# CHANGES IN LEATHERWORK INDIGENOUS INDUSTRY AMONG THE TUGEN OF BARINGO COUNTY; 1895-1963;KENYA.

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**Abstract**

This is a study of pre-colonial African technology with special emphasis on the Tugen indigenous leather industry between 1895 and 1963. The study examined the approaches that were employed by the Tugen in their knowledge, skills and attitudes acquisition before and during colonial period of Kenya. The study examined two distinctive epochs from which the understanding of how leatherwork in Tugen land was conducted. The position that is strongly advanced through this paper is that even before colonialism the Tugen of Baringo County practiced indigenous industries such as pottery, blacksmithing, and leatherwork among others. Leatherwork was characterized by the provision of knowledge and skills to individuals who were supposed to selflessly serve the society by making garments for the members of the society. They learnt through their interaction with their physical environments, to cope with the changing climatic conditions by making suitable attire for the varied climatic zones and seasons. The work relied on oral traditions as a primary source. Secondary sources were utilized such as unpublished works like articles, books, and thesis. Archival source from Kenya National Archives were extensively used to supplement the sources from primary and secondary. The study described the distribution, methods and techniques and the procedure used in leatherwork. It further assessed the types and uses of leather products. This study established the forces which led to the dismantling of the industry during the early periods of colonial rule such as through taxation, forced labour, settler farming and western education. Leatherwork in the 1930s underwent re-organisations in form of labour innovativeness, cultural transformation; marketing strategies etc. These were analysed to ascertain the forces behind the persistence of the industry. The Tugen devised ways of survival so as to compete favorably with the British colonizers which led to the Tugen transformation of the leather industry from 1945. The main problem that this study advanced is that Tugenland like other African societies is regarded by some people as having not had any form of industry or organisations before the arrival of the colonialists. This paper raised an argument against this position. The study has recorded the Tugen leather industry for posterity purposes.

**Keywords: Indigenous industry, indigenous knowledge, leatherwork, colonialism, independence**.

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Since ancient times, the hides of wild and domesticated animals have been part of the important treasure trove of materials used by people all-over the world to make garments. Leather is one of the oldest materials used in Africa, in the making of clothing and utensils by nomadic, hunting and pastoral African tribe.( [www.Gateway-Africa-Com](http://www.Gateway-Africa-Com)) Communities identify solutions to address local development problems. For communities to realize their development choices, enhancement of their own capacity to deliver and manage these problems is a critical necessity. The President of Tanzania Julius Nyerere remarked that African communities and farmers have always coped with changing environments and that “communities not only have knowledge about practices, they also have knowledge of how to adapt to adverse environments, institutions, and policies.”

The Tugen were basically mixed farmers and they kept a variety of livestock mainly goats, sheep and cattle in the varied terrain. Apart from domesticated animals a number of different kinds of wild animals provided hides used in the making of clothing. Clothing was a family responsibility (Orchardson,.1961.58.) The style and type of clothing depended to a great extent on climatic conditions. Naturally hides with the largest possible size, stiffness and thickness such as antelopes, snakes, elephants and giraffes were preferred.

Animals were slaughtered in many occasions in an individual’s life among the Tugen and this ensured the ready availability of the skins to be used. Hunting for wild game in the many forests was a continuous process. Slaughtering was done in style to get the desired shape of the skin. Thus the supply of skins was continuous. It is important to note that animals were not only slaughtered purposely to provide skins but also to provide meat, blood and even horns to be used by man. The hair, teeth, whisks, muscles, bones, horns and the fur was also utilized for other purposes by man.

The skin and the tegument (inner lining) of individual animals had to be prepared and treated in the most different ways. The skin of higher animals is divided into an outer layer (epidermis), middle layer (dermis, corium) and bottom layer (sub-Curtis). The animal skin was the most common traditional African cloth. Different communities wore different animal skins and processed them in various ways. The most common was the cow hide which was used to make cloaks, aprons and skirts. Among the Maasai the most outstanding was the lion skin which was worn by warriors as a sign of bravery.

