. Also the introduced terms and conditions of work should be respected by all employers and employees, in order to benefit from work.

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