THE CHANGING ROLE OF WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE: A CASE

STUDY OF KALABO DISTRICT, 1906 – 1986

BY

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LUSAKA

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my daughter Wanyambe and in memory of my late father, DISTRICT GOVERNOR.

MUSA KAFUHA.
DECLARATION

I KAPURA OOMA declare that this dissertation represents my own work and that it has not previously been submitted for a degree at this or another university.
Signed: ........................
Date: ........................
APPROVAL

This dissertation of KAFUBA MBOMA is approved as fulfilling part of the requirements for the award of the Master of Arts degree in History by the University of Zambia.

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ABSTRACT

This is a study of the changing role of women in agriculture, taking a case study of Kalabo district in the period 1906 to 1986. It examines the changing role of women in agriculture in the context of the growth of Islamism and penetration of capitalism. The study takes a chronological approach, exploring the impact of cattle trade, Islamic conversion and changing technology on the role of women in agriculture in Kalabo district. The study is divided into two chapters.

Chapter one of this study covers the pre-colonial history of Kalabo district as well as the colonial impact up to 1933. Under the title 'Changing Role of Women in Agriculture', the study looks at the entrenchment of Islam and the agricultural system that set in in the 1930s. The thesis also examined the role and position of women in the pre-colonial setting of Kalabo. In this chapter the study argues that the pre 1933 economic relations in Kalabo were such that women played a crucial role in production.

Chapter two sheds light on the colonial impact on women's role in agriculture in the period 1906 to 1933. Examining issues such as the control of women, cattle trade, the 'seasonality' aspect of labour migration, the impact of long term labour migration, and indeed, changing agricultural
technology, the chapter underscores the argument that women's role in agriculture was affected. Yet the impact on women's role in agriculture during this period did not relieve women from shouldering the brunt of agricultural production.

Under chapter three the thesis focuses on the agricultural change experienced by Kalabo in the period 1940 to 1964. The agricultural change was experienced in terms of production levels sometimes leading to food shortages, food marketing and the involvement of the colonial government in endeavouring to promote African agriculture. In the final analysis, the role of women in agriculture was affected to the extent that some female producers experienced unbearable material conditions as a result of their ability to hire labour and organise jubile. But some women such as Bo Nanukuka experienced hardships of village agricultural production.

As for chapter four covering the period 1964 to 1985 it embraces issues such as the closure of Nenela, government agricultural policies reflected in village councils, extensions services and indeed agricultural projects such as the Peoples Participation Project. The underlying argument of the chapter is that such efforts indicate the crucial role of female labour in agricultural production.
In a nutshell, the study is an attempt to elucidate the conditions of female producers in Kalabo district from a historical perspective.
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I am indebted to my intellectual mentor, Prof. John Gagiano. His constant encouragement and support are deeply appreciated. Furthermore, I was fortunate to be exposed to the intellectual atmosphere of the University of Pretoria, which never faltered. The intellectual environment provided by scholars such as Dr. Marcia Weber, Prof. André van der Linde, Prof. Joanne Botha and Prof. Peter van der Waal was extremely vital to carry out my research and shed new light on knowledge.

My special thanks are due to my wife, Mrs. Ngwira, for her kind support and concern. Lastly, I extend my thanks to Mrs. Ngwira for her tireless efforts in typing this work.
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<td>Cilence</td>
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| Induna        | A title given to a village headman; a member of the traditional court; an indeed a member of the ruling cli
debut. |
| Mwambya       | Ploughing   |
| Mwemelela     | The task of hiring out one's labour in cultivation |
| Sambali       | The task of hiring out one's labour for weeding |
| Sembali       | The task of hiring out one's labour for harvesting |
| Ska           | Court       |
| Tshana        | Wooden barrels |
| Lubuza        | Bride price  |
| Lubile        | Big working combinations |
| Makumuda      | Repatriates  |
| Mawiko        | A general name given to the early immigrants who began settling Barotseland during the late Nineteenth Century |
| Mukulo        | Plain margin |
| Namukuka      | Woman heading a household. Generally it includes widows and divorced women. (Bo Namukuka - plural) |
| Salula        | Old clothes offered for sale |
| Silalo        | Land district headed by an induna |
| Welela        | Local name for the Witwatergrand Native Labour Association |
List of Abbreviations

A.A.A.R. - African Affairs Annual Report
A.R. - Annual Report
A.F.C. - Agricultural Finance Company Limited
B.N.A. - Barotse Native Authority
B.S.A. Co. - British South Africa Company
C.Ds - Commodity Demonstrators
D.C. - District Commissioner
F.A.O. - Food and Agriculture Organisation
G.R.F - Guarantee Risk Fund
LENCO - Lusaka Engineering Company Limited
N. A. Z. - National Archives of Zambia
P.C. - Provincial Commissioner
P.P.P. - People's Participation Project
R.D.S.B. - Rural Development Studies Bureau
W.N.L.A. - Witwatersrand Native Labour Association
W.P.C.U. - Western Province Cooperative Union
Planners appear to operate from a worldview in which only men are producers, women are seen as reproducers and consumers of both goods and services. Both their labour and production problems are for all intents and purposes invisible.... Hence, agricultural development policy which ignores or misunderstands the needs of women producers may have adverse effects on women and or fail to increase agricultural productivity.¹

Fortmann's critique cited above underscores the theme of our study namely that women have been heavily involved in agricultural production. The objectives of this study therefore are as follows:

By making a case study of Kalabo District the study intends to focus on the changing role of women in agriculture in the context of the impact of colonialism and the penetration of capitalism in the period 1906 to 1986. The purpose of this study is to investigate the importance of female labour in agriculture, colonial state policies in agriculture and how women's role changed in the process. In the same vein the study endeavours to show how the conditions of women producers improved or worsened. The thesis intends to examine the impact of male labour migration on the role of women in agriculture in Kalabo District. As a process labour migration was

- 1 -
systematized and organised on a large scale through the Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau (R.N.L.B.) from 1910 up to 1932. In 1935 the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association (WENELA; as it was locally known) continued the recruitment until in 1966 when the Post-Colonial Zambian government brought the recruitment to a halt. However, migrant labour was also recruited by agents such as Mr. R.W. Yule and the Zambezi Migrant Transport Service for the labour department of the Southern Rhodesia government. On labour migration the study intends to focus on the impact of both male labour absence from agricultural production and migrant labour remittances or deferred pay on women's role in agriculture. The study also endeavours to examine the impact of changing technology, the Post-Colonial state's agricultural policies on women's role in agriculture. Apart from the issues raised above, the relevance of this study can perhaps be established when seen in the context of the existing body of literature.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Few works have been written on the agricultural history of Barotseland [now Western Province]. The works of Trapnell and Clothier Gluckman and Peters have concentrated on analysing the Barotseland
Agricultural system per se. The historical approach is not the concern of these works. However, they are useful in enabling us to appreciate the nature of the Barotseland agricultural system. The works which have a historical approach are those of Hermitte, Prins and Van Horn. Nevertheless, the work of Trapnell and Clothier provides relevant details on the agricultural system. Agricultural methods, crops grown, types of gardens used are source of relevant issues covered in their work. The work of Gluckman is useful in providing details on the African agricultural system in Barotseland and gives a chart on the division of agricultural tasks between males and females.

In the case of Hermitte he has produced a doctoral dissertation on the Economic History of Barotseland. His work covering the period 1800 to 1940 takes a broad approach and agricultural history is just one of the themes covered. Though relevant and useful, Hermitte's work is not detailed enough on the issues pertaining to our study. For instance, women's role in agriculture is looked at only in passing.

As for Gwyn Prins' book, it is a historical work embodied with many flaws as can be judged from the reviews of the book by three scholars namely Macmillan, Chipungu and Rennie. Initially the reviews were
prepared for the University of Zambia History department seminar in 1982. This book is not particularly relevant to the theme of our study. However, it does contain some relevant scanty points especially in the chapter on material production, distribution and exchange.

In the case of Van Horn operating within the underdevelopment paradigm, she provides a historical analysis of agricultural production in Barotseland. She pays no specific attention to our area of study, namely Kalabo district, nor does she pay attention to our theme. Her main argument is that the colonial state's policies resulted in the decline of agricultural production in Barotseland. She contends, "Given the fact that the Lozi were competing for those resources which the British themselves were determined to control, the destruction of their economy was inevitable. It was only a matter of time." The problem we find with the underdevelopment structured arguments such as Van Horns' is the tendency to trivialize improvements in African agricultural production. On the contrary, our
study contends that African agricultural production did operate within the limits of the given economic arrangements so as to meet the needs of the people. Women played a crucial role in that process.

In a nutshell, the theme of this study has not been sufficiently covered by the existing works on the agricultural history of Barotseland.

**SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY**

Our study is based on archival sources, oral interviews published documents and secondary literature. The initial phase of data collection involved extensive research in the University of Zambia Library especially the Special Collections Section. This was followed by research in the National Archives of Zambia. Sources in the Archives which we consulted were District Notebooks, Annual Reports, Secretariat files and Tour Reports. The Tour reports and Annual reports proved useful to us because they were readily available and had relevant details. However, archival sources in the period 1906 to 1920 proved to be scanty. Nevertheless, such problems did not erode the thrilling aspect of academic research which we experienced in the course of producing this dissertation.

The last phase of our research was Oral interviews done in Kalabo district. We had a short stop-over
in Mongu district on our way to Kalabo. This was for
the purpose of interviewing some officials at the office
of the Provincial Agricultural Officer, Department of
Agriculture. In Kalabo district we interviewed both
male and female respondents. We used Silozi the
Lingua franca of the entire Western Province (formerly
Barotseland). Fieldwork has its own problems too
numerous to mention. However, we managed to persevere.

ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

This study consists of four chapters. Chapter
one provides the geographical and historical background
before 1906. Chapter two looks at the Colonial impact
on women's role in agriculture in Kalabo district in
the period 1906 to 1939. Chapter three focuses on
agricultural change and gender in the period 1940 to
1964. The last chapter looks at the Post-colonial
agricultural change and how women were affected in the
period 1964 to 1986. This is followed by the
conclusion.


10. Apart from J.K. Rennie who has since left the Department of History at the University of Zambia, Chipungu and Macmillan are currently lecturers at the University. The Reviews we are referring to have been published in the *Zambia Journal of History*, Number 2, 1989.


12. see L. Van Horn, 'The Agricultural History', p. 166.
CHAPTER 1

THE GEOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter sheds light on the Delimitation, Communication, Climate, and the people of Kalabo district. It also focuses on the Historical background and women's role in agriculture before 1906.

Kalabo district is one of the six administrative districts of Barotseland [now Western Province]. The delimitation starts from 22nd meridien of east longitudinal at its intersection with the Republic of Angola [formerly Portuguese West Africa] international boundary. Moving in an easterly direction the boundary proceeds up to a point where it turns in a south easterly direction. Along this direction it shares a boundary with Lukulu district, thence moves southwards where it shares a border with Mongu district. The border goes on southwards until at Ukolo-Mwandi where the boundary turns in the south-westerly direction to beacon number 37, on the Zambia-Angola international boundary on the 22nd meridien east longitude. The boundary, thence moves northwards to the starting point. In short, Kalabo district shares borders with Angola and Lukulu, Mongu and Senanga districts of
Zambia. It has a land area of 17,526 square kilometres. In 1980 it had a population of 97,933 and a density of 5.6 per square kilometre.³

Communications

Before 1906 one could reach Kalabo district using a water surface route from Mongu Boma. Canoes and Lisepe (wooden Barges) were the mode of transport on this route. Around the 1940s engine driven boats began to use this route.⁴ In the 1940s the land route from Nangweshi [this was a WENELA station established in Senanga district in 1939] to Kalabo was opened by the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association [WENELA].⁵ In 1946 this road was extended from Kalabo to Sikongo.⁶ The route from Mongu to Senanga also connect with the Nangweshi-Kalabo road at Kalongola after crossing the Zambezi river. After the completion of an airstrip in 1945, Kalabo could be reached by air.⁷ In fact from June 1946 the airstrip began to be used. The Central African Airways held scheduled flights to Kalabo in the 1950s and 1960s. Zambia Airways Launched, after the dissolution of the Central African Airways, flights to Kalabo though by 1980 they were cancelled for economic reasons. However, the general road network within Kalabo district has not been developed.
Climate

The general climatic pattern for Kalabo district is similar to that experienced by the entire Western province. According to Trapnell and Clother, "the climate of Barotseland [now Western Province] may be said to vary from comparatively temperate conditions on its northern and eastern limits to hot and extreme conditions in the south west." ⁸

On the rainfall pattern, Van Gils says, "93 percent of total rainfall falls between November and March, with a peak between December and February. The wettest month is January. During the onset of the rains in November, thunderstorms alternating with sunny weather are persistent." ⁹ Over the years Kalabo has experienced extreme pressures, drought and high floods. Such extremes occurred in 1908, 1918, 1928, 1938, 1943, 1958 and 1968. ¹⁰

Ecological regions

Kalabo district has four district ecological zones. These are Luanginga river valley, Nyengo plain, Imilangu bushland and Liuwa plain. The Luanginga valley is a narrow floodplain and on its edges are the Luanja and Manga forests. ¹¹

The Nyengo plain includes the swampy part as well.
According to Clay, "the Nyengo swamps were filled with fish... while on the landward side there were great open plains in between areas of bushland, and in both the plain and bush were aggregations of game animals on a scale only seen everyday in National parks and Game reserves." Clay's impressions were, however, based on his observations around the 1920s.