**1.1 Statement of the problem**

Humanity has always sought more knowledge to feed families, stay healthy, argue with neighbours, and understand their immediate environment, among other issues, since the dawn of history. Before the scientific approaches of knowledge discovery emerged, local ways of solving problems were already strongly established. These ways have persisted to date and comprise what is known as indigenous knowledge. As society scientifically developed, IK became a neglected area whose potential as a resource in development was forgotten. This neglect has led to socio-economic challenges affecting food security, environmental conservation, health and social cohesion, among others. The need to rediscover and mainstream IK in development is great. This need is anchored on the understanding that IK is the basis for local-level decision making in agriculture, healthcare, food preparation, education, management of natural resources, and a host of other activities. Regardless of the growing number of studies on and interests in IK in Kenya, the issue of its protection is poorly addressed. For instance, literature on indigenous leatherwork in Kenya is scanty. This paper analysed the existing knowledge on leatherwork in Kenya and particularly in Baringo county to ascertain the changes that have occurred in the sector from the pre-colonial period and give recommendations that will address the challenges and restore industry to its rightful position in the society.

**1.2 Objectives**

1. To evaluate the steps taken by the Tugen in making indigenous leather products up to 1910.
2. To discuss the methods used by the colonialists to dismantle the Tugen indigenous leather industry from 1910 up to 1930.
3. To undertake an examination of the Tugen response to colonial dismantling of their indigenous leather industry from 1930- 1963

**1.3 Research questions**

1. Describe the steps followed when making leather products for various uses from 1895 up to 1910.
2. How did the colonialists dismantle the Tugen indigenous leather industry from 1910 up to 1930.
3. What was the response of the Tugen to this attempt from 1930 up to 1963.

# Study Area

The study was conducted in Baringo County. Baringo County is one of the 47 Counties in Kenya. Baringo County is situated in the Rift Valley region of Kenya and borders Elgeyo Escarpment to the East forming the Eastern wall and Ngelesha hills( Mochongoi) to the West forming the Western wall. To the East of the Tugen country is the Kerio Valley where river Kerio cuts along the valley floor marking a natural boundary between Baringo and Elgeyo Marakwet County. Southern boundary of the county is appropriately marked by the road between Eldama Ravine and Kampi Ya Moto. It is located between longitudes 35 30’ and 36 30’ East and Latitudes 0 10’ South and1 40’ North. The equator cuts across the country at the southern part. It covers some 11,015 Square Kilometers of which 165 Square Kilometers is water surface. ( Baringo county development plan 2017-2022)

# 1.5 Scope and limitations

The study was conducted in Baringo County, a region occupied by the Tugen community. The raw material for the development of leather industry was not found in all regions, thus various clans located in the specific regions specialised in the aspect and perfected it. The study concentrated on this contextual areas. The study consciously extracted the relevant information on leatherwork throughout the colonial period.

# 1.6 Justification and Significance of the Study

The study on Tugen leatherwork is critical because of the significant role it plays in the economic development of a county. It is history which is now urgently needed and it must be collected before it is buried with the present generation of elders who preserve it in their memory. It is important to record and document Tugen indigenous industries in written form for future use. It will show how the Tugen harnessed the surrounding environment for survival and in the process contribute to knowledge about African indigenous industries. It was the Tugen way of life, and did not record it. Moreover, the available literature of previous studies did not adequately explain the phenomenon. They tend to contradict the existing knowledge about the phenomenon. The study will offer fresh insight in the study.

**1.7 Theoretical Framework**

**T**he study was guided by the articulation of modes of production theory. The proponents of the theory included Lancau, Claude Meillassoux and African scholars such as John Lonsdale and Bruce Berman. The main argument of the theory is that when the capitalist mode of production is introduced it does not automatically and immediately replace the pre-capitalist modes of production. The two modes ie pre-capitalist and capitalist mode, were operating side by side hence articulating each other. The two modes of production were then locked in a complex and sometimes contradictory struggle, hence articulation. (Laclau. E. (1971) Gradually, the capitalist mode of production began to modify, marginalize, destroy or sub-ordinate the pre-capitalist mode of production by utilizing it rather than casting it aside.( Meillessoux. C. (1974) It provides the framework for analyzing the different social formation of capitalist penetration, their dynamism and resulting degree of articulation.

**1.8 Literature Review**

This section entails the critical and relevant literature review of Leatherwork.The literature review was able to acknowledge the contributions of other scholars on themes on leatherwork in the world and Baringo County in particular. It analyzed the literature related to the study which formed the basis for research questions and objectives in order to broaden the ideas on the topic to be studied. It also addressed historical gaps that needed to be filled in the study.

