

Ecology and History as Essentials of Deprivation in Turkana County Kenya

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Abstract

Turkana County is one of the forty seven counties in Kenya that were created after promulgation of the constitution in 2010. It is the largest and poorest county. A lot of debates on the causes of underdevelopment have been advanced but none focused on history and ecology as the epitome. This study intended to find out the ecological and historical causes of underdevelopment in Turkana County. It set out also to find out why the colonial administration was unwilling to transform the Turkana people. Historical research design was used in this study. Two research instruments were used. These were questionnaires and oral interviews. Archival sources from the Kenya National Archives (KNA) in Nairobi, published books, journals and government reports were utilized. Modernization theory as expounded by (Bernstein, 1971) was applied as its tool of analysis. It was found out that the problem of underdevelopment in Turkana County was majorly as a result of history and ecology. Historically the counties suffered as a result of colonial policy of conquer and punish. The administration deliberately marginalized the county because it perceived it as arid and therefore unproductive and uneconomical. It declared it a closed district. Turkana pastoralists were seen as backward and suffering from cattle complex that proved difficult to “civilize”

Keywords: Turkana, Punitive, Underdevelopment, Colonial, Pastoralism.

1. Introduction

This study examined factors that militated against the achievement of meaningful socio-economic development in Turkana County of Kenya. It highlighted the pre-colonial and colonial history of the Turkana people who are actually the ethnic group residing in the County. The historical factors that were examined include: colonialism, colonial marginalization of pastoralism, scarcity of pastoral resources, cattle rustling, raids and banditry, incessant drought and famine, cultural conservatism, Special District Administration Order Chapter 45 of the Laws of Kenya and pastoralist migrations in search for pasture. Furthermore, the study examined the punitive expeditions and measures against the Turkana pastoralists and locust infestation.

2. Physiographic, Geographic and Demographic Description of Turkana County

Turkana County occupies the North Western part of Kenya to the west of Lake Turkana. It was one of districts of former Rift Valley Province and it is geographically the largest County in the republic. It shares international boundaries with several countries that include Ethiopia to the North, Sudan to the North-West, and Uganda to the West. Domestically, it lies to the west of Lake Turkana, to the South east of Samburu County and to the south, Baringo and West Pokot Counties. It borders to the east Marsabit County. It covers a total of 77,000 sq km or 42.4% of the total area of former Rift Valley Province. The County is predominantly a vast low lying plain from which emerge isolated mountains and ranges of hills, most lying in the north south direction following the general structure of the eastern Rift Valley. The plain slopes from an altitude of about 900 meters at the foot of the escarpment which marks the Uganda border to the west, to the shores of Lake Turkana, 369 meters in the east. The mountains rise between 1,500m and 1,800m whereby, the largest being Loima which forms an undulating table land of some 65kms square. The mountains which form a contrasting environment in rainfall and vegetation are fairly well distributed except in the central area of plains around Lodwar and more especially the Lotikipi plain in the north. In the south east, the Suguta valley follows a tectonic trough bordering the Samburu uplands. The main rivers include River Kerio, Tarach and Turkwel. Both Turkwel and Kerio rivers originate from the highlands to the south and sharing a delta on the lake. The Suguta is in the south east and the Tarach is in the south west. Of all these rivers, Suguta is permanent.

As a consequence of this, pastoralism remained the main economic activity and the Turkana's dependence on the pastoral sector is an appropriate adoption to the environment. Vegetation along rivers Kerio and Turkwel may form dense forests of up to six to seven kilometers wide which have a dominance of various free species, such as acacia tortillas, acacia sepal, cardiagharaf, Banalites species, *dichrostachy's cinerea* and *Salvador persica*. Away from the water courses the common species vary somewhat with the region and soil type. Cover is sparse, often less than five per-cent, bushes being typically thorny and rather widely spaced.