The third region is a mass of bushland known as Imilangu. This zone is well watered by perennial pans and lakes. The fourth zone is the Liuwa plain, larger part of which is the Liuwa national park. The area is basically a flat plain endowed with wildlife dominated by the wildbeeste. When I traversed this area I remember seeing large herds of animals grazing. I also remember Mubita remarking, "lifolofolo ze kiza kutalima feela ka meto niku nizeza mati," meaning, "These animals are just for viewing and desiring to eat." Apparently, Mubita was referring to the government restrictions against poaching.

THE PEOPLE OF KALABO DISTRICT BEFORE 1906

Kalabo's ethnic composition before 1906 was a fluid one. However, the principal inhabitants were the Mwenyi, Nyengo, Milangu, Makoma, Liuwa and the Mawiko people. The Mawiko people comprised a variety of immigrants who came to Barotseland from Angola at
the turn of the nineteenth century. In relation to the ecological zones, the Imilangu people occupied the Imilangu zone, the Nyengo people occupied the Nyengo plain and swamps. The Liuwa people occupied the Liuwa plain. The other people were the Matotela, Masubia and Matoka who settled around Lukona area in 1904. The Mawiko people occupied no distinct area probably because, "they migrate here and there like a swarm of locusts and are as difficult to control." The Makwandi settled on the Kwando river at the extreme south of the Kalabo district. The people settled in the area bordering on the Zambezi river were the Lozi. Nevertheless, by 1906 the people of Kalabo could not be studied strictly along ethnic lines because of what I call 'social fluidity'.
Map of Kalabo District
THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND BEFORE 1906

According to the North-Western Rhodesia Order in Council of 28th November 1899, the whole of Barotseland was placed under the control of the British South Africa Company. This control was based on the principle that the company would not interfere with the internal administration of the Barotse nation. The background to this principle was confirmed by Colonel Harding. He wrote:

A few days after his arrival Major Coryndon in the presence of King Lewanika and his people assembled for the occasion, confirmed Major Goold-Adam's statement and declared that he had been sent by the British government to be Lewanika's adviser and friend and not interfere with the internal administration of the Barotse nation... that the country still belonged to Lewanika and his people, and had not been bought by anyone.

However, history has proved that the words of Major Coryndon were too 'sweet' to be true. By 1906 the British South Africa Company rule was firmly established in Kalabo district. This was marked by the establishment of Lukona sub-district. In 1920 the name changed from Lukona to Kalabo sub-district following the shifting of the administrative centre from Lukona to where it is today. Company rule was now firmly grounded in the sub-district.
The objective of the British South Africa Company, being a commercial undertaking, was to exploit the resources of Northern Rhodesia and to minimise the costs of chartered rule. This was a dream which did not come true quickly. Chartered rule proved costly. According to Gann, by 1911 administration costs," were running up to an annual deficit of some £54,000 on a combined income of £95,000."21 The company shouldered chartered rule in the hope of making profit from commercial revenue [land sales, investment in shares, Railway and Mining Royalties] and administrative revenue [custom duties, taxes, postal lights and so on].22 The practical experience shattered this hope. Despite such high costs colonial rule was firmly established. Perhaps we can now have a glance at Kalabo's agricultural system and women's role by 1906.

THE KALABO AGRICULTURAL SYSTEM AND WOMEN'S ROLE BY 1906

Production in Kalabo in the pre-1906 era hinged upon four main activities namely; cultivation, animal husbandry, hunting, gathering and fishing.23 These activities tended to complement each other. Therefore, they were all important to the survival of the people of Kalabo district. Though, our focus is on the agricultural system, we shall in passing make reference to
the other activities. The agricultural system practised in Kalabo district before 1906 was similar to what the rest of Barotseland followed. A number of researches and surveys have been done on this system. These researches and surveys came to the same conclusion on the basic features of this agricultural system. According to Peters this system, "consists in the use of a variety of different types of gardens, each of which is determined by the relevant soil type and moisture." Trapnell and Clothier identified eight different types of gardens and fields under this system. They outline them as Lizulu (mound or raised garden); Mukomena (Ridge garden); Dry Litongo (Village garden); Moist Litongo (Village seepage garden); Sitopa (Lagoon garden); Lutunda (small river-bank garden); and Litema (Bush garden). An important question to pose at this juncture is what were the differences between these gardens in relation to women's role?

First of all we should point out that in terms of gender division of labour, male labour was expended in two types of fields out of the above named eight. Male labour was utilised in lishanjo gardens primarily for opening canals and digging drainage ditches. Men used sticks shaped like a shovel to do this work since at this point in time metal shovels were not yet
available in the district. This task was relegated to men because by village standards it was considered too heavy for women to undertake. Male labour was also required in Matena fields. The Mwiko men were particularly good at this work of cutting, stumpng and lopping branches in a new Litena field. In Kalabo district the Mbunda people and Luvale people (both included under Mwiko) were particularly good at this task because they were accustomed to this system of busa cultivation.28

Though male labour was used in both Matena and Sishango gardens, this did not imply that female labour was excluded in such fields. Actually, in the Matena women carried out the Kashendeke task. Kashendeke was the seasonal cutting of small bushes, weeding and planting of cassava stems in existing matena fields. The hoe was the ideal tool for this task. In the case of Sishango, female labour was required to hoe the top peat layer which was then burned. Grass and weeds would be heaped, burned and sowed the seed crops. These were female tasks. The Malozi, Liuwa, Makema, Mwanyi and Nyengo women of Kalabo were heavily involved in these tasks.29 The Sishango was mainly cultivated in winter and some of crops grown were maize, taro and sweet potatoes.

In the other types of gardens female labour was
extensively used. The Lutunda, Sitapa, Dry Litongo, moist Litongo and Mukosena were all cultivated by women and the hoe was the major tool. To a large extent women were the custodians of the production techniques required in these gardens. This was because there was little male assistance particularly in the case of Mukosena which was labour demanding. The Makoni, Nyengo, Lusi, Liuwa, Ndundulu, and Mwenyi people of Kalabo district were involved in this system.

However, to understand women’s role in agriculture in Kalabo district in the period before 1906 one needs focus beyond women’s work via as via the different gardens cultivated. This calls for an analysis of the kind of labour relations which existed at both the societal and family levels. Such an approach will shed light on the position of women in Kalabo society before 1906.

At a social level, labour relations which existed were institutionalized to serve the status quo and the ruling aristocracy. The systems of labour relations which existed were Maketiso and Buzike. Maketiso was a form of slave labour involving young men and women being sent at given intervals to serve in Central Bulozi. These young men and women were attached or allocated to the households of the members of the aristocracy. Men having positions
such as Indunas and Lindumeleli benefitted. The Maketiso labour was assigned both domestic and food production tasks. There was no clear distinction between male and female tasks.

Buzike was another form of slave labour. This consisted of those captured on raids and wars. Clarence-Smith informs us that "on raids, the Loxi seized only women and children. The men were killed, horribly mutilated and stripped of certain organs as trophies for successful warriors." It is important to note that even men were made buzike except that emphasis was placed on women. The reason was probably because women's value lay in both labour and reproductive capacities. The role of slave labour was explicitly outlined by Clarence-Smith as follows:

Once reduced to an unfree status, the great majority of slaves were faced with a hard and precarious material existence. They had to cultivate their master's fields, tend his flocks, fish for him, fetch wood and water, prepare and cook his meals, build huts and canoes, and act as paddlers and porters, in addition to a host of other miscellaneous duties. Slaves had to till and harvest their master's fields before their own, which put their crops at risk, especially as slaves were usually allocated low-lying soils prone to early flooding. Although slaves enjoyed the Royal guarantee of access to land, they could be moved arbitrarily from one plot to another and from one settlement to another, by sale or by some other form of transfer. If slaves did produce any agricultural surplus,
part of it had to be paid as rent...
In consequence, slaves often suffered acutely from hunger and even died of starvation, especially during natural disasters.34

The crucial point here is that the existence of these forms of labour meant that those who were privileged to own and control such labour were alienated from production. Women married to men who had slaves were certainly divorced from the strenuous agricultural tasks. Livingstone enlightens us on this development; "The younger Makololo, who have been accustomed from their infancy to lord it over the conquered Makalaka have unfortunately no desire to imitate the agricultural tastes of their fathers, and expect their subjects to perform all manual labour. They are the Aristocracy of the country, and once possessed almost unlimited power over their vassals."35 Holub was also able to observe and confirm this development. This is how he put it:

Two eleven to twelve years girls ... were taking the maize cobs down and throwing them on a place on the ground which had been stamped flat. Then naked little boys or six to eight year old little girls... beat the cobs with sticks in order to thrust out the corn. Two female slaves and stubbies of the owner of the farm, ... were threshing the maize which was slightly soaked in water... In the meantime the head wife was sitting on mat separating the fully-threshed from the half-threshed maize
in order to throw the latter once again back into the mortar. She did not seem to exhaust herself very much since she was here the mistress and enjoyed the special graces of her master and husband as his ... favourite wife. Perhaps she will be in favour with him for years... Yet the poor creature knows how to use this time well.36

One point come out clearly from the above citations namely that the existence of Maketino and Buzike labour did alienate the wives of slave masters from food production. But the slave woman shared the burden of food production with her male counterpart. However, both maketino and Buzike were not widespread systems in pre 1906 Kalabo society probably because the Malozi political hegemony over the area was not effectively established.37

At a household level family labour was depended on in agricultural production. Hermitte explains this, "Production depended on the number of a man's dependents and they themselves consumed most of the goods they produced. Control of economic resources, as everywhere gave status and power in social organisation but only by making a man head of a dependent group."38 Having such a dependent group began with a man getting married. This meant having or owning an independent household. To have a wife a man had to pay Lobola - locally known as Sionda to the parents or guardians of his bride. This is
how a man could acquire his lobola:

A young Lozi did not have to find cattle; but he had to trade fish and grain for hoes and mats from the Kwangwa, or beg them from some kin or political authority. He had to have some of limited gardening land to give his bride and to be able to provide her with fish for relish. 39

The payment of lobola entitled a man to the labour and services of his wife as well as bearing children for him. However, with the penetration of colonialism in Kalabo district, the role and position of women began to be affected.


13. I viewed large herds of wild beeste.

14. Alex Mubita who accompanied me across the Luwa Park made this remark.

15. In this study we shall use the name 'Mawiko people' as an umbrella term referring to the immigrants from Angola. Literally it means 'those from the West'.
16. M.A.Z. KPE 9/1/1, Kalabo district Notebook, p. 1
17. M.A.Z. KPE 9/1/1, Kalabo district Notebook, p. 1
19. M.A.Z. KPE 3/1/1, Kalabo district Notebook, p. 1
27. see Trappnell and Clothier, *The Soil*, p. 92.
30. We do not imply that all agricultural work was entirely left in the hands of women. Men did assist women. In fact Holubi did observe this fact when he traversed Barotseland in the mid-nineteenth century. see R. Holub. *Travels North of the Kambwa*, 1859-1866. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1955), p. 26. He noted: "The men of these Sanbezi tribes used women much more with their fieldwork than the men of the Southern tribes."


34. see W.G. Clarence-Smith, 'Slaves, Commoners and Landlords', p. 229.


37. see G. Zambwa, 'A History of the Luyana' (1980), for a detailed analysis of the political relationships between the Lozi and Luyana of Kalabo.