Ajahi 59 stressed that community’s change with development. He mentioned that culture is dynamic. Culture constantly undergoes changes, modifications or adjustments either for better or worse. Culture is transmutable, meaning, as it is being transmitted it undergoes changes which maybe subtle or extreme. Discontinuity or change of industries may be in the form of abandoning, adding or altering the materials, colour, styles of material used. For instance on discontinuity of meaning (hill) states that, until recently, beadwork was lavishly applied on men’s and women’s daily wear. The dress included leather, cloaks, headbands and jewellery.. today some of the artifacts are reserved for special ceremonies like initiation ceremonies.

Kettle D.W.D presents an analysis of the social organization and marriage alliance rules which underlay the kinship systems of the Tugen of Kenya. From the review the author was able to document the social organization’s and further derive its influence on their social built forms which will show the connections with the Tugen indigenous industries which the current research seeks to unravel.

Hodder attempted to give an elaborate explanation on why material culture varied from one region to another in Baringo county. He argued that many of the usual interpretations of material culture patterning are inadequate because they do not take into account the ability of groups and individuals to use artifacts as a medium for the communication of information about, for example, one's membership of identity groups and status groups. The importance of the symbolic nature of artifacts for the structuring of material culture distributions is shown at the boundaries between spatial identity groups, and in the distributions of male-and female-associated items. This work helped to explain the context variation of material culture in Baringo such as leatherwork.

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

Little suggested that the Tugen interacted with their neighbours and subsidized their products through trade. Ne argued that increased dependence on pastoralism occurred in the context of regional trade networks in which Nubian, Indian, Swahili, and Somali traders bought, traded, or sold maize, millet, goats, and cattle (Little 1992:40–41). The stability of this regional economic system was subject to problems created by fluctuations in grain prices, market quarantine restrictions imposed by colonial governments, severe droughts and famine relief programs, and expansion of lands used for production of cash crops, e.g., coffee, pyrethrum, wheat, onions, and red chilies (Little 1992:37–38). Little (1992:98–104) suggests that the Il Chamus commit themselves to limited agriculture for three reasons: (1) to reduce their dependence on an unpredictable grain market; (2) to purchase livestock after droughts and associated declines in herd size; and (3) to secure and to maintain access to land and water. This ensured continuity of leatherwork in Baringo despite the challenges.

Anderson 53 in his work *eroding the Commons* noted that in the 1930’s Baringo was the first district in which development programs were implemented. It was a testing ground for ideas on how reform should be implemented. He further noted that in the years after second world wars, as the colonial government carried enlarged programme of rural development, Baringo became an important reference point for others. The work will be very useful in the current study in tracing the origin and culture of the Tugen.

Gleave M.B gave an elaborate explanation on the development of indigenous industries in Africa. He stated that manufacturing in Africa was represented by small scale craft industries which existed throughout pre-colonial tropical Africa. For example, most African cultures were familiar with iron working, pottery, woodcarving the products of which ranged from elaborate carvings to simple tools and utensils. Africa also had the curing and preparation of animal skins and their manufacture into a wide diversity of articles from clothing to musical instruments and manufacture of bark cloth.48

Kate Moore 49 acknowledges the importance of culture and cultural differences in research as a decolonizing process to try to balance the Eurocentric thinking. He dealt with traditional knowledge and local values which he discussed with the understanding that they are hybridized through connections to colonial, western and other African societies and evolving through a process of cultural and environmental change. From this review the author was able to document the interactions which the Tugen had with the British colonisers and the Tugen neighbours which are crucial in the study.

**1.9 Methodology**

This study was conducted through a Historical Research Method. Historical Research Method refers to the objective location, collection, recording and evaluation of evidence in order to establish facts and draw conclusions concerning past historical events.

The study was based on a sample selected from the study area, that is, Baringo County where the Tugen reside. The Tugen are divided into eighteen (18) clans and each clan specialized in a specific aspect based on the raw materials in the locality and it formed a research site.

To ensure an objective and comprehensive data, selection of the informants was done using two sampling techniques. One of the techniques is the Purposive sampling. This is where people who have similar characteristics are chosen so that the information they give will be more homogeneous. The second technique will be the Snowball Technique. It is a technique where existing members recruit other members from among the members of the community who have relevant information and these in turn identified yet others, hence the number kept on snowballing.( Dey.I., (2003) Using this technique, the researcher identified seven (7) Tugen men and women whose ages range between 45 and 102 years, who provided useful information on specific themes on leatherwork that the study sought to investigate.