The County is classified as an Arid and Semi Arid Lands region (ASAL). Rainfall varies with altitude whereby the lowest is recorded in the central plains around Lodwar, with an annual rainfall average of

about 180mm. The highest is in the North West for example Lokichogio has an average of about 520mm. Lokitaung in the north east has an average of about 380mm and Kaputir in the Turkwel Valley further south has an average of about 360mm. There are no records for any mountain areas but vegetation would suggest averages of over 750mm at altitudes above 1350m. Distribution of rainfall is very unreliable. Annual figures for Lodwar, for instance, vary from 190mm to 498mm. Rain usually comes in sharp thunderstorm in late afternoon or at night. Long rains fall around April to August, with short rains in the late November

The temperatures are high and fairly uniform throughout the year with an average daily level of about 24 to 38°C (75-100°F) in the plains. In the central plains there are strong winds usually coming from the east or south east sweeping across the largely barren land and carrying large quantities of dust and sand. The plains are almost bare of ground vegetation from grazing and browsing. After rain, annual grasses and herbs germinate quickly producing a rapid flush of vegetation, which may, however, wither as quickly as it appeared in the absence of any further rain. There is a tendency for tree and grass species to be suppressed by browsing, grazing and cutting thus encouraging less palatable, often thorny species, such as the small acacias (Meteorological Department, Lodwar).

The 1969 census indicated that Turkana District had a total population of 165,225 with a density population of 2 persons per sq. km, and at the annual growth rate of 3.3 percent. The 1979 census indicated that Turkana District had a drop in population to 142,702. The 1989 population census the total population for Turkana District was 179,000 and 451,000 in 1999 respectively

A Brief Pre-Colonial History of the people of Turkana County

Turkana County has a long record of human occupation, evidence of which comes from Paleontology, archeology, and historical linguistics; these are augmented by oral tradition for recent time. For the earliest periods, fossils occurred in lake beds in the vicinity of the present Lake Turkana while the area is not as rich in fossils as the sites around Koobi Fora. To the east of the lake, bones of Australopithecine hominids dating to the late Pliocene (3.7 million years) have been found at Lothagam and Konapoi respectively and are among the earliest hominids on record. Almost any stony surface in the district yields a dense scatter of stone artifacts ranging in date from the early Stone Age to the present, the product of hundreds of thousands of years of human activity. The commonest historical monuments are burial cairns, heaps of stones of various sizes and shapes which cover graves. Some of these belong to the Turkana themselves but the majorities were apparently left by earlier inhabitants (KNA/DC/LOK/5/3, 1951).

Northern Kenya in general and the Turkana Basin in particular has been an area of contact and cross-fertilization between different cultural and linguistic groups for millennia. The Nilotes have interacted with both Eastern and Southern Cushites as shown by their language, vocabularies and cultural practices. The term Nilo-Hamatic was used to refer to the Turkana to indicate a mixture of Nilotic and Cushitic (Hamitic) but has now been dropped. The mingling of the population is likely to have been even more pronounced than that of language. Thus the Turkana population and culture results from a process of mixing and acculturation (Gulliver 1951:3)

Today, the County is exclusively occupied by the Turkana people, strongly independent nomadic pastoralists closely related to the Jie and Karamajong of Uganda. Throughout the vast territory their culture is remarkably heterogeneous, the result of constant movement and continual interaction. It is argued that the Turkana descended into the country from Dodoth escarpment before 1800AD (Gulliver: 1951). Why they migrated from their original homeland after differing with their ancestral family of Karamajong people is a matter of speculation. Their oral traditions indicate a breaking away from the Jie by following a wayward ox. They descended the escarpment to the Tarach River Valley and spread along the Turkwel and Kagwalasi (or Nakwehe) River Valleys to establish a new homeland in the Turkana County of today (Gulliver 1951)

Like most other African traditions, it ends up demonstrating that the Turkana settlement in their present homelands is logically the termination of migrations which carried the Turkana from the grazing Karamajong area. Thereafter, the grazing and water needs of the stock dictated the settlement patterns and movements. This trend more or less persists up to the present. The Turkana are constantly on the move from the plains to the river banks, to the mountains and then back again. And so, on the whole, they build no permanent homes and settlements but live in temporary shelters. Because of the tendency to move wherever grass and water is available, the pastoralists are understandably in endless competition and conflict with the Karamajong, Toposa, Dodoth, Pokot, Rendile, Samburu and Merille (Manger, 2000a).