38. see E.L. Hermitte, 'An Economic History', p. 208.

CHAPTER 2

THE COLONIAL IMPACT ON WOMEN'S ROLE IN AGRICULTURE

1906 - 1939

This chapter examines the colonial impact on women's role in agriculture in Kalabo district during the period 1906 to 1939. We pay attention to a number of interrelated issues ushered in by the new colonial economy. These issues are: the control of and access to women, cattle trade, labour migration and changing technology. Our concern is to establish how these issues affected women's role in agriculture. From the onset we should underline the fact that in reality these issues were so much inter-related that one cannot easily draw a hard and fast line between them particularly when one looks at their impact on women.

THE CONTROL OF WOMEN

The payment of lobola entitled a man to control over his wife as well as her reproductive capacities. The guardians or parents of the bride were also entitled to the lobola paid. Therefore any change in the value of lobola was logically an attractive development to the recipients of lobola. On the 19th October 1917 a law on lobola, adultery and pregnancies was promulgated. On lobola the law stated:
Any man who takes to a wife a young woman who had not been previously married by another man, he, the husband shall pay to the parents of the girl, four head of cattle or more if the man is a rich man. But if the man has no cattle to pay, he shall pay whatever goods he can afford such as hoes, axes, dishes, spears or such like articles.2

In the case of a man found guilty of adultery the culprit would pay 2 head of cattle to the 'injured man'.3 The woman too, if proved guilty shall pay her husband for having consented to the act. With regard to pregnancies the law provided for a change of 2 heads of cattle to the parents of the girl.4

From this two points are noteworthy. First, the increased value of lobola entrenched men's control over women. Second, women became sources of material wealth such as cattle through lobola, adultery cases and pregnancy cases. Hence, the need to control the means of acquiring this wealth, namely women. However, how do we explain this increase in the value of lobola?

The new colonial money economy did increase the value of productive labour of women as well as cattle. These factors seem to explain the increase in lobola. We concur with Schmidt when she says, "As the productive labour and cattle acquiring potential of women increased in value, so too did the value of their reproductive capacities. As producers of children, women were
bearers of the next generation of labourers, who would sustain their parents in old age. Since the payment of lobola entitled a man to control over his wife's reproductive capacity and to any children she might bear, it is not surprising that the cattle and cash components of brideprice were rapidly inflating.\(^5\) The fact that those who received lobola and other payments such as adultery fines stood to gain with the increase in value was acknowledged in the Kalabo District Commissioner's report of 1926 as follows:

Induna Funika from Lealui was at Nyengo collecting the beast or equivalent paid to the Kuta by the parents of the adulterers. He has so far succeeded in obtaining 2 heads of cattle and 4 Kaffir pots. On his return to Lealui these cattle will be killed and the meat and pots will be divided amongst the Kuta Indunas. Doubtless, any change in the adultery laws would be strongly opposed by the Kuta.\(^6\)

The increased value of lobola secured men's control and access to female labour in married households. The payment of lobola made the man the master of the home. It was only the unmarried woman [Namukuka (singular) or Bo Namukuka (plural)], who could control her labour and have a final say over the products of her labour. However, when seen in light of the new economic imperatives of the new colonial economy access to female labour took different
forms. The penetration of the money economy ushered in economic activities such as cattle trade which did affect women's role in production.

**CATTLE TRADE**

Kalabo district is one of the Barotseland district which engaged in cattle trade. This trade became very important in light of the penetration of the money economy because it was a source of money. The money was required for payment of tax and payment for European goods such as blankets, clothes, hoes and so on. These economic factors were boosters to cattle trade in Barotseland particularly after 1906. In terms of figures, it has been estimated that in 1911 about 3,000 head were exported whilst in 1912 about 10,000 head were exported from Barotseland.\(^7\) Some of the cattle buyers active in the area included Ely Susman, J. Eden, J. Lance, J. Dawson, E. Snapper, S. Hazlett just to name a few.\(^8\)

The outbreak of Bovine pleuro-pneumonia spread by oxen used by the Angola boundary commission in the province forced the closure of cattle trade in 1915. Consequently, the colonial government undertook large scale inoculation. In 1918 there was an attempt to open up cattle trade but this had the effect of spreading the disease again. This necessitated
another closure. However, the cattle owners in Kalabo resorted to selling cattle hides. The 1929 report indicated, "there has been a considerable trade in cattle hides, mostly obtained from animals which died of lung sickness." Hence, cattle hides became another source of money for the cattle owners. The opening of the Zambezi Saw mills at Mulobezi in the province also provided a market for cattle particularly trek oxen. However, for Kalabo cattle owners this was not a favourable market probably because of the long distance from Kalabo to Mulobezi. For example in 1939 Kalabo district sold only 150 animals.

The fundamental question we need to pose at this juncture is what was the impact of the cattle trade on women's role in agriculture? The direct consequence of cattle trade was that cattle owners earned cash from it. The money earned was used to hire labour for agricultural tasks ranging from cultivation to harvesting. Therefore, the women who were fortunate enough to have got married to such cattle owners were relieved of such tasks. The Malozi people who resided in the plain points of Kalabo district and owned cattle managed to raise money to hire Mambunda men to cut Matema fields for them. Some cattle owners did not endeavour to do this strenuous agricultural work.
After all, they could buy the food they wanted when faced with starvation.\textsuperscript{11} The 1917 district report from Kalabo referred to such cattle owners as 'Loafers'. It referred to, "the loafer who has happened to inherit a few head of cattle and gets all he wants by the occasional sale of some of their increase."\textsuperscript{12} Certainly the women who were married to such 'loafers' were not induced to hire out their labour in order to earn cash income. Other ways in which cattle trade influenced women's role in production relates to technology namely ploughs and hoes. We shall discuss in detail how these implements affected women but suffice it to mention that the money from cattle trade was also used to purchase these implements.

However, the stoppage of cattle trade due to the outbreak of bovine pleuro-pneumonia had adverse effects on such cattle owners. First, their ability to hire labour was reduced, hence they had to rely heavily on what their wives could produce. Second, it intensified female labour. In fact one Kalabo \textit{induna} is reported to have expressed his anxieties as follows: "the servant will be the master, we shall be the servants."\textsuperscript{13} In a nutshell our argument is that cattle trade did have an impact on women's role in agriculture due to a number of factors. First, it was not every household which owned cattle. Secondly, the outbreak of bovine
pleuro-pneumonia reduced the cash income from cattle trade. Consequently, the cattle owners' ability to hire labour for agricultural tasks diminished. Ultimately, this led to heavy reliance on female labour in such households.

LABOUR MIGRATION

The migration of men from Kalabo district to seek employment to places such as Wankie, Salisbury and Johannesburg started even before 1906. Some impetus was given to it when the process of organised recruitment by the Rhodesia Native Labour bureau started in 1910. The Bureau continued recruitment until 1932. In 1935 the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association shouldered the recruitment task until 1966 when its operations were brought to a close by the post-colonial government. The significance of male labour migration in relation to women's role in agriculture, in this section shall be viewed from two angles. These are the diversion of male labour from agricultural production and the impact of the cash inflow from labour migration. Let us now discuss these in detail.

SEASONALITY

As a consequence of the necessity of male migrant
labour and the need to continue agricultural production in the villages, the flow of migrant labour initially took a seasonal pattern. This meant that all the agricultural tasks were not entirely left in the hands of women. In Kalabo district men returned to their homes when the agricultural cycle required their labour. This was particularly the case for tasks such as cutting new matema fields and drainage work in the Sishanjo gardens. In the 1911/12 season white farmers, for instance, were reported to have complained about this practice by migrant labourers. The report said, "His [white farmers] labourers leave him between the ploughing and harvesting seasons when he requires their services most; they go to prepare their own lands and they remain away to weed and reap." This trend increased in Kalabo district and by 1922 labour migrant were opting to search for employment themselves so as to work for short periods of time. The 1922 Kalabo district report indicated that "the number of natives going independently in search of employment is on the increase, particularly these natives going to Southern Rhodesia. Many prefer obtaining employment direct for a short period instead of being engaged by the Rhodesia Native Labour Bureau." However, one should point out that the seasonality pattern was only possible where labour migrants found it easy to return home when
they so desired. This was not possible for labour migrants employed in distant places such as South Africa.

LONG TERM LABOUR MIGRANTS

Generally, the migrants recruited by the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association could be classified as long term labour migrants because they were recruited on a contract basis of a minimum twelve (12) months period. It is this form of migration which had a telling effect on the tribal life of those women who remained at home. The impact of this form of migrant labour was felt by women in two ways. The adverse effect of this migration was clearly revealed to the Kalabo District Commissioner on his tour of Maala Kuta and Simunyange area in 1936. He wrote;

... Of the 1,717 men seen 696 were exempted from tax. It will be seen therefore that out of 1,844 taxable males 823 or nearly 45 percent were away at work. Sam inclined to think that this is too high a percentage... There are notably few young men seen at the villages and if many go away to work, I fear it may have a serious effect on tribal life.19

In relation to agricultural work this means that much was left on the shoulders of women. In a way this became a burden for the women. Even though some men could manage to return home to cultivate women still bore the brunt. In 1939 this was still an acknowledged
fact, "though many men return to cultivate gardens for varying periods, the hardcore of agriculturists consist of women and old men."^20

The impact of long term labour migration on women's role in agriculture was also from remittances and deferred pay.

Some married women did receive money sent by their husbands in wage employment. This flow of money altered women's role in agriculture because new forms of labour were devised. It is these forms of labour which affected women. We can now examine these forms of labour:

(1) **LUBILE** (big working combinations). This was a form of hired labour paid for in kind namely beer. Actually this form of labour was not new as such. Gluckman associates its origins with the Kololo who brought it from Basutoland.^21 However, he also claims the term is Mbunda, hence it may have come into Huloxi with the coming of the Mbunda people. Gluckman also notes that the Lozi people called it **Silala**. This implies that probably it was neither the Kololo nor the Mbunda who introduced it into Barotseland.^22 However, one fact stands out clearly. This is that Lubile was not a colonial innovation. Our concern is to show how this institution affected women's role in agriculture with the penetration of the colonial money economy.
In this context, therefore, we find that according to the 1914 proclamation on Kaffir Beer, this form of payment for labour was legalised. The proclamation stated, "Any person employing natives for manual labour can brew native beer and supply the same to the natives so employed." Some women who received money from their husbands used it to purchase millet, malt it and brew beer for the purpose of lubile. Some women who had poor yield of millet could now acquire it by purchasing from those who had a surplus. As a matter of fact Hermitte gives us the evidence that a woman could seek divorce from her husband who failed to send her money to make beer for lubile. This demonstrates the extent to which some women realised the need to enhance their role in production by engaging the labour of non-family members through lubile. The fact that labour migrants used to send money to their wives at home was observed. Provincial Commissioner E.H. Lane Poole enlightens us on this development;" a far greater number of registered letters have been received in the Post office this year than was the case in 1934. Most of them are addressed to the women from their husbands and relatives who have succeeded in finding work." The point we want to underline here is that the change in women's role was in the engagement of big working combinations.
Moreover, those women who could organise *lubile* did lighten their agricultural tasks and since the labour was paid for, its claims and interests in the produce was severed.

(ii) **HIRED LABOUR:** The difference between hired labour and *lubile* is two fold. First, the form of payment for *lubile* tended to be mainly beer whilst for hired labour, money, food and any valuable material object was the form of payment. Secondly, most important is that for *lubile* it mainly involved group work. Hired labour in agricultural production was referred to differently depending on the kind of task to be done. *Kulimelela* was labour expended on cultivation; *Kuocalisa* for sowing; *Ku tahulisa* for weeding and *Ku kutulisa* for harvesting. Depending on the size and type of field, these tasks were quite demanding for a few hands. Hence some women who received money from their husbands could engage labour in any of these tasks. Sometimes payment in kind such as fish, cassava meal, baskets of millet and so on was done. This was necessary for those who were in dire need of food. Hence, those households who could spare food hired labour that way.

By 1937 reports on the flow of money from labour migrants into the district were still recorded. This
was recorded thus, "there has been a greater demand for cattle and other local produce and much more money has been in circulation. This progress is due to some extent to the greater demand for local produce but to a greater extent to the increased amount of money remitted to natives at home by those away at work."^26

The flow of money created favourable circumstances of hiring labour. What is interesting is the fact that as the flow of money into the district increased men who remained at home hired out their labour in agricultural tasks which in the pre-colonial era were the preserve of women. These are tasks such as weeding. One respondent told us, "In the 1930s, just as is the case now, men used to weed with us in the fields. They also needed money. How could they resist hiring out their labour for such tasks?"^27 The extent to which women who remained at home improved their conditions in production as a result of hiring labour depended on when and the amount of money which came their way.