Information about Tugen leather industries were obtained from two sources i.e. Primary and Secondary Data. (Airasian. P.W., ( 2009) Primary Data was collected through direct communication with the practitioners using structured questionnaires, focused group discussions and oral interviews. It also involved collecting data from the Archival source which is the major source of primary Data. Archival material were obtained from Kenya National Archives based in Nairobi, Provincial Archives based in Nakuru and District Documentation Centers in Kabarnet. Primary Data was also obtained from internet sources. Secondary data was derived from published and unpublished material deposited in the various libraries. They include going through Books, Journals, Thesis Reports, Dissertations and policy reports. Relevant information to the study was extracted only.

Data was analyzed using thematic analysis method.( Patton.M.Q. (2004) The researcher undertook to organize, categorize, synthesize and interpret the data. Corroborative analysis method will then be used where the researcher compares information from different sources that is Kenya National Archives, museums, documentation centers, Oral Interview and Secondary or Document Analysis

**FINDINGS**

**LEATHERWORK**

## 1.10 Steps in leatherwork

Once obtained, skins were dried with the inner part facing the sun for about two to four days depending on the weather conditions. To dry the raw skin, holes were pierced at the sides and sharp sticks pinned to the ground; helping to stretch the skin to the desired size and shape. They then pegged it on the ground using small pieces of sharpened sticks. Skins were sun dried in order to kill the fleshy parts in the skins which could cause decomposition. One of the processes employed by the Maasai people of Kenya, was the stretching of hides on a wooden rack, where it remained until dried and stone hard. One widespread method used in Africa was pegging hides to the ground to dry and to keep its shape or to stretch it.

While the skin was being sun dried the adipose layer was also scrapped using stone knife. And this removed the remaining flesh from the skin. This called for precision in order to avoid tearing the skin. To facilitate this, the flesh was removed whereby the adipose layer was rolled on a piece of wood. This technique of rolling is quite an early development in the tanning industry for it ensured that the skin gained some evenness and smoothness qualities which customers valued in their garments.

The furs on the skins were either shaved using a sharp stone knife depending on the purpose the skins were meant for or removed either by plucking or scrapping. After drying in the sun for about four hours, it is soaked in water to facilitate the removal of the fur. Both sides must look the same. The instrument for removing the fur varies from place to place. In the lowlands they used stones while in the highlands they used sharp objects acquired through trade from the Nandi. The Nandi stole the metal for making sharp objects from the Europeans who were constructing the Uganda railway.( Kipkorir. B., and Ssenyonga. W .,(1985)

The epidermis was also removed so that when the tannin was added chemical reaction will take place and it will produce leather. The craftsman understanding of the crude chemical reaction shows development in chemistry among the Tugen and the vast understanding of their surroundings. The craftsmen had some basic knowledge of how to treat this skin and make it suitable for human clothing and other uses.

## The leather specialists’ noble invention was further demonstrated by the use of tannin.10Tanning is the process of dressing and curing hides and skins to leather. Tanning is one of the oldest crafts practiced by humankind. The technique used for tanning are unique to each community. It involves using the bark of trees, ash, lemon or fermented bran. Leather tanners are specialized and respected members of the community as the craft has cultural importance amongst these ethnic groups. The development of tanning among the Tugen reflects on the people’s advancement in technological development during the pre-colonial era.

Tanning was done majorly by men who made a variety of items for both men and women. It was not a specialist activity and was carried out in most homesteads. Almost every family had a person who prepared their clothing. Tanning was not done in particular workshops but carried out under granaries or any shade within the homestead. (Zeleza, T.P.,(1997).

The skills in leather tanning were learnt through apprenticeship. Skin craftsmen instructed the youths on the basic skills. The process of instruction ensured that the skill was passed on from one generation to the next. Tanning required a short period of training. It lasted for about one to two years depending on the learners tanning techniques, designing the various leather garments and other important goods.