Linguistic studies and the historical traditions of their western neighbours confirm the common origin of the Turkana, Jie, Karamajong and Dodoth. The current boundaries of Turkana County are therefore, artificial and restrictive as far as the Turkana economic needs are concerned. Although essentially settled by virtue of fixed boundaries, land disputes over water and grazing areas continued for a long time in the past against neighbours like the Samburu, Merille, Karamajong and Pokot. Yet despite the recurring violent conflicts in pre-colonial and colonial times, the Turkana traded with neighbours including the Pokot and Karamajong who are

known fierce raiders. The Turkana bought millet, maize, maize meal, tobacco, spears, iron, cooking pots beads and ostrich eggs and feathers (KNA/DC/LOK/5/3, 1951). By about 1850, Turkanas were still arriving at their present home in Turkana County. There are traces of people known as Elmolo who had preceded them and are thought to have possibly been the Samburu. The Swahili caravans from the Kenya coast are reported to have penetrated to Turkana. Similarly, from the north the ivory traders and slavers of Abyssinia (modern day Ethiopia) raided up to as late as in the twentieth century (Gulliver 1951:4).

3. The Colonial State and Turkana District 1888-1947

In 1888-1889, the Austrians, Count Teleki and Von Hohnel were the first Europeans to arrive at Lake Rudolf (now Lake Turkana) and Stephanie. They were followed ten years later by Austin. After the latter's second journey, the Uganda boundary was defined at 5° north, a line just south of the British fort at Lokomorinyang. At this time, the topography of the North Eastern frontier was very different. Sanderson's Gulf of Lake Rudolf stretched between the Turkana of Labur and the Merille in Abyssinia and constituted a natural barrier. In the course of time, it filled up as much with the silt of Lake Rudolf. But behind these mountains, Lokwamor and Lorienatom, the Turkana lay more or less sheltered, while the Merille occupied the plains of the former Nile Valley down to the natural boundary of Sanderson's gulf (KNA/DC/LOK/5/3, 1951). It is maintained by some old Turkana that the territory of their fathers extended even as far as Tapeisi Hills and the North Shores of the Gulf but there is no evidence to support this claim.

The Turkana were covered by the treaties of the Juba Expedition (1887-1899) which the British Government organized to survey the limits of the British sphere of influence in connection with the exploration of the headquarters of River Nile. Turkana District became part of the British Uganda Protectorate before the declaration of the boundaries of Kenya Colony, but the Northern regions of Turkanaland were for some time subject to a lot of pressure from Abyssinian expansion and were not finally considered part of Kenya until 1926. However, the Turkana seem to have occupied the northern region up to the point close to Lodwar, longer than other areas. Their southward expansion and settlement in earnest is comparatively recent and still continuing. And although they resisted through all their encounters with the British colonial power, the expansion of the Turkana outside their current district was checked in the past by police and military action (KNA/DC/LDW/1/1/66, 1932). As indicated above, it is known that Turkana District was administered by Uganda. The government's records of that time do not exist. And whatever administration exercised then was of nominal character.

The Protectorate government of Kenya began an operation of conquest and disarmament of the Turkana in 1910. The exercise was laboriously completed while the rest of the world was celebrating the armistice in 1918 (KNA/DC/LDW/1/1/17, 1956). The Turkwel had been reached by the King's African Rifles (KAR) in 1910 and two years later Lake Rudolf. In the meanwhile the boundary with Sudan was modified by Order in Council in 1914 and the Uganda – Sudan frontier was defined on its present official position of 4° 37', (KNA/LOK/5/3, 1951).

In 1915, the Turkana engaged the colonial government forces in battle. As a result the Turkana lost heavily in the war where 417 people were killed and 19,000 cattle, 215 camels, 1400 donkeys and 17,000 sheep and goats were confiscated by the military.

