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## THE ROLE OF INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF IRON INDUSTRY AMONG THE TUGEN OF BARINGO COUNTY; 1895-1963; KENYA

One of the most important indigenous industries among the Tugen community was Iron Making. The Tugen evolved an industry which was superb as per the standards of that time and has continued to thrive even up to the colonial and post-colonial period. The origins, development and the resilience to change through the turbulent years is the interest of this paper. The study examined two distinctive epochs from which the understanding of how ironwork 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 using knowledge and skills which were developed independently. Ironwork, which will be dealt with extensively in this paper was characterized by the application of knowledge and skills by skilled individuals who were supposed to selflessly serve the society by making iron materials for the members of the society. The study relied on primary and Secondary sources. The study described the procedure used in ironwork. It further assessed the types and uses of iron products. It established the forces which led to the dismantling of the industry during the colonial period. These were analyzed to ascertain the forces behind the persistence and resilience of the industry. The Tugen devised ways of survival which led to the Tugen transformation of the iron industry from 1945. The study established that Tugenland like any other society is regarded having not had any form of industry before the arrival of the colonialists. This paper raised an argument against this position. The study has recorded the Tugen iron industry for posterity purposes. The study recommends the inclusion of indigenous knowledge to any industrial development and innovation in the country.

Keywords: Indigenous industry, indigenous knowledge, iron making, colonialism, independence.

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