Depending on which tannin agent used, the distinction is made between fat tanning and vegetable tanning. In fat tanning or oil tanning, the Tugen rubbed milk butter or fat into the hide. This was regarded as the simplest process. The specialists used certain vegetable plants such as sap plants or extracts from barks such as Solonum in Cunum and Vangeuna to provide tannin. Tannin was obtained by pounding the leaves of various plants. The skin was then rubbed with tannin in the process of rubbing which ensured that the living matter on the skin was removed through the process of corrosion. To make it soft, the upper surface was rubbed between the hands until it became soft and a little oil is added. The skins were sometimes smoked to make it more weather resistant. Often combination-tanning methods were employed. This made the skin to be tender, reduced the weight and left the fibrous part of the skin intact. The under skin maintained the tanned skin in place and it gave strength, while the middle skin gave the leather an admirable smooth look. The tanners applied castor oil on the skin and rubbed the skin to ensure that the skin became soft. Any stubborn fleshy remains were removed using a rough stone. One of the 'vegetable tanning' plants used in Southern Africa is called the Eland-bean (Elephantorhiza elephantina). The underground rhizomes / roots are dug up and used in rural areas for dyeing and tanning. In the Kalahari Desert region, the bark is removed and root pounded to pulp, with a little water added. The paste is then smeared on the hide to help in making it soft. By continuous rubbing the skin over tree branch or by hand till the skin is soft.( [www.Gateway-Africa-Com](http://www.Gateway-Africa-Com))

Among the Swazi people in South Africa, the semi-finished skin is beaten on rocks till it is soft; the 'Ndebele', however, use wooden hammers to make it pliable. After the skins were ready they were cut into various garments for various purposes. The next section addresses the products which were made out of leather.

## 1.11 Uses of leather products

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

### Clothing

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attire. While a man’s dress was in the form of a

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ermost hem.

The Tugen community were also renowned for their traditional clothing which essentially consisted of animal skins of either domesticated or wild animals. The clothes differed for men and women. Studies from other parts of Africa indicate that animal skins were used especially by those in dry Northern and Western zones such as the Hausas, Arabs and Bororos who practice nomadism/animal husbandry own herds of cattle, goats and sheep and use their skins for clothing; bags, shoes, jackets, seat covers, water bags because they do not radiate heat and prevent possible evaporation and also to make knife/dagger/sword sheathes, shoes, caps and horse/donkey/Carmel saddles.

### Women

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

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

Another garment was referred to as *sir or skirt.* This was a body cover which was of great value to the Tugen. It was made from several soft goatskins which were stitched together to make a triangular skirt. To the front of the skirt are attached several strings of leather through which are threaded beads and bone ornaments. The sir is a women’s body cover received from the mother’s home at the time of initiation and marriage. In fact, a traditional married Tugen woman wore this beautiful skirt with many strings until the time that she becomes a widow. When the husband dies the strings were ceremoniously cut off leaving the bare leather surface. The undecorated skirt was then a sign of widowhood.

A full dress made from the skins of goat was made for ladies who were elder and were going for circumcision. Girls undergoing initiation ceremonies wore it for a long period ranging from a month to one year. In their initiation ceremonies they were taught so many things, among which was how to decorate the skins, treatment, sewing and drying.( OI Julia bartonjo)

### Men

Young boys used traditional attire in certain times of the year or in particular occasions only. When they go for initiation and are in the camp they are kept away from any other form of dress. It acted as both cloth and a blanket. It was continuously oiled to make it soft and flexible

The more elderly men have attire made from a cow skin which is sewn together from the middle. He uses it to cover the chest and back. During the day, when he is travelling or herding animals, the garment is wrapped around his body in such a way that the right arm is trained to use a tool like club or a spear and in case of sudden attack by wild animals or enemies the pastoralist is ready to defend himself. In addition, he had long beaded leather straps hanging. Others wear gown and headdresses clearly showing his social status in his community.

Ceremonial attire was also made for the Tugen men. It was made from a Columbus monkey skin. In the Tugen hills there lived wild animals namely the Columbus monkey, bush babies, monkeys and baboons. Many of these animals were hunted and killed and their skins were converted into ceremonial costumes. The skins were dried in the sun, oiled with castor oil and sewed into a hat and overcoat and kept in the house for ceremonies. The color combined of black and white provided the beauty aspect. The hat got from the skin of a Columbus monkey is called *kutwet*. They also make attire which covered the whole body. They were made by joining two or three skins skillfully. They were also for ceremonies and referred to as *sambut*. It was worn by specific members in the society and signified authority and power. ( kabarnet museum)