Later on 30 percent of these animals were returned. But in 1917-1918 the fighting went north, 13,000 cattle were confiscated in two months alone. When the Labur Patrol went to the Lokitaung area, 25,000 spears and 1000 rifles were estimated to have been the strength of the Turkana and at once the disarmament began. The administrative post of the Uganda government at Kolosia was too remote for the effective control of North Turkana. The forces engaged in the pacification were largely withdrawn, and the Turkana having lost heavily found their traditional Merille enemies too well equipped to be resisted effectively in the frontier. The KAR posts at Lodwar and Kakuma, though consolidating the southern tribes, was not equipped to undertake the defense of Uganda subjects against the Abyssinian subject tribesmen (KNA/DC/LDW/1/1/17, 1954).

There was no effective occupation or administration of the north, and the years 1924-1926 saw the Turkana defeated in their own lands and retiring before the onslaughts of the Merille. In 1926, however, the Merille patrol by Sir Vincent Glenday was undertaken and considerably enlarged the knowledge of a remote area. It was however regarded as a challenge by the Merille and Dongiru, and the Turkana were obliged to surrender as far as 4 20' Miles South of Lokitaung (KNA/DC/LDW/1/1/66, 1932). In 1926 the transfer of —Rudolf Province from Uganda to Kenya was effected. In the following year an administrative post was opened at Lokitaung, and the first District Officer sent. The KAR arrived at the post in 1928 and set up a military station simultaneous to the establishment of the Sudan Defence Force in Kapoeta (KNA/DC/LDW/1/1/17, 1954). Until 1940, the officer in charge of Turkana and Suk (Pokot) was responsible for Lokitaung affairs through the District Commissioner (DC). With the coming of the World War II however, the DC became directly responsible to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Kenya. In 1947. When conditions were stable; the District of Turkana was transferred to the Northern Province with Provincial Commissioner based at Isiolo.

Uneven development was created by the colonial economy, when capital and modern technologies were brought together to create a new mode of production that is cultivation of export crops, in areas where suitable land, labour and water were available. The growth of an urban sector was promoted simultaneously to provide the required services and administration (Rodney, 1972). Little was done elsewhere and nothing at all in the pastoralism domain in which Turkana District fell. The resulting unevenness translated into gross disparity in the development of the productive forces in different regions and in the standards of living of their inhabitants. Investment in infrastructure and social services was concentrated in areas of modern economic development and only nominal development appeared elsewhere (Manger, 2000). The fact that the colonial economy followed the capitalist model, notwithstanding the prime mover in its development was the state. The state owned, managed, and effectively controlled the modern economic sector. Accordingly, the state became the determining factor in the production and distribution of material and social resources. It was this function that endowed the state with overwhelming predominance in colonial society (Samatar, 1989, Wallis, 1989). With the foregoing discussion, it is imperative to examine the historical and ecological factors that negated the achievement of meaningful socio-economic development in Turkana County.

4. Scarcity of Pastoral Resources

The natural endowment of Turkana County is meagre and unevenly distributed and large parts of it are not fit for settled habitation. Man's adaptation to it was premised on movement, and the history of the area is marked by extensive migrations and population shifts, the constant jostling and shoving of people in search of land, pasture and water. Scarcity remains to date a harsh fact of life in Turkana County. Partly, this is due to the meagre natural endowment. The bulk of the county is arid with an average precipitation rate of less than 550mm and a moisture index of minus 50. Nature's parsimony in the county is accentuated with a pattern of recurring drought and inevitably results in massive famine. Population growth of both human and animal led to combined pressure on already scarce resources (Jackson, 1970)

As mobility was increasingly constrained, the need for it remained an economic imperative and they continued to shift about and press against their neighbours in a constant search for pasture and water. The restiveness of the pastoralists was aggravated by proliferation of constraints placed upon their movements by state borders, provincial boundaries, grazing zones, game parks, quarantine restrictions. Scarcity of pastoral resources triggered mobility which in turn made conflict inevitable, and Turkana County has never been peaceful a place (Lipton, 1977). And in that case the county remained behind in socio-economic development. In addition to that, water was not otherwise a particularly limiting factor by Turkana standards and the main constraint was pasture and browse for the domestic animals on which the human population relied. To maintain their existence in such a marginal environment, the Turkana's ecology have to be finely tuned to take advantage of every resource, and almost all other factors had to be sub-ordinate to this. This is not to say that everything they did was dictated by the environment but it did impose constraints on most aspects of life (KNA/DC/LOK/5/3, 1951).