However, the position of Bo Namukuka was different primarily because they had no partners who could send them money at home. This compelled many of them to hire out their labour, working in the fields of those who had the means. This was another way in which some women could earn money locally. They had no means to
hire labour to help them in their agricultural tasks. Their agricultural methods remained traditional because they lacked the means to utilize the modern methods. For instance, without the money to buy or hire a plough they could not use this implement. We shall amplify this issue in the next section when looking at technology and gender.

TECHNOLOGY AND GENDER

The role of women in agriculture in Kalabo district was also affected by changing agricultural technology. In the context of this study agricultural technology shall mean agricultural implements. Therefore, the type and access to agricultural tools are important considerations which by and large, affected women's role in production.

In the period 1906 to 1939 the major agricultural implements used in Kalabo district were the hoe and the plough. The hoe was locally made though later on imported types began to enter Kalabo district. The plough was not made locally. It was imported. The records show that in the 1930s more than one hundred ploughs were in use in Kalabo district. For the purpose of the ensuing discussion we shall look at the impact of hoes, followed by an examination of the impact of the plough on the role of women in agricultur
THE HOE

Hoes were the only agricultural tools which the women of Kalabo could claim to own though they did not know how to make them. The art of hoe making was a specialized one. Hence, only blacksmiths could supply hoes. It was not every man who had the skill and knowledge to produce a hoe. The blacksmith produced both the handles and heads of the hoes. However, some Malozi informants claimed that they used to get some hoes from the Makwangwa people residing in the Kataba areas of Mongu district. They used to exchange products of the plain for hoes. Actually, the Totela, old Mbunda and Nyengo people were reckoned to be smith. The main way in which women came to own hoes was through marriage. It was almost taboo for a man to marry without a hoe for his wife. Besides, for those men who were considered 'poor', the hoe was paid as Sionda. In fact on this issue one respondent retorted, "How could a man marry without a hoe for his wife to use? Actually hoes were paid as lobola. This shows how important they were to us."

However, the supply of hoes seems to have been a problem in Kalabo district. The short supply of hoes in the district seems to have induced the following order to be issued in 1909:
About the black smiths being called out to work, I have instructed Native Commissioners not to call on black smiths to go out to work.... I would like to see the Black-smiths making many hoes as this is one of the ways to work and earn money near their homes.32

The order was necessary given the fact that imported types were not yet available in the district. The outbreak of World War I seems to have worsened the situation because it disrupted the supply of imported hoes which were now imported in the district. It was observed that, "the influence of the war is being felt in many ways by the farming industry. Prices of implements, tools, bags, fertilizers have not only gone up considerably but are more difficult to obtain."33 This shortage did contribute to food shortage in Kalabo district. In 1919 it was explained that, 'one of the reasons for the food shortage last year (1918) was the lack of implements for cultivating the land. Arrangements have been made to supply natives with hoes and some 100,000 hoes have been ordered from England. It is hoped that will cause a large increase in the areas of cultivation."34 Despite such frantic steps the situation in Kalabo district seems not to have improved. This is revealed in the case of a skilled Blacksmith named Chilundu who came to settle in Kalabo district in 1928. The District officials made this
man set up his foundry in the Boma orchard at Kalabo from where he was to pound hoes out of Iron scraps. Unfortunately, his production was insignificant. He only produced one hoe per day.\textsuperscript{35}

However, in the 1930s the above scenario changed. Hoes became available in the local stores at Kalabo and Lukona. Some informants claimed that they used to buy hoes from the stores at Lukona and Sikongo in the 1930a.\textsuperscript{36} Labour migration also contributed to this. Labour migrants returned with hoes for their wives. One respondent claimed, "My late husband returned home from Wankie in 1935. He brought two hoes with him. At least my eldest daughter could assist me in cultivation."\textsuperscript{37} Other parts of Kalabo district were still hard hit. For instance, Imilengu on the western part of Kalabo Boma began to use European hoes only in 1940.\textsuperscript{38}

The use and supply of hoes seems not to have improved the conditions of female labour in agriculture. As a tool, the hoe demanded much labour. It was the women who provided that labour. However, with the use of jubile and hired labour men also expended their labour on this implement. But those women who were in a position to organise jubile and hire labour got a relief from the use of this tool because they could depend on non-family labour. In some cases those
hired labour or participation in *lubile* provided their own hoes. This was a mitigating factor in the case where an organiser of *lubile* could not provide enough hoes. Some households who owned more than one hoe and had some dependents old enough to carry out agricultural tasks had the advantage in that they could fall upon such family labour to cultivate their fields.

**THE PLOUGH**

The plough was first adopted in Barotseland in 1915.\(^39\) As for Kalabo district it was adopted in the 1920s.\(^40\) The recorded evidence about the availability of ploughs in Kalabo show that in 1935 there were 150 ploughs in the district.\(^41\) Later evidence shows that the use of the plough particularly through hiring by those who did not own them increased. One source stated, "the owners of the ploughs undertook ploughing for the less fortunate brethren at a charge of 10s per acre broken up."\(^42\) By 1939 the side effects of the plough were observable. It was noted that, "the use of the plough tends to increase acreage being torn up but it is not weeded. The tendency to sandiness becomes more pronounced than when the land is hoed by hand and gardens do not last so long as they did in the past."\(^43\)

The number of *women* who owned ploughs in Kalabo during this period is unknown, but most of our informants agree that there were none. Nevertheless the adoption of the plough had an impact on women's role in agriculture. First, it divorced *women* from cultivation tasks. *Kukekela* (ploughing) was a male task hence men did the ploughing.
This was only a relief to those women in households which either owned a plough or could afford to hire one. The fields in which the plough was used were Mzulu, Litapa and sometimes Matema – especially if stumping and bush clearing was good enough to permit ploughing. In these fields female tasks were mainly sowing, weeding and harvesting. To carry out these tasks the hoe was still ideal and useful. But with regard to the Sishanjo gardens where ploughing could not be done, female labour was still crucial. Male labour in Sishanjo gardens was vital for drainage work.

The adoption of the plough reduced women’s work of hoe cultivation but it increased the female tasks of sowing, weeding and harvesting. This was because the plough increased acreage. For those women who could not organise lubile and hire labour to assist them, these were colossal agricultural tasks for them. In the final analysis some fields could not be weeded. We should also note that while men undertook the task of ploughing it was a woman’s responsibility to prepare a good meal for the men to eat after the ploughing task. Monde testified to us, "It was unheard of those colonial days for a woman to handle a plough. Her task was to prepare a good meal for the men to eat after ploughing."
This is one area in which Kalabo women came to be involved as agricultural producers. The colonial sandy economy created markets for food crops. The colonial officials and European residents offered market for food crops. In 1910 a report on the situation in Kalabo indicated that, "vegetables and fruits from imported seed originally distributed by the missionaries were grown for the purpose of sale to European residents. Amongst these crops were onions, pawpaw, tomatoes, cabbage, lettuce, potatoes, pineapples, bananas and peaches (few few)." Traders were also active food buyers in the district. In fact in 1919 the Kalabo District Commissioner complained in his report about the traders. He said, "There is plenty of food in the Barotse valley but the natives appear to be disinclined to bring it in for sale. This is due to traders sending out money in outlying villages, a practice which ought to be stopped, especially as a large amount of the grain so purchased is for export from the district." In 1929 the Kalabo District Commissioner Stevens in his Tour Report acknowledged that:
At Kuchekaya food was plentiful and the induna asked for a government depot to be opened there... Higher prices were demanded everywhere and it is said this is due, among other reasons, to the fact that monied repatriates will pay 'fancy' prices.... Recently, it was reported that the natives will not bring in food to the station because they consider the government price of 201bs for 1/- too small and they expect to sell at their villages and not at the station. 47

The existence of food markets in Kalabo districts was therefore unquestionable. The change in women's role came in the sense that their produce, despite the small quantity involved, found its way to the market. Production to some extent had become market oriented. The principles of supply and demand in the market transactions was a notion which the agricultural producers were already conversant with judging from District Commissioner Steven's report cited above.

At another level, Kalabo women became physically involved in food marketing. This was a new role for them. The marketing task women undertook mainly involved small quantities of crops such as fresh cobs of maize, potatoes, cassava leaves (shombo), cassava (both fresh and dried) and so on. They were usually in small quantities which women could manage to carry and hawk around neighbouring villages. The distances covered were short, at least not more than a day's
walking distance. Due to small quantities of food crops they marketed, the cash income earned from the sales was not substantial. The income earned was usually expended on domestic needs particularly consumer goods such as salt. On this aspect our evidence suggest that even married women were not bothered by their husbands though a husband could make a casual inquiry on how the sales fared. Probably this was because the income was not substantial. Food marketing on such limited scale however, demonstrates one way in which Kalabo women could earn money locally since they could not go into formal employment. Connected to this was beer brewing. This is one venture in which Kalabo women dominated. Infact this proved to be a lucrative venture particularly given the ready market offered by the Makamuca (Repatriaties). In the following chapter our discussion on female marketing tasks shall expand on this aspect of beer brewing.

CONCLUSION

Our discussion in this chapter has revolved around two main arguments worth repeating here. Firstly, we have argued that at the level of production, women's role changed through the engagement of forms of labour such as jubile and hired labour. This was facilitated...
by the colonial money economy in which economic activities of cattle trade and labour migration became sources of money for the Kalabo people. Such forms of labour were only beneficial to those households which could engage it. Secondly, the penetration of the money economy also made agricultural production to be market oriented. Women became direct participants in food marketing though on a very minor scale. The introduction of the plough divorced female labour from cultivation but this implement increased acreage under cultivation and hence made more work for women in weeding and harvesting. In the final analysis, these changes did not relieve women from shouldering the brunt of agricultural production.
NOTES

5. see E. Schmidt, 'Women, Agriculture and Social Change in Southern Rhodesia, 1898-1937, with Special Reference to the Goromonzi District', (University of Zimbabwe, 23 April, 1986), p. 12.
7. see E.L. Hermitte, 'An Economic History', p. 254.
11. The Plain dwellers largely depended on the cultivation of Mazulu and Litapu. They were not much conversant with matema cultivation.
15. see R.S. Kapaale, 'A Survey of WENELA', p. 75.
17. N.A.Z. Native Affairs Annual Report, 1911/12.
22. We could not establish the exact year when ploughs first appeared in Kalabo District. But some informants claimed it was in the late 1920s.


32. See D.L. Hermitte, 'An Economic History', p. 519.
39. N. A. Z. KDE 2/1/1, Kalabo district Notebook, p. 28.

40. Most of our informants from Ngunyana and Namatindi confirmed this points. European traders such as who opened some General Stores at place such as Lukona also supplied ploughs. See N. A. Z. KDE 8/1/1 Kalabo district Notebook, p. 26.

41. Native Affairs Annual Report, 1935. p. 95


44. Interview with Monde Sukamoko, Munkuye, January 1990,

45. N.A.Z. KDE 8/1/3 Lukona District Annual Report, 1910/11.


CHAPTER 3

AGRICULTURAL CHANGE AND GENDER, 1940-1964

In this chapter we look at the relationship between Agricultural change and Women's role in the period 1940 to 1964. The agricultural change was with respect to production, food marketing and changing technology. We endeavour to critically analyse the colonial government's agricultural policies and initiatives undertaken in the district particularly after the Second World War. We wind up the discussion by looking at differentiation and gender.

