Colonialism, Land Use, Labour and the Implications for the Economy of the Tiv of Southern Nasarawa Area, 1900 -Present

Koko Godwin Nyinongu PhD*., & Geri Tor Godfrey PhD[1]
[*]Department of History and Archaeology Education,
Joseph Sarwuan Tarka University, Makurdi, Benue State, Nigeria.
[1]Department of History, College of Education,
Katsina-Ala, Benue State, Nigeria
Koko Godwin Email: godwinkoko@gmail.com
Geri Tor Godfrey Email: meettorgeri2@gmail.com
Corresponding Email: meettorgeri2@gmail.com
https://doi.org/10.56201/ajha.v10.no4.2026.pg75.88

Abstract
Land and labour were central to the agricultural economy and social organization of the Tiv before colonial rule. Using the Tiv of the Southern Nasarawa area as its focus, this study examines how colonialism between 1900 and 1960 altered land ownership, labour organization and agricultural production, and considers the implications of those changes for the economic life of the people. The study shows that pre-colonial Tiv agriculture was predominantly oriented toward food production and was supported by communal landholding, family labour and reciprocal labour arrangements such as sule lohon and ihyumbe. Colonial rule introduced a different agricultural orientation in which cash and export crops, taxation, monetization and expanded production became increasingly important. The transformation of land from predominantly communal control to a system administered through colonial authority and native institutions encouraged expanded cultivation of crops such as groundnuts, beniseed, cotton and soybeans. At the same time, the growing demand for cash-crop production contributed to intensified land use, reduced fallow periods, pressure on soil fertility and the gradual replacement or supplementation of communal labour with hired labour. The study further finds that colonial transport development, agricultural stations and later agricultural programmes created opportunities for commercialization and technical improvement, but these benefits were uneven. Overall, colonialism stimulated commercial agriculture and cash-crop production while weakening elements of the earlier subsistence-oriented system, contributing to labour migration, social differentiation and food shortages. The study concludes that the colonial transformation of Tiv agriculture had enduring implications for land, labour and rural economic organization.

Keywords: *Colonialism, Tiv; Southern Nasarawa, land use, agricultural labour, cash crops, subsistence agriculture, commercial agriculture*