5. Cattle Rustling and Raids

The economic adaptation to the environment found in Turkana County was mainly based on herds of domestic animals, cattle, camels, sheep and goats for milk, meat, blood and hides, and donkeys for transport. The Turkana also practiced cultivation in the limited areas and limited periods when it was possible (KNA/DC/DW/1/1/113, 1948). The Turkana's main aim and delight was the ownership of livestock especially cattle though for most of their region, camels and goats were more suited to the environment. Property was synonymous with stock and other possessions were simply conveniences. It should be noted that, the county has a number of neighbours with whom she hardly lived a peaceful co-existence due to cattle rustling and raids. The most painful act that can be done to a Turkana is to take away his cattle. This exposes him to poverty which is responsible for misery and thus a draw back to the districts socio-economic status. These neighbours that constantly raided Turkana stock included the Merille of Ethiopia and Toposa of Sudan in the North, Karamajong of Uganda to the West, Pokot to the south, Rendile and Samburu to the East (KNA/DC/LDW/1/1/104, 1963). Cattle rustling and raids are considered as one of the main contributors of the lagging behind of Turkana County in socio-economic development. Because cattle is the main measure of wealth and source of livelihood to the people of Turkana, cattle rustling and raids has been a nuisance even before the advent of colonial rule. As a result, very limited socio-economic development could take place in an environment where pastoralists are exposed to constant loss of their wealth and source of livelihood (Manger, 2000b).

In an attempt to contain the problem of cattle rustling and raids, the Kenya colonial government obtained some concession with some neighbouring countries. One such country was the Sudan. No agreement was reached with the Abyssinian government in which the notorious Merille raiders incessantly raided Turkana cattle rendering them poorer and poorer (KNA/DC/LDW/1/1/113, 1950). A good example is what happened in 1936 where the Merille despite grazing their cattle on Turkana territory, past the consul's Rock; they also

engaged themselves in several raids. In 1928, the Donyero and Merille raided the Turkana in a combined force (KNA/DC/LDW/2/1/1, 1930). Earlier on in 1927, the Toposa of Sudan carried out a raid on 18 July at Mogilla and were able to escape with a lot of livestock from the Turkana. Raids on Turkana have continued to the present with an increase in sophistication. After independence most African countries found themselves in conflicts that culminated in serious civil strife. It was tragic that all states that neighbored Turkana County were engaged in armed conflicts. These states included Uganda, Ethiopia, and the Sudan. As a result firearms landed on the hands of pastoral tribes including the Turkana who acquired them through trade (Ayittey, 1992).

There is no year that the Turkana neighbours failed to launch raiding expeditions on the Turkana to date. The situation has recently become more complicated when the neighbouring pastoralists not only raid with the intention of acquiring wealth but as a source of school fees. In the southern parts of the County the large scale livestock raids launched by heavily armed Pokot rustlers caused major displacement of Turkana pastoralists from Lokori and Lomelo Divisions.

6. Drought and Famine

Turkana pastoralists live in the most arid region of Kenya. In most areas, the average annual rainfall is less than 300mm, and is concentrated in three to four month period with April the month which rainfall is most likely to occur. However, as is characteristic of arid areas, the rainfall is extremely variable from year to year, and there are periodic droughts during which there is little or no plant productivity and even the deep rooted trees along river courses shed their leaves. This lack of grazing and browse leads to low productivity of milk and blood, and also to high mortality in the livestock herds and causes great hardship to the people. Turkana County was hard hit by a drought in 1979. There has also been recurrence in 1984, 1990, 1994, 1999, 2000, 2003 and 2005. It should also be noted that drought and famine has been hitting the county since the time the Turkana settled in. This is also seen as the major contributor of poverty and lagging behind of social and economic development of the inhabitants. As indicated above, the county was very hard hit by a drought from 1979 into 1981. Between 1977 and 1981; there was an estimated loss of 72 per cent of the cattle, 59 per cent of the goats and sheep and 4 per cent of the camels. In October 1981, 65000 to 70000 people, an estimated 45 and 49 percent of the population were receiving food in famine relief camps mainly in the west and north of the county (Airey, *et al* 1981, see also United Nations, 1993).