AGRICULTURAL CHANGE

The prominent feature in the state of agriculture in Kalabo district in the 1940s and 1950s was the persistent reports of food shortages. The year 1940 was described as "bad year, verging on famine in some parts [of Kalabo] due to abnormal floods which inundated many gardens and ruined the crops."\(^1\) Consequently, women by virtue of being food producers were affected in the sense that they became heavily involved in the gathering of whatever edible food nature could provide. This was confirmed thus, "the food shortage was acute and the women and the children were spending long hours in the bush searching for forest fruits. The
able-bodied males tended to abandon their families and go south for work.\textsuperscript{2} Food shortages were reported in 1941;\textsuperscript{3} 1945;\textsuperscript{4} 1948;\textsuperscript{5} and 1949.\textsuperscript{6} The seasonal floods partly contributed to these food shortages. For instance, the 1948 floods in the words of the Provincial Commissioner, "were almost everywhere the highest within living memory, rose quickly and flooded all the low-lying gardens on the Barotse plain."\textsuperscript{7} In 1949 the worst hit areas were the Central Zambezi plain and the Nyengo plain.\textsuperscript{8}

In the 1950s plain gardens continued to be subjected to floods. In 1951 areas such as Ngunyama, Namatindi and Mapungu experienced food shortages.\textsuperscript{9} In 1952 the Barotse province newsletter reported that, "mound cultivation in the plain... suffered quite appreciably in many cases the whole crop has been destroyed."\textsuperscript{10} One agricultural induna Mukundekwa confirmed food shortages in 1956.\textsuperscript{11} He named the areas affected as Mukola and Nyaala Lilalo. The following year induna Mukundekwa also reported that people were starving in the Kandambo II silalo in the Tuuwa kuta area of induna Sikambundu.\textsuperscript{12} Like many other parts of Barotseland, Kalabo district was in 1958 hit by abnormally high floods.\textsuperscript{13} Given the above scenario one would gain the impression that production in Kalabo came to a standstill in the 1940s and 1950s. Whilst we can not
dispute the ravages of floods and water-logging one
should bear in mind the fact that it was not all parts
of Kalabo district and gardens which were susceptible
to floods. For instance, most matema fields were
located in bushland which could not be flooded.

The most frustrating aspect of floods is their
unpredictable nature. Women producers became 'victims'
of this aspect in the sense that they could not completely
abandon the Mazulu and Litapa gardens in the low lying
areas. The level of floods tended to fluctuate from
one year to the other. Therefore, they (women)
continued to cultivate the fields despite the threat of
floods. This was not the case where water-logging
particularly due to lack of drainage as result of lack
of male labour, had led to abandonment of some gardens.
However, the cultivation of fields in the low lying
areas became possible if the seasonal flood for a
particular year subsided so low as to permit cultiva-
tion in the fields. In some cases the seasonal floods
did lead to the abandonment of gardens. However, the
occurrence of high floods had one clear message to the
cultivators, namely that they could cause food shortages.

Owing to the fact that the plain gardens and Litapa
gardens were susceptible to floods, the matema fields
assumed greater importance as 'insurance' against
famine. Acknowledging this shift the Provincial Commi-
ssioner in 1948 reported that:
There will be a definite transfer of wealth from the plain to the highlands, from the Lozi of Buluvi to the late comers [Mawiko] who cultivate the ridges with cassava and millet. This process of transfer of wealth has gone on for years but this year it will be more marked than ever.... Some of the cattle will go and a woman or two will marry where there is less hunger. 14

One should point out that the abandonment of some plain mounds was not only due to floods but also labour migration which divorced male labour that was used to open and maintain canals. The end result was noticeable in that more cassava was being planted in the district and larger gardens cultivated. 15 The 1940 Kalabo Annual Report indicated that, "the only 'progress' is the extension of the chitemene system practised by the Mawiko. District officers on tour carried out propa-ganda in favour of cassava growing as it is a hardier crop in an area peculiarly liable either to floods or draughts." 16 Hence it is not surprising to note that even by 1948 reports from Barotseland still stated, "the main food production is in the hands of the Mawiko tribes. Without them, the Malozi would suffer a yearly famine of no small proportion." 17 This state of affairs was equally true in the Kalabo case.

The expansion of Matema fields in the 1940s and 1950s was a development which had some implications for the women. For instance, both married women and Bo Namukuka who desired to open up a new Litema
required male labour for stumping trees and lopping branches. The axe, a male tool, was particularly useful for such a task. Therefore, for those women whose husbands were away from home as labour migrants and the unmarried women it was a major problem. In fact the labour of Malozi men generally, even if they were present at home, was not significant in relation to Matema fields. This was because they were not good at this method of cultivation apart from it being strenuous work. Some women therefore, opted to hire out their labour in the fields of those who had the means. One informant confessed to us:

I remember most of the time I had to cultivate in the fields of those who had successful Matema fields. At least one could earn a basket of cassava or one shilling depending on the amount of work done. I suffered because my husband had deserted me since he left for Wankie.18

On the other hand the expansion of Matema did increase female tasks such as Kushende in such fields. This task involved clearing small bushes using a hoe, weeding and planting cassava stems. Moreover, the uprooting of matured cassava and processing either for domestic consumption or sale were all tasks which rested on the shoulders of women. Indeed, those women who could neither hire labour nor rely upon the labour of family dependents had to carry the burden.
FOOD MARKETING

The marketing of food produce is one task which women in Kalabo continued to undertake even in the period after the World War II. Women were able to consolidate their positions as food sellers albeit in small quantities. The Mawiko women were prominent. Evidence suggests that they frequented Malozi villages located along the Mukulo (plain margin), hawking cassava which they could carry in the Maselo containers.¹⁹

No wonder that in 1946 reporting on the situation in Kalabo, the Barotse Newsletter stated, "The Malozi and others bordering the plain are incurably casual cultivators and provide a ready market for industrious Maluvale."²⁰ Echoing this report, Mbaita Alisi told us, "In the 1950s I was young and strong enough to carry a basket full of dried cassava hawking in the villages, one could earn enough money for soap, salt and so on. But the cash earned was too meagre to buy things like ploughs. However, with some good savings one could manage to buy a hoe or have the old one repaired."²¹

A picture which emerges from women's involvement in food marketing in the post World War II era is that women were mainly selling small quantities of food crops. In the case where yields were good enough
enabling a family to sell one or two bags of grain or cassava, men took the responsibility of marketing. This was the case for married households. For instance when the buying depots of Namboma, Liyoyelo and Sikundu were opened in 1946 only men used to deliver bags of grain for sale there.22 One explanation for this trend was that men could not permit their wives to engage in transactions which by villages standards were considered too 'big' for the women to handle.23 Some male respondents claimed that they could not relegate the task of selling such 'big' consignments to women since they [women] could not manage to paddle canoes for long distances carrying the grain to the depots.24 Hence, married women were not better off than Bo Namukuka as far as food marketing was concerned. The former were constrained by their marital status mainly whilst the latter faced the problems of poor yields and lack of means. However, in the case of Bo Namukuka who chanced a good harvest in a given season, they had the advantage of having a final say about their produce.25

Another area in which Kalabo women made a mark was their increased involvement in beer brewing and selling. Bucwala (Beer) was one local source of money for these women. The Makumuca provided some good business for these Bucwala sellers. On this aspect we are informed that some women who lived far
away from the routes used by Makumuca even shifted to stay close to the routes. Writing about this, Kapaale says:

Many women came to these markets some of them permanently to sell beer, and of course their 'sacred goods'. The Repatriates who used to stay for 12 months in South Africa without women, made a ready market for these 'sacred goods'. One informant said, "these Makumuca used to be met by a mundanswe: line of women on arrival. They used to spend lavishly on women and beer. Among women they were known as 'botunga kupela mina penduka', (Just take I am going back).26

The evidence cited so far clearly demonstrates that women did play a prominent role in marketing of produce. But the fundamental issue is why were women able to do so? Bryson gives us a plausible explanation. She says, "The women were able to consolidate their positions as food sellers largely because men had new opportunities and considered food crops women's work and the incomes to be derived from them less attractive than the alternatives open to men. Women were able to dispose of the money they earned themselves both because their husbands knew that most was spent immediately on household needs and also because men considered the women's earnings to be small in comparison to their own." 27 Hence in the period 1940 to 1964 the produce distribution pattern in Kalabo district did change and women were involved in this change. This also calls for
an examination of the change ushered in by the introduction and increased use of the plough in the same period.

CHANGING TECHNOLOGY

Significant strides were made in the adoption and use of the plough in the period 1940 to 1964. In 1948 it was reported that, "ploughs appeared to be on the increase and widely used to cultivate large gardens, particularly in the plains in the southern half of the district." In 1949 Kalabo district was reported to have 250 ploughs and by 1951 the use of the plough in the district was reported thus, "... many more ploughs have been put into use. Consignments arriving at the local stores are snapped up almost on arrival and there remains a demand." By 1954, Kalabo district had 1,216 ploughs and the number shot up to 1493 by 1963.

From the above figures it appears that the use of the plough was fairly extensive. However, one drawback was that the people still lacked the skill and technique of using this implement. This trend was observed:

The use of this implement is not properly understood and unsuitable types are purchased. Large areas are ploughed up and the District Commissioner has estimated
the yield as averaging less than two bags per acre. Too little attention is paid to contours. No harrows are owned and the people find the weeding of the large acreages ploughed beyond their powers, denuded as the population is by absentees... several old men told the District Commissioner that they did not really understand the use of the plough but tried to copy what, they had heard, other people did.33

The increased use of the plough in Kalabo district during the period under review had several implications for women's role in agriculture. First of all, the increased use of the plough did reduce women's work in cultivation of fields such as Mazulu and Litapa in the plain. The reason being that ploughing was undertaken by men and it was considered a male task. Secondly, the use of the plough increased field acreages and this meant more work for women particularly weeding. The burden was not felt so much by those women who were in a position to hire labour. Those who could not hire labour ended up leaving acreages unweeded. Thirdly, there was heavy involvement of both male and female hired labour for the purposes of weeding, harvesting and so on. Fourthly, a significant change was in the gender division of labour. The change was in the sense that men were also hired to engage in tasks such as weeding which previously were considered female. The key factor in this change was, of course, the reward aspect: money.
THE POST-WAR AGRICULTURAL SCHEMES

The Post-Second World War era in Northern Rhodesia was characterised by a unique feature in the role of the colonial government. This peculiar feature was manifested by the working out of agricultural policies and 'development plans'. The intentions of the colonial state were enshrined in the ten year development plan initiated in 1945. The operational framework or mechanics of the plan worked as follows:

The territory [Northern Rhodesia] is divided into eleven ecological areas, each area being reasonably homogenous both as regards soil types and its African inhabitants. These are called 'development areas' and in each one a suitable administrative district is selected to be the 'Development District' of its 'Development Areas'. Each Development District contains a team of administrative and technical officers balanced to serve the needs of the area.

Given the above framework, Barotseland was divided into Barotse South area and Barotse North area. Mongu district was designated as the 'Development district'. Kalabo district belonged to the Barotse North area. Mwashakende, located within Mongu district, was earmarked as the Development Centre catering for the entire province. As for the African agricultural sector, the objectives of the plan were, "to find the best soils in each development area and
to establish on them groups of peasant farmers working
the land on the basis of permanent agriculture; using
simple implements such as ploughs and carts instead
of the hoe and earning their living on the land
instead of extracting a mere subsistence from it."^36

In the case of Kalabo the objectives of the plan
in relation to African agriculture were not fully
realised. The colonial government in conjunction with
the Native Authorities directed their efforts to making
lishanjo soil available to cultivation. This was done
through the opening of new canals, cleaning old ones
and other drainage work. Some attempts were also made
to introduce and encourage the production of rice
in the district. However, we can now examine these
efforts in detail.

DRAINAGE WORKS

The problem of seasonal floods and water-logging
resulting from lack of drainage in the absence of male
labour necessitated the opening of new canals,
cleaning of old ones and other drainage work. This was
in order to make lishanjo soil available to cultiva-
tion. To tackle this problem funds from the Barotse Native
Authorities were used to pay the hired labourers for
opening canals. In fact in 1948 the Provincial
Commissioner suggested that money from the colonial
Development and Welfare funds should supplement the Native Treasury efforts. This was done though the funds were limited.

In 1949 the colonial government concern was seen in the opening of the Sitokoloki canal which affected mainly the western side of Simunyange plain. In the same year canals were dug in the area of Inkona mission and this made sishanjo land available to cultivation. The digging of feeder drains in the Simunyange plain was carried out in 1951. Government effort on this drainage scheme was also manifested through the release of £1000 in 1957. It was also reported that, "many miles have been covered in digging up the Sihole drainage canal and in widening and deepening the Kalenga canal." The Kalabo District Commissioner in his 1959 report outlined the work done as follows:

More spectacular, although less fundamental, is the new construction work which has been executed this year. A twenty-five foot wide channel has been cleared from Kalabo to Sikongo, for a distance of forty-one miles, thus providing a main drain along the bottom of the heavily populated Salund ridge as well as opening a remote hinterland to river transport. Most of the Simunyange plain is now drained by major canals, and intelligent use of side drains should enable all the abandoned gardens to be brought back into production.