Although many African communities wore animal skins or leather clothes, a number had developed the art of weaving and spinning of cotton and other fibres to make cloths. In several parts of Africa a variety of fibres were employed in the manufacture of cloth such as bark, bast, raphia, silk, wool and cotton( Picton) The Berbers of North Africa on the other hand, made their woven rugs by blending wool and goat hair with esparto grass, dwarf palm and rush. Among the Baganda, clothes were made from the bark of trees, and the product was commonly known as bark- cloth. In central Africa they used Bast fibres and Raphia which was obtained from the marsh or swamp vegetation. Silk production was done in Nigeria and Madagascar where various species of moth of the genius Anaphe were found. It was obtained from the larvae of these moths, which bred on tamarind tress. Details of the preparation process of cloth varied from place to place. The Yoruba, for example, built furnaces of four feet high or five feet wide, to prepare the potash for the alkaline medium. Dyeing was carried out either in large earthenware pots or pits in the ground.( zeleza, 1997)

Apart from leather clothes, other products were made from animal skins and hides such as sandals, bags and beddings which were designed for that purpose. The Tuareg, the Beja, the Somali and the Ajar made their shelter or tents out of animal skins. The hard work in leather has been associated more with the pastoralist communities.

**1.12 Dismantling of Leather Indigenous Industry between 1912 and 1930.**

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

**Land alienation and the creation of reserves**

The usage of land in the Tugen community was mainly communal and was owned by clans. The clans were given different rights on how to exploit it for various purposes. The acquisition of these rights was basically through inheritance. The process of land alienation began in1903 with the granting of a concession in the Lembus forest to the west of Eldama Ravine to Messrs Lingham and Grogan who wanted to establish a timber industry in the area. In 1907, the allotment of the first group of Rift Valley farms was made where forty seven farms each approximately 5,000 acres having been alienated, surveyed and allocated to European claimants. These included lands in in southern Baringo in Eldama Ravine all the way to Kisanana in the East. ( KNA. Lands and settlement political reports)

In allowing the alienation and settlement of these areas the colonial administration had failed to realise, or perhaps had chosen to ignore, the historical fact that Baringo had always functioned as a pastoral community. Restricting the Tugen to reserves could not give them the skins to support them because it interrupted grazing and expansion to new grazing lands. The alienation of land and creation of reserves affected the Tugen domestic economy. Land which was a source of livelihood for the Tugen community was now converted into a commercial asset. Majority of the Tugen gave up leatherwork as others looked for alternatives even changing their economic activity.26( OI Kimatui George)

## Forced Labour

Another effective instrument or strategy which destroyed the Tugen indigenous industries was the use of forced Labor. The Tugen were forced to work in the colonial plantations and industries. Since the Tugen were not used to colonial economy and system of production, there was need to compel them by force to work for the colonialists. This is because, since the new economy is alien to them, there was no way they could give their labor force willingly and voluntarily. In any case the Tugen culture advocated for the use of family labor for production. To force the Tugen to work in the plantations and industries the colonialists employed a number of strategies to compel them to make their labor force available. Commenting on the colonial order and the use of forced labor in Africa, ( Chinwezu (1978, p. 55) observed that “having by conquest become masters of the continent, the European rulers of Africa began to seize resources and to organize their rule for long and profitable stay”

## Taxation

Another important development in the early period of colonization was the implementation of taxation policies. At first a series of regulated pressures were applied to secure the necessary labour. These included the imposition of taxes and the use of administrative officers to persuade or coerce able bodied Africans onto the Europeans farms. The earliest measures was an attempt to subject Africans to a crude form of wealth tax via the hut tax regulations of 1901.( Mcgregor ross,1968 9, hut tax regulations no.18 1901) The colonial authority insisted that Africans should pay their taxes in colonial currency. The implication of this was that Africans would be compelled to work either in the colonial civil service or in the colonial farms in order to earn their colonial currency to pay their tax. The colonialists imposed taxes on the Africans for two reasons; the first was that it was a source of labour for their farms and the second was that they wanted the colonies to bear the cost of the personnel and the administration. The colonialists were not ready to use their own funds to run the colonial territories and administration.( OI Chief Rutto Saimo Mosop) The Tugen had accumulated wealth in form of cattle and farm produce which the colonisers did not acknowledge because it will mean not utilizing them for the much needed labour.