7. Cultural Conservatism

Socially the Turkana found themselves comfortable with their traditional mode of living. Any attempt by the colonial administration to influence and challenge their social values was resisted even with the help of their local leaders and it appeared to the state that it would take quite some time before the Turkana people accepted change for their social development. In 1975 for example efforts were made to have the Turkana buy and put on clothes like other people in the republic but very little was achieved due to the opposition and reactionary attitude from some local leaders who argued that the Turkana were too poor to afford clothes. But it was encouraging when a number of them could be seen wearing clothes in Lodwar town. The first development efforts since the attainment of independence have been to bring the county into the mainstream development in all the aspects and integrate it with the rest of the country. But given the conservative attitude of the people, their way of life imposed by the harsh, ecological conditions, very little development in a classical sense was achieved (KNA/DC/LDW/1/1/1966).

8. Special District Administration Ordinance Order

Historically the British government established an administration over the Turkana in 1910 and the county has since remained within the present borders. Immediately the government through the Special District Administration Ordinance Order Chapter 45 of the Laws of Kenya conferred the District Commissioner together with the police, the power to issue or not issue a pass to persons who wished to enter or get out of the district. Through the Ordinance Order, the county was declared a closed district. Upon receiving a pass, the government dictated especially to traders on where and when they could conduct business. For instance in 1961, the Turkana District Commissioner. T.D Preston in a letter dated 21/05/1961 advised Mr. Mohammed Hussein to only conduct business at Lorugum and Kangetet at specified dates, 15/05/1961 and 25/05/1961 (KNA/LDW/1/1/125, 1961). Until 1968, the county was a restricted area and people traveling through it had to have a special administrative and police permits as indicated above. At times too especially among natives, it was forbidden to enter the county without dressing traditionally. To the British, the Turkana were a nuisance to the neighbouring European farmers at Trans-Nzoia and had to be contained. For this reasons and the fact that the people were nomadic pastoralists, very little development was accomplished in the county throughout the colonial era and well into the years of political independence.

9. Pastoralist Migrations

As argued earlier, the Turkana even prior to the advent of colonialism were predominantly pastoral. Their adaptation to the environment was that of constant migration in search of pasture for their animals. In that regard, successive governments have had a difficult time in planning and implementation of socio-economic programmes. Constant migrations incapacitated the establishment of permanent social amenities and infrastructure, such as the schools and hospitals and roads (KNA/DC/LDW/1/1/104)

10. Punitive Expeditions and Measures against the Turkana

A critical study of records leaves one with the overwhelming conviction that much of the trouble that the Turkana encountered in the past and the poverty and distress was brought about by repeated punitive campaigns against them carried out over a long period by forces of the Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia and Sudan governments. The stock taken from the Turkana in these expeditions numbered hundreds of thousands (KNA/DC/LDW/1/1/104/1963). In an attempt to contain the Turkana menaces, the Provincial Commissioner and District Commissioner Northern Turkana met in 1914 and a line which was named red line was drawn as the northern limits of the Turkana grazing grounds. It received the complete approval of the Sudanese government and in reality was detailed demarcation of the general description of the boundary which was published in the Uganda official Gazette in 1914. To enforce the rule, Inspector General Kings African Rifles the Brigade and Battalion, commanders arrived with a patrol contingent and put up a patrol base at Todenyang (Fort Ilkinson) (KNA/DC/LOK/5/3, 1951.)

In 1930 the Abyssinian forces occupied the sandpit which forms Sanderson's Gulf in the Northern corner of Lake Rudolf (Turkana). Here the Ethiopian Government established a military post in spite of protests by the colonial government that it was within the British territory. The Ethiopia government wanted to stop the Turkana raids on the Merille once and for all. Representations made by the Kenya government for the evacuation of the post did not however receive the unqualified support of the foreign office as advised by the British Minister at Addis Ababa. As a result, the post remained and negotiations were to be instituted on the spot with a view to induce the local Ethiopian authorities to relinquish it as a military post in favour of it being regarded as a neutral ground and a convenient meeting place for the Arbitration Board. In that regard, the Turkana fishermen were banned from carrying out any activity at the lake.