Women were not directly involved in the actual digging of canals. This was considered a male task. However,
the colonial authorities did endeavour to teach them
songs giving moral support to the canal diggers.
Cadet J.D. Horniman confirmed this in his 1960 Tour
report:

I was most interested by the words of one
song with which the women folk sometimes
accompanied me. This was in the form of a
command to their men to take up their
shovels and go and work clearing the
canals on Monday Tuesday. Wednesday and
Thursday and to rest on the remaining
three days of the week. This song is
apparently a legacy from a visit by the
Namushakende Public Relations Unit at
the beginning of this year [1960]
advocating canal consciousness at which
they seem to have had some success.43

Our search for the exact words of the song brought us
close to what Cadet Horniman reports above. This
was in the following song, which one respondent claimed
was the song they used to sing those days:

Mina Baana amutokole maabwa ni malombe!
Mina amutokole maabwa!
La Mubulo kuiza la bune
Amutokole Maabwa!
Mina Baana amutokole maabwa!

meanings:

You men open canals and clear drains!
You men open canals!
From Monday to Thursday
You men open canals!44

Nevertheless, the drainage work undertaken resulted
into the reclamation of about 250,000 acres or 400
square miles of land. However, this land was still subject to seasonal flooding. At any rate, this was a considerable effort on the part of the colonial government and the Barotse Native Authorities.

Another area which was focussed upon was the maintenance of canals and channels. This task needed to be carried out regularly. Therefore, the colonial officials in Kalabo district approached the issue with the objective of inculcating what was termed 'canal conscious' attitude among the Kalabo people. To achieve this a number of activities were undertaken:

the dropping of leaflets from aircraft, two tours by the Protectorate public relations unit, the printing of 5,000 copies of a profusely illustrated book on the district's canals that is now a school reader, an exhibition of posters and photographs that is still 'on tour' in the district, the use of a tape recorder to deliver speeches by the induna Muleta and the District Commissioner and the preparation of a film and slides about canals, 'Canal courses' have been held for Kapasus and a canal conference for indunas...

The drainage schemes, as we have described them above, had a number of implications for women's role in agriculture. First of all, it is clear and evident that female labour was not engaged in these drainage works. This was a male task. Therefore, though women were primary cultivators, they were not given or exposed to the skill and knowledge about opening canals
and their maintenance. The 'canal courses' were only attended by men, namely Kapasus and Indunas. Secondly the consequence of drainage work was making land available for cultivation, the land which was previously lost to the swamps. This made sishanjo cultivation possible. Practically, this entailed intensification of female labour in sishanjo cultivation. The hoe was still an indispensable implement for the cultivation of these gardens.

THE RICE SCHEME

Apart from carrying out drainage work, the colonial government in the post world war II era did undertake the task of introducing and encouraging the production of rice crop in Kalabo district. In fact the District Commissioner's Conference on Native Development held in May 1943 recommended the production of rice in the province where land was available. The colonial government through the department of agriculture made efforts to identify suitable sites and make seeds available to the people. For instance, in 1949 it was reported that:

Large areas in each district in the province contain sites suitable for Rice growing and the population to cultivate the crop on an appreciable scale. Observation and inquiry in Angola showed that a Rice variety suitable for milling for export and
grown under conditions approximating close to those in Barotseland was available. For these reasons Angola paddy rice was imported and distributed... The importation of twenty-five bags was arranged, the greatest quantity that could be planted in 1949.48

Some attention was also given to the idea of teaching the people how to grow rice. Hence in 1950 some 'Notes on Rice cultivation' written in Silozi were distributed throughout the province. 49 In the same year rice seed distribution was carried out;

In September and October, twenty four sacks of seed were distributed in the province, of which eleven sacks of Angola Crystal were distributed in Mongu district.... The seed was directly issued to 3,209 women who were instructed in rice cultivation. Thirteen sacks were distributed through the District Commissioners and indunas in the other four districts, all of it Angola crystal except for two bags of Tanganyika Faya. 50

Though, seed rice in Kalabo district was distributed through the District Commissioner and the indunas as can be deduced from the above citation, the Mongu case whereby seeds were directly given to 3,209 women does demonstrate the colonial government's awareness of the crucial role of women in agriculture. However, in the area of instructing the people how to grow Rice, some effort was made in 1951 by sending some people to Namushakende Development Centre for Rice
demonstration. The Kalabo District Commissioner in his report remarked: "It was also good to see the evident interest being shown by people from the district who attended the rice demonstrations at Namushakende in November."

The mode of rice seed distribution which the department of Agriculture used was to give the seed to those who were interested. But this was done on the understanding that, "either they pay cash for the seeds or return an equal amount at the end of the harvest." This mode of distribution was misunderstood by some people because, "a few people thought that if they borrow the seed this way, all the harvest belonged to the department of Agriculture." Certainly, this misconception created apathy in some.

In terms of labour, rice is one crop which was very demanding. Generally, men ploughed the rice fields. The women, transplanted, thinned, weeded, protected the crop from birds such as wildgeese and harvested. In the Kalabo case, we were informed that even children in the age range of six to twelve years helped their mothers particularly when it came to the task of scaring birds. In fact this labour demanding aspect seem to have contributed to the failure of the efforts on Rice production in Kalabo district. In 1957 the Kalabo District Commissioner confirmed this, "for some
years the production of rice has been encouraged. The main difficulty has been the reluctance of the villages to undertake the comparatively heavy work involved in producing a crop for which the price paid is little if at all, higher than that for maize. Cadet Housden also admitted, "I was careful to look for signs of rice growing but found none. It is not a popular crop, needing transplanting and protection from birds." However, to appreciate the changing role of women in the context of these schemes one needs to look at differentiation and gender.

DIFFERENTIATION AND GENDER

It is necessary to focus on the position of women in the social relations of production in order to get an idea of the varying material conditions in which the Kalabo female producers operated in the period 1940 to 1964. Therefore the position of women should be seen in the context of the varying basic characteristics of the Kalabo peasantry. One such basic characteristic is that some peasants in Kalabo in the period 1940 to 1964 produced to meet their subsistence needs and for the market. Due to lack of statistics we can not quantify them (peasants). However, the important point is that their production had a tendency to marketing. In fact we are informed that some men engaged in
in tobacco trade to earn cash. The report read as follows:

Many villages particularly of Nyanka and Nakoma, tobacco is grown fairly extensively and a flourishing trade is carried on with the sale of tobacco sales. Not only are they hawked round other parts of the district but they are supplied to the other parts of the province where there is a demand. Some growers receive an income of up to £50 from their business.58

In relation to agricultural implements, these peasants owned ploughs and several hoes. This was because they were capable of purchasing them. Certainly, they were responsible for the fact that "consignments of ploughs] arriving at the local stores are snapped up and there remains a demand."59

Nevertheless, the fundamental question is what was the position of women? Evidence available to us suggests that some women were in favourable material conditions, because they were married to men who owned ploughs and could hire labour to assist in agricultural production. Unlike the Malawian women studied by Vauznan the Kalabo women followed the viriloclal marriage system.60 Practically, this meant that they were provided with fields to cultivate by their husbands — who owned the land. However, this is not to say that women like Bo Namukuka were denied access to land.

The role of these married women centred on their labour
and reproductive capacities. With regard to production some married women did engage in cultivation, though they enjoyed the privilege that their husbands could employ casual labour for various tasks such as Kulimelela. Confirming this point one respondent recalled:

I remember in 1962 a number of Linjimi (rich peasants) such as Mr. Jeremiah Konga [now turned trader] hired us to work in their fields. Their wives accompanied us to the fields but only to oversee our work. They could cultivate if they wanted to but their concern was to see that we did the work well.

It is also important to note that some of these married women did engage in some income generating activities such as small scale food marketing and beer brewing. These activities tended to be limited. Hence, their income was not substantial. There was little interference from their husbands because their income was not substantial apart from the fact that these women expended the money on domestic needs. They brewed beer and sold it in situ. The main reasons being that their husbands could not release them to go away from home and sell beer along the routes used by Makumuca. After all, their husbands did not perceive such efforts as constituting a major and reliable financial source. In a nutshell, these women tended to be surbdinated.

On the other hand, there were some married women and Bo Namukuka who were in less favourable material
conditions. In the absence of statistics we can not quantify these women. But their material conditions were underlined by a number of features. First, they were engaged in subsistence production. Second, they were directly involved in the tasks ranging from cultivation to consumption. Their yields were low due to a number of constraints such as lack of labour, lack of manure to fertilize their yields and so on. Third, the hoe was their main implement and rarely or hardly did they hire labour. Fourth, it was common for these women to hire out their labour cultivating in the fields of the other peasants. Alluding to this aspect Pumulo said:

In the 1960s many of us were still depending on the hoe. Our fortunate friends owned ploughs and cultivated more land than us. We had no oxen and could not hire a plough. Some women who were fortunate to receive some money from their migrant husbands could organise lubile. For me and many others we only had to cultivate in the fields of others.62

Some of these married women who failed to cope with the hardships of village agricultural production resisted remaining at home when their husbands left to look for work. This new option for these women was in 1961 reported thus, "the exodus of women is also increasing especially among the Mawiko."63 Certainly, these were the most vulnerable women. The option to migrate was
taken as a consequence of destitution. **Bo Namukuka**
were among the hardest hit probably because they had
no male partners to assist them in eking a living in
production. Hence, the hardships of food production
rested on the women who had no option to migrate
in search of formal employment.
NOTES

1. see Sec2/;f, Annual Report on Native Affairs of Barotse Province, 1940.
2. see Sec2/71, Native Affairs, 1940.
3. see Sec2/71, Native Affairs, 1941.
4. see Sec2/71, Native Affairs, 1945.
5. see Sec2/71, Native Affairs, 1948.
6. see Sec2/71, Native Affairs, 1949.
7. see Sec2/71, Native Affairs, 1948.
8. see Sec2/71, Native Affairs, 1949.
11. see Sec2/197, Zwelopili, 1956.
12. see Sec2/197, Zwelopili, 1957.
15. see Sec2/71, Native Affairs, 1941.
16. see Sec2/71, Native Affairs, 1940.
17. see Sec2/71, Native Affairs, 1948.
20. see Sec2/194, Provincial Newsletter, 1946.
22. see Sec2/477, Kalabo Tour Report, 1946.
30. see Sec2/71, Native Affairs, 1951.
33. see African Affairs Annual Report, 1948.
35. see Sec1/383, "The Ten Year Development Plan," 1945.
37. see African Affairs Annual Report, 1948.
38. see Sec2/71, Native Affairs, 1949.
40. see Sec2/71, Native Affairs, 1949
41. see Sec2/71, Native Affairs, 1949
42. see African Affairs Annual Report, 1959.
43. see Sec2/477, Kalabo Tour Report, 1960.
44. Interview with Ma Miyato Lubinda, Kalabo Roma, October, 1989.
45. see African Affairs Annual Report, 1950.
46. see African Affairs Annual Report, 1950.
47. see Sec2/143 District Commissioner's Conference, 1943.
48. see Northern Rhodesia, Department of Agriculture Annual Report, 1949.
49. see African Affairs Annual Report, 1950.
50. see African Affairs Annual Report, 1950.
51. see Sec2/71, Native Affairs, 1951.
52. see Sec2/71, Zwelopili, 1956.
53. see Sec2/71, Zwelopili, 1956.
55. see Sec2/485, Kalabo Tour Report, 1957.
56. see Sec2/485, Kalabo Tour Report, 1958.
57. For a definition of peasants which we use in this study see M.A. Klein (ed.), Peasants in Africa: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives. (Beverly Hills: Sage publications, 1980). 'Introduction'.
58. see M.A.Z. Barotse Annual Report, 1943.
59. see Sec2/71, Native Affairs, 1951.
61. Interview with Mawa Sizimbulwe, Lukona, January 1990.
63. see African Affairs Annual Report, 1961.
CHAPTER 4

POST-COLONIAL AGRICULTURAL CHANGE AND GENDER,
1964-1986

In this chapter we explore the post-colonial agricultural changes in Kalabo district from 1964 to 1986. We focus on how these changes affected women's role in agriculture. In this connection we look at the following issues: the impact of the closure of WENELA; the role of the post-colonial government in fostering agricultural change; the People's Participation Project and cash crop production in Kalabo district. The chapter closes by examining the labour procurement methods and modern agricultural methods adopted by some peasants. Our main argument in this chapter is that the agricultural changes which took place in Kalabo district in the period 1964 to 1986 were more inclined to intensifying the exploitation of female labour than improving their conditions in production.