**Influence of colonial education and missionary education**

The missionary education which was basically colonial in nature was not rooted in African culture and therefore could not foster any meaningful development within the African environment because it had no linkage. The Tugen accepted it because they were facing a challenge. Furthermore, missionary education was essentially literacy and it had no technological base and therefore had no idea for industrial development. Missionary education aimed at training clerks, interpreters, produce inspectors and artisans which would help them in exploiting the rich resources in the region. The missionary activities further interfered with the indigenous industries especially when they started missionary education where they offered western formal education which was not in line with the Tugen informal education. They introduced industrial training for the Africans where they started courses such as tailoring, carpentry, bricklaying, masonry and agriculture.( OI Kob Nyandusi)

**1.13 Continuity of indigenous leatherwork during post economic depression period upto 1945.**

Continuity in clothing on the other hand after 1930, was influenced by customs, values, cultural gatherings, raw materials and advance in technology. The value for ethnic identity dictate that the Columbus monkey skin remains the most important material employed in the construction of cloaks (*sambut*), headdresses *(chepkulet*) and bags (*motoge*t).( Kabarnet museum) The study revealed that the Columbus skin has remained unchanged as the material used to construct the indigenous attire – *sambut*. Their distinctive black and white fur has made them status symbols for tribal ceremonies although taboos on reckless killing have also helped preserve them. 5Likewise, the colonial system of administration was biased and at the lower levels chiefs were made to be in charge of the political administration. This gave them the opportunity to put on the *sambut* during ceremonies. In any case the British colonizers did not have a ready replacement for the *sambut*. The Columbus monkey was only found in tropical regions and not in the temperate regions, thus the practice of hunting them for their skin continued uninterrupted.

The inferiority complex among the Tugen brought about by prejudice from neighbors, led to individuals abandoning their attire. One informant mentioned that he could not wear his attire anywhere even to the market for fear of being labeled insane. The ethnic Tugen attire mainly comprised of adornment such as *sanai*, earrings, bracelets and necklaces. The men had their ears pierced and earrings which were rounded rings were worn. This culture of piercing the ears and wearing earrings was abandoned and therefore the making of earrings for men was also abandoned and there were no alternatives. The Tugen Women only pierce their lower earlobes but they do not stretch them. The earlobes which are hanging are not appreciated by the younger generation who prefer small holes in the lower earlobes. Moreover, the earrings which were obtained through trade from the Europeans were for small earlobes. Most of the traditional attire and beads were only worn during occasions such as *tumdo* ceremonies and wedding ceremonies.8

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

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

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

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

**1.14 Post World War II and the Tugen transformation of leather industry from 1945 upto 1963**

The section concern is on the structure of the industries after World War Two, in order to establish how the industries changed shape, color or form. It then assesses the factors which combined to give rise to the above phenomenon such as changes in labor, forests, agriculture, trade and production and distribution of the products.( Anderson 2012) Finally, it turns to the extension in the scale of trade and marketing activities which also took place. The study established that in this period the Tugen indigenous industries continued to survive although the range of goods produced changed, based on what was determined by the prevailing market demands.

**1.15 Recommendation**

**Research and documentation**

To map out leather making activities in the regions, it is necessary to record all the aspects on video and print. This exercise should include different professionals such as anthropologists, archaeologists and historians. This would help to understand the mechanisms and dynamics of the art and document its aspects for posterity.

**leather’s community capacity-building activities and improvement of local marketing strategies**

As demonstrated in the Tugen community, leather work is done by individuals who are unable to organize themselves and to find ways of countering emerging challenges. It would therefore be necessary to organize them into groups where they have leaders, create proper records and keep books of accounts. They will put their resources together, which will enhance their working environment and increase their ability to penetrate the market and to negotiate with local authorities as a team. This will ensure continuity of production and, therefore, the conservation of the technology and practice.

**Enhancement of transmission methods**

Leather making skills, rules and regulations are passed to family apprentices during production. This limits opportunities for other members of the society to learn. This strategy also extends the learning period over years. Therefore, leather making could be introduced as an extra-curricular activity in schools, where teachers could invite practitioners to talk to students and to offer practical lessons on the technology during school club days.

**Establish indigenous knowledge resource Centres within the public library system**

In Kenya, the National Museums of Kenya has an indigenous knowledge resource centre which is meant to serve the whole country through its branch networks. This is not adequate, especially given that IK is context specific. The authors recommend that all public libraries in Kenya should set up indigenous knowledge units.

**Training on indigenous knowledge**

In some countries, universities have gone a notch higher by initiating IK departments which provide training on IK issues such as history, languages and culture, among others. In some cases, aspects of IK are taught as courses in academic institutions. There should be deliberate efforts by training institutions to develop and deploy curricula on indigenous knowledge in Kenya.

**1.16 CONCLUSION**

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

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