In total disregard of the Turkana poverty, and in an effort of trying to make the Turkana work, the Kenya colonial government slapped taxation on the Turkana. The Turkana were not willing to work especially in road construction and other manual activities because of their cultural background of pastoral lifestyle. As a punitive measure for their resistance to work, taxation was started in Turkana in 1928. Hut and poll tax was collected in which every, male who owned cattle was made to pay Kshs. 6. At the time the amount was extremely high and could buy two cows. In 1926, about 100 Turkanas of Ngamatok section were forcibly turned out to make the new road. They did not like it and this exacerbated hate for the British. In 1929, tax collection in the county was Kshs. 48,686 against Kshs. 39,324 in 1928. The Provincial Commissioner approved the institution of a system whereby a metal disc bearing section letters and numbers were issued to and retained by individual tax payer – thus avoiding the impossible task of counting and issuing new numbers to everybody each year (KNA/DC/LWD/2/1/1). The snag was that these discs were liable to be mixed up if one man brought in taxes for a dozen or so of his friends. It was suggested that this could be overcome by impressing on each man as he is given his disc, that if he sends in his disc and tax by a friend he must attach some identification mark to it a piece of leather with or without beads for instance (KNA/DC/LOD/1/1/66,1955). Taxation on the Turkana can be seen as a punitive measure because the collected tax was disbursed to Nairobi instead of using it to develop the county. The money disbursed by the government did not even address the Turkana social-economic needs because of lack of planning and owing to its small amount.

11. Locust Infestation

Locust (*Schistocerca gregaria*) or the Hopper for a long time destroyed pastures and crops in Turkana County. In fact, the colonial government appointed a locust officer to be in charge of locust control and destruction. A major locust campaign was conducted in 1945 dubbed —the sixth locust campaign which involved almost the entire northern part of the colony. An interesting fact is that the colonial administration encouraged the Turkana to destroy locusts manually which can be considered to have been slow and ineffective. Central and southern Turkana were affected most by the Hopper. Areas that experienced more infestation included the Loya, Lokichar, Loperot, Kangetet, Kaputir, Mogilla, Kalin, Liwan and Oropoi (KNA/DC/LDW/1/03/8, 1945).

In 1940 – 1944, the colonial military used chemicals in the locust destruction campaign. This impacted negatively on the Turkana as the use of poison resulted in the loss of stock. Loss of stock through locust campaigns in the 1940s is considered by the Turkana herdsmen as one of the tragic source of poverty and drawback to their economic development (KNA/DC/LDW/1/03/8, 1945). In 1945, the director of locust control based at Lodwar, reported to the head office in Nairobi that it was fairly easy to kill the Hoppers when they were

moving over soft sandy soil and the method employed was by digging small trenches by hand driving the Hoppers in bands into the trenches and then smothering them. But on the 4th and 5th stage of development, the Hoppers move on to hard ground and the only method left was to burn them. Unfortunately there was little wood. On average thousands thorn trees heavily packed with thousands of hoppers were burnt daily. There was an average of 140 Turkana daily employed on the work of cutting trees for the purpose of burning the Hoppers. The destruction of thorn trees and vegetation resulted in environmental degradation which can be attributed to have caused incessant drought in the county over the years thus impacting negatively on the economic development of the inhabitants.

12. Conclusion

It is clear from the above discussions that underdevelopment in Turkana County is as a result of ecological factors, human activities and choices. The same factors continue to affect development in the county to date. It should be noted that local people have a large capacity for innovation and development within their own frame of reference. The problem is to fit national level priorities and resource into this local concept of life and socio-economic development. Once this is done people can and will respond intelligently, adaptively and energetically. It is important to study and understand the connection between the crisis of pastoralism in Turkana County and endemic ethnic conflict and banditry with the aim of designing well researched strategies that have worked well in other parts of the world with similar challenges. The inclusion of the local people in planning and implementation of these strategies will definitely bear the desired results.

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