THE CLOSURE OF WENELA

In September 1966 recruitment of labour migrants by the Witwatersrand Native Labour Association [W.N.L.A.] in Bulozi came to an end. Announcing the closure a Cabinet Minister Munukayumbwa Sipalo said, "Kina Munukayumbwa Sipalo. Ni tiloo felisa Sipalo sa Wenela mwa Muluyi-Longa Bulozi". (I am Munukayumbwa
Sipalo. I am here to announce the end of M.M.L.A. contract labour in Bulozi.¹ The announcement by Sipalo had a telling effect on the lives of the people of Bulozi. For some women the closure had adverse effects in the sense that this was one of their source of income. Their frustration was revealed in their songs. For instance, one of the songs went as follows:

**UNIP has disappointed us**
**We made UNIP win and**
**Melansky is gone!**
**UNIP has disappointed us!**
**WENELA is finished!**
**Wankle is finished!**
**Johannesburg is finished!²**

**UNIP ilu swa mi ya**
**Lumano winisa UNIP**
**Melansky wiles.**
**Kono Unip ilushibiza**
**Menela ifelile!**
**Wankle ifelile!**
**Njobeli ifelile!**

This song is quite explicit about the women's awareness of what they had lost with the closure of the male labour migration to the south. The song expressed their disappointment with ruling party namely the United National Independence Party (U.N.I.P.) for having closed WENELA. In another testimony one Namukuka in Sikongo told us, "You see my son! [apparently referring to me the interviewer] the closure of WENELA was a big blow to some of us. I could manage to raise £2.00 in a month from Bucwala alone. The money would enable me to buy salt, needles and even mulepo."³ Mulepo is a length of printed cloth now popularly known as citeme. It is undiscou-
table that WOMEN was one of the sources of female income.

In another development, some of the men who lost employment through the closure joined their wives in the villages. The return of male labour to village life was a relief to those women whose husbands could open new Ntenga fields for them and assist them in production. Ntenga fields had an advantage in that once opened up they would last three to four years producing cassava. The only work to be done was the Kusnenedeka. It is interesting to note that men also carried out this task considered 'female'.

Asking why men participated in it, one respondent said, "Of course, our husbands realised the need to help us in production - now the only means of livelihood. As a matter of fact some of them admitted that in the mines of Johannesburg they were subjected to 'monkey' work of pick and shovel. Besides, we just had to earn a living. Because Johannesburg was no more."

Nevertheless, some men could not resort to farming. They endeavoured to secure employment locally and on the Zambian Copperbelt. Locally, they managed to engage in work such as Bafuluni ba lisepe [meaning the Paddlers of Wood Barges]. They paddled long distances such as Monju to Kalabo - a distance which could be covered in five days.
A major local labour market became available with the commencement of recruitment by the Nakambala Sugar Estate in Mazabuka district, Southern Province. Men from Kalabo district took advantage of this new labour market. In fact the Nyengo men from Kalabo were said to have been so many that all the Cane Cutters came to be commonly known as the 'Nyengo people'. Unlike labour migration to the south, the migration to Nakambala Estate took a different pattern. This pattern was along the lines of what Stichter described in the Kenyan case as 'seasonality'. She described the Kenyan case as follows:

One result of the stasis in African Agriculture and the necessity of migrant labour was the emergence of a seasonal pattern in the flow of labour.... Workers who came out voluntarily attempted to key their work periods to the demands of agricultural cycle. This could not actually prevent the decline of African agriculture but it did prove a mechanism of adjustment and mitigation.

The significant difference between the Kenyan case and the Nakambala case is that in the latter the labour migrants stayed at the estate during the cropping season and thereafter they would be paid off. In terms of time, this meant that migrants stayed at Nakambala from April to December. For the rest of the months they stayed at home. Hence they were away from
home for nine months in a year.

In order to appreciate the impact of 'seasonality' on women's role in agriculture in the Kalabo case, one should underscore the fact that the agricultural cycle practiced there was such that it occupied the women all year round. The fact that women shouldered three quarters of the agricultural work as a result of the 'seasonality' aspect of labour migration can be deduced even from a chart Gluckman provides in his work.\textsuperscript{11} The chart shows the calendrical cycle, siting and sex division of gardening in Lozi plain.

However, some respondents from Imilangu, Nakoma, Liuwa and Nyenzo plain did indicate to us that the work which men did upon return from Nakambala Estate was mainly Mazulu ploughing which usually started around December every year.\textsuperscript{12} Another important point to consider is that seasonality also affected the sishanjo gardens, the moist heap and moist margin gardens. This was with respect to the male task of drainage, opening canals and furrows. Given the agricultural cycle in the area this work needed to be done during winter and yet this was the time when men were fully engaged in cane cutting at Nakambala. Ultimately, in some cases women endeavoured to do men's work but in most cases these fields were abandoned.\textsuperscript{13} Some women, such as Albertina Sitali, consoled them-
selves with the little that their husbands brought home from Nakambala. Albertina says:

My former husband went to Nakambala in 1969 and 1970. At the end of his 1969 contract he brought home a dress for me, a citizen and a blanket for us to use. ... We barely survived on the little I had managed to cultivate.14

The crucial question which was still pending was the response of the post-colonial government to the plight of African agriculture. The government response appeared in 1970.

**THE POST-COLONIAL STATE’S POLICIES, 1970-1986**

Theoretically, the Zambian government began to turn its attention to issues affecting women in agriculture in 1970. This was done through the creation of the Home Economics Section in the department of Agriculture.15 In the Western Province [formerly Barotseland] this section began to operate in the same year. The broad objectives of the section were:

a. to provide extension services to women in the rural areas to assist them to increase agricultural production and to grow more varied foods to improve their diets.

b. teaching nutrition and thereby educating
women on how to end malnutrition in their families.

a. encourage and support women's contribution to national development so that the part they play can be recognised.

Theoretically, the objectives were good. They reflected the desire of the state to enhance women's role in agriculture and improve their conditions. The question is how were they translated into action?

VILLAGE COURSES

In order to expose Kalabo Women to new knowledge on nutrition and how to combat malnutrition, the Home Economics Section conducted Rural Women Courses in villages. According to the 1973/74 Annual Report, it was reported that:

... Village classes were having the desired effect. They minimised transport problems and because they are conducted in situ husbands are nearby to taste what has been prepared and as such are amenable to permitting their wives to participate in the courses.

From the report it is evident that men were not willing to release their wives to attend the classes if at all the courses entailed the women staying far away from their homes. However, this was not a constraint for
the **Namukuka**. What is abundantly clear from the report is the fact that male control was still a serious barrier. Another problem we find with this government initiative is that it tended not to give priority to solving problems faced by women in agricultural production. It had a bias to the aspect of inculcating nutritional knowledge among women. This approach, we contend, was 'up-side down' because learning to cook food without the means to produce it was not helpful to the village women. Besides, not all Kalabo women attended these courses since they were conducted only in few places. However, by 1985/86 these village courses had been stopped due to lack of staff by the Female Extension Services Section and non-availability of transport to use in going into the villages.\(^\text{13}\)

Though, conducted on a small scale, the village courses did change women’s attitude to the issues of nutritional diet.

**EXTENSION SERVICES**

As an attempt to expose women in Kalabo to new knowledge and modern agricultural methods the department of agriculture through Home Economics Section decided to train women at the Kalabo Farmers Training Centre. Such a step was taken in 1978 when 54 local
female farmers and 139 male farmers were offered training in wheat and rice production at the centre.\textsuperscript{19} Though the centre had been in operation since 1970 it was only from 1978 when women farmers were offered training there. What is significant with this move was the realisation on the part of the state of the need to involve women. However, it was not adequate from the point of view of numbers despite women constituting the core of rural agricultural producers in Kalabo. Certainly, the illiterate women did not benefit from such training even if enough room was created for them to attend such training.

Another aspect related to Extension services was the work of Commodity Demonstrators (here after C.D.S) who were also trained locally at the Kalabo Training Centre. The C.D.'s major task was to visit villages teaching the farmers modern methods of farming. They urged the people to plant on time and taught them how to tend their crops. The work of C.D.S seem not to have yielded positive results in as far as addressing the problems of female producers was concerned. The main problem was that probably due to cultural inhibitions the C.D.'s audience tended to consist of men only. Women, who were the primary producers were assumed to get their lessons in modern farming via their husbands. The fate of
Bo Namukuka was left in their own hands. They were probably expected to use initiative by copying from others. One informant complained:

The C.Ds only talked to their fellow men yet we, the women, are the ones who go to the fields and 'break' our backs. To some of us we see no reason why the government continues to pay these people the salaries they spend in beer drinking. 20

It is interesting to note that even Barbara Brown who studied the case of Women in Botswana arrived at the conclusion that, "the failure of agricultural extension work to women stems from at least two causes. First, the lack of an integrated farming system, tailored to the needs of small farmers, means that the extension worker has little to offer most women, who are usually the farmers. Second, the almost entire male extension staff has hesistated to approach women farmers." 21 Perhaps, as a recognition of this problem in 1983 the department of agriculture launched the People's Participation Project in Kalabo, Mongu and Kaoma districts.

THE PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION PROJECT, 1983-1986

In an effort to enhance women's role in agriculture particularly those in the low income group such as Bo Namukuka, the department of agriculture launched the
People's Participation Project (P.P.P.) in Kalabo district in 1983. This was a pilot project funded by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (F.A.O.) in collaboration with the donor country, Netherlands. The prime objective of the project was to initiate a suitable development approach for the lower income rural women especially the female headed households. These women were defined as those individuals living at or below the subsistence level. The P.P.P. approach was based on the idea of small homogenous groups of 8 to 15 persons operating separately or in existing formal farmer organizations such as co-operatives. The women under this project were organised into groups and had access to group loans guaranteed by a Guarantee Risk Fund [G.R.F.] through the Zambia Cooperative Federation.

The project started with three groups namely Buleya, Mapungu and Lukona with a total membership of 165. The focus was on wheat production, communal rice production and Handicrafts. By 1985 Kalabo had 24 groups with a total membership of 318. Though the project has good intentions by 1986 some of its limitations were evident.

LIMITATIONS OF THE PROJECT

The project lacked staff to manage and organise the groups in the district. For instance, only Theresa, N. Pellsar, who depended on a 110 Trial Honda motorcycle was charged with the responsibility of organising the groups in the entire district. Certainly, this was not adequate. Secondly, funds to
purchase project inputs such as fertilizer, seeds and herbicides were lacking. Thirdly, being a new concept in the farming system of the local people naturally, it was not wholly acceptable. Some women had reservations about it. Ultimately, some groups had big membership whilst others like Hungandu had only five members. However, the existence of these limitations does not imply that the project did not have an impact on women. Let us now look at this aspect.

THE IMPACT ON WOMEN

In order to adequately examine the impact of the project on women's role in agriculture in Kalabo it would be necessary to go beyond the time period of this study. However, the project did change women's role in agriculture by organising female labour into groups. The women were also exposed to agricultural lending. Moreover, these women were oriented to engage their labour in production with the market and profit motive other than just satisfying consumption needs. This point was amplified in a baseline study of the project. The study concluded:

Participants [in the project] tend to grow a wider range of crops than Non-Participants. They also tend to grow crops such as maize, wheat and rice which require high management practices. ... Non participants seem to grow non commercial crops like
cassava, sorghum and millet... It is more likely that participants are now growing more of commercial crops (maize, rice and wheat) because of the influence of agricultural extension agents. 27

Another point of observation we would make here is that in the case of Kalabo district the crop which featured prominently was rice. This was not because it was a popular food crop in the area but as a cash crop. Therefore it was an outstanding cash crop for the district. This was one crop which did heavily involve female labour in production. This crop made a notable contribution to cash crop production in Kalabo district.

**CASH CROP PRODUCTION**

The agricultural change in Kalabo district towards cash crop production became notable in the period 1975 to 1984. From 1975 to 1984 Kalabo district made a contribution of 34.47 percent of national rice production second only to Mongu district. In terms of production levels, Kalabo's contribution was, "54.9 metric tons in 1975, 311.8 in 1983 and 245.3 metric tons in 1984." This was a remarkable development. But to appreciate the impact of this cash crop production on the role of women, we focus on the labour procurement methods and modern agricultural methods which
some farmers practiced. These methods in one way or
another made a contribution to this remarkable develop-
ment.

LABOUR PROCUREMENT METHODS

In the proceeding chapter we indicated that some
peasants hired labour and adopted modern agricultural
tools such as the plough. Such methods were also
adopted by those in salaried employment such
as civil servants, clerks, teachers and so on, who by
virtue of proximity, interpersonal relationships and
individual initiative had access to land and engaged
in production. In a way they were producers. However,
our concern here is to analyse the labour procurement
methods employed by some peasants in light of the post-
colonial agricultural changes and how these methods affected
women. The labour procurement methods were in the use
of different forms of payment for hired labour engaged
in agricultural production. These included:

(i) CASH: Cash was a form of payment which some
peasants used for hired agricultural labour.
We were informed that both men and women were
hired and paid in cash. In fact, in Salunda
area, we witnessed a group of men and women
transplanting and thinning rice in the field
of my brother in law, Mr. A. Peilwar. It was interesting to see men do 'female' work such as thinning and weeding. Though Kalabo was still a male dominated society, the economic pressure seemed to have compelled men do work which in the pre-colonial era they would have left in the hands of women. However, the catch here was the money reward which both men and women needed.

(C4) SALAUA: Meaning old clothes, was another form of payment which came to be used in hiring agricultural labour in Kalabo District particularly around 1985 and 1986. These clothes were brought in bales from places such as the Copperbelt Province, Lusaka and Mongu and transported to Kalabo. A bale of salaual would fetch in the range of K1000.00 to K3000.00 depending on the size and type of clothes inside. Upon arriving in Kalabo, the owner of the bale would open it and each item would be priced. In this case the labour hired was valued on the basis of the price of clothes which the labourer desired. In other words, they would exchange labour for the clothes. In most cases, these prices were negotiable depending on the work.
to be done and the condition of the clothes one is interested in. Our field evidence suggest that many women and children were greatly lured by this form of payment. It seemed a cheaper way for Bo Manguku to have clothes which otherwise they could not afford to buy directly from the shops. Children who were bit enough to do meaningful work also did not 'spare' themselves. Khowa Sita, a mother of two twins aged twelve years, told us:

by two daughters and myself but these dresses we are putting on after working in the vine field of Mr. Manenhla - the headteacher at our nearby primary school. These are our best clothes. 34

Hence, by 1996 salaula had become a popular form of payment for agricultural tasks. Other payments in kind for agricultural tasks included fish.

3.3. Under the influence of economic factors such as the rising value of fishing nets and indeed, the fisherman's dire need to eke a living through this occupation, the price value of fish also rose. Besides under circumstances of population increase it was not every Kalabo peasant who had access and time to catch fish. These factors boosted fish trade. But for some
women especially those domiciled in areas where fish deficit existed access to fish meant buying it. Some Kaloko peasants in fish deficit areas bought bundles of fish from the fishermen in Buleli flood plain. Instead of reselling the fish for cash, these peasants exchanged the fish for labour as they did with salaula. Evidence available to us does indicate that it was particularly the Namukuka who tended to hire out their labour for fish. Of course, they had to find relish such as fish to feed their families. Expressing how hard bit they were, one Namukuka confessed to us:

I remember relish was a problem and it is still a problem particularly during the dry season when green vegetables such as Mangosha from our gardens are no more. One season I was forced to transplant rice in the field of Udante Lubinda who paid me three tiger fish and two breeders. Actually, I went to work in his field about three times. 35

This form of payment does demonstrate the extent to which women could go to procure food for their families. The use of different forms of payment for hired labour was an advantage to those who had the means. Perhaps we can now look at the adoption of modern agricultural methods and their implications on women's role in agriculture.
The modern agricultural methods which some peasants adopted included agricultural loans from the Agricultural Finance Company (A.F.C.) which ceased operating in 1937; application of fertilizers such as Amonia; use of ploughs (the LEWCO type) and so on. In the adoption of these methods it was the men not women who were in the forefront. For instance in a married household the man would get an agricultural loan from the Agricultural Finance Company whilst the wife was just a 'spectator'. In the fields, the men invited the agricultural extension workers and did the purchasing of all the agricultural inputs. All the serious decision making rested on the heads of men. The men controlled and owned the ploughs. They ceased the use of such inputs as fertilizer and seeds. However, all this did not mean that men did more physical work than the women in such households. It means that men monopolised the management and owned the major means of production. Hence, even cash payment for hired labour was done by men. This was so particularly because such households had yields which in most cases were marketed and hence could not allow their wives to have a 'free' hand. Ultimately, the married women in such households had to acquire knowledge about modern methods via their
husbands.

In the sphere of food marketing, particularly rice which was now a cash crop in Kalabo, some men excluded their wives. The men transported the bags of rice in canoes where possible and sleighs to the Western Province Cooperative Union (W.P.C.U.) rural depots such as Buleya, Sikongo and Imilangu. These were buying depots from which it was convenient for the 'Cooperative Union' to collect the bags bought. Women were excluded, by their husbands, from marketing bags of rice especially if it involved two or more bags. For instance, one respondent told us:

In 1986 we had our best production. We sold 8 bags of rice. My husband sold the bags and kept the money. After buying me a citenge and school requisites for our children, he deposited the money in his Post-Office Savings Book.

From the above response it is clear that married women were not decision makers on the proceeds from the marketed produce. Therefore, their material benefits from such proceeds were determined by their husbands. Obviously such a situation left room for abuse by their husbands. Nevertheless, the monopoly of large scale agricultural marketing by men did not imply that all married women were subjected to rural poverty.

We should also recognise the fact that there still existed in Kalabo, women whose conditions were markedly different from those whose husbands could afford to adopt modern agricultural methods. Such women if at all they had land suitable for rice cultivation, they hardly grew enough for sale. The Luvale and Mbunda women, for example, largely lacked land, suitable for rice growing. The literature...
Therefore, their most important field. These women also
tended to hire out their labour, hence they experienced
the greatest hardships. Not only were they expected
to cultivate their own fields but also compelled by
other economic factors to hire out their labour. The
moe was still the dominant tool they could afford.
However, there were some who could endeavour to hire a
plough if they stumbled upon some money. 39 But the
litema was an important field to such women as was
confirmed in a study of Namakuyu area in Kalabo by
Lerling. She established that 38.5 percent of litema
fields in the area were owned by women and 33.7 percent
by men. 40

CONCLUSION

This chapter has shown that there was a deliberate
effort on the part of the Post-Colonial government to
encourage the role of women in agriculture in Kalabo
district from 1978 to 1986. Nevertheless, such efforts
were thwarted by the constraints inherent in the
agricultural policies. By and large, the conditions
of women in agriculture changed to the benefit of few.
The plight of the female producer in Kalabo district
is still unresolved.
NOTES


2. I first heard this song from Mr. Mubenda who
happens to originate from Kyembe and the
Kalabo district. In an informal chat with
Mubenda, September 1979.


4. Interview with Mary Mulenda, Hunkuyu area, August 1979.

5. The song of Bwimbi be Lilepe has changed.
The main routes are Mongu to Kalabo, Mongu to
Kalabo, and Kalabo to points along the
Luwangwa river. Mealie-meal from the Tindeco Milling plant is the main commodity
exchanged in the barge.

Kalabo harbour. Mongu Libo claims that
he once worked as a Capitao (Supervisor of
the barge crew) in 1935 and 1939.

Mr. Pelisar is a mechanic/driver working
for the Kalabo Agriculture and Development
Project based at Kalabo Estate.

Mr. Shipopa happens to be a colleague
of the R.U.A. History programme. He is actively
researching on the conditions of labour
independent and worker consciousness at the
Kalambala Crown Estate, Matabola.

9. see M. Gluckman, Economy, p. 120.

10. see M. Albertina Sitali, Emilanzu Game,

11. M. Gluckman, Economy, p. 120.

12. Interview with Albertina Sitali, Emilanzu Game,

13. There were instances when women helped men to
ploough by pulling the oxen but not pulling
the plough.


16. see Annual Report, Extension Branch, p. 39.

17. see Annual Report, Extension Branch, p. 40.


22. see Kangangwa and Shula, A Baseline Study, p. 7


24. see Kanyangwa and Shula, A Baseline Study, p. 19.


27. see Kanyangwa and Shula, A Baseline Study, p. 55.

28. see Kanyangwa and Shula, A Baseline Study, p. 19.

29. see Kanyangwa and Shula, A Baseline Study, p. 19.
30. Interview with Agnes Shamiyoyo, Mapungu, November 1989.

31. We traversed this area in February 1990.

32. Interview with Namakondo Sundano, Sikongo, October 1989.

33. Interview with Simushi Patricia Nakushowa, Tuuwa, November 1989.

34. Interview with Mulowa Sitali, Mapungu, November 1989.

35. Interview with Nyambe Sitali, Buleya, January 1990.

36. Interview with Mutemwa Mboma, Mongu, whilst on his way to Kalabo, October 1989. Mr. Mutemwa is an Agronomist working for the Kalabo Agricultural Development Project.

37. Interview with Lillian Sumbwa, Kalabo Boma, October 1989. She lost her husband in 1983. She claims he was one of the Linjuni in Buleya area.


CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine the changing role of women in agriculture in the period 1906 to 1986, by taking a case study of Kalabo district. The change was seen in the context of the impact of colonialism and the penetration of capitalism. The study has argued that from the pre-colonial era the role of women in agriculture has been crucial. In pre-colonial Kalabo, the institutionalisation of labour relations to serve the status quo and the ruling aristocracy was in the form of slave labour. This slave labour was Maketiso and Buzike. Women were affected by this form of labour in two ways. Firstly, some women were taken as Maketiso and Ba Buzike. Secondly, some women married to men who were privileged to have Maketiso and Buzike seem to have been alienated from production because they could depend upon maketiso and buzike labour.

However, the penetration of colonialism in Kalabo district had a telling effect on the role of women in agriculture. The role of women changed in the context of the new colonial economy, cattle trade, labour migration and indeed changing agricultural technology. In the period 1906 to 1939 the conditions of some women improved through the engagement of Lubile, Kulimelela and hired labour. Generally, women still shouldered the brunt of agricultural production.
In the period 1940 to 1964, agricultural change in production was noted. The Matema field assumed importance as a result of the abandonment of the Mazulu, Litapa and Sishanjogardens which were flooded and waterlogged. This was due to seasonal floods and lack of male labour for drainage tasks. Therefore, female tasks in Matema fields increased. At the same time, women played a prominent role in food marketing and beer brewing for sale. Men tended not to interfere with women's involvement in such income generating activities may be because the earnings were meagre. Besides, their (women) earnings were mainly expended on immediate domestic needs.

The introduction of the plough, an agricultural implement Kalabo women did not own, led to increased acreage under cultivation. Consequently, there was increased work for women with respect to tasks such as sowing, weeding and harvesting. But some women married to peasants who could hire labour, experienced favourable material conditions.

The period after the Second World War witnessed deliberate steps being taken by the colonial government through the devising of agricultural policies and development plans targeted at Africans. Kalabo district in particular was affected through the implementation of drainage works and promotion of rice production.
However, such endeavours seem not to have improved the conditions of women in agricultural production.

Lastly, the period 1964 to 1986 was, at first, characterised by the closure of Wenela, a development which dwindled one source of money for the village women who engaged in beer brewing for sale to Makumuda. Nevertheless, some Kalabo men opted to offer their labour to the Nakambala Sugar Estate in Mazabuka. They engaged in the seasonal cane cutting task. This had the effect of engaging female labour in agricultural tasks more than men. This was as a result of the 'seasonality' aspect of labour migration to Nakambala Sugar Estate in Mazabuka.

As from 1970, the Zambian government through the creation of the Home Economics Section within the department of Agriculture, turned its attention to issues affecting women in Agriculture. Theoretically, the objectives of the section were good in the sense that they sought to enhance women's role in agriculture. But practically the manner in which the section attempted to achieve its objectives, for instance, through village courses, extension services and the People's Participation Project seem not to have been adequate. Neither did these approaches involve all women in Kalabo district nor did they drastically improve the conditions of women in production.
However, we should underscore the fact that some women married to peasants who could use labour procurement methods and adopt modern agricultural methods were in conditions markedly different from those women who tended to hire out their labour. The latter experienced the greatest hardships. In a nutshell, the plight of the female producer in Kalabo district may still remain unresolved for some time to come.
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Kalabo Boma 26/10/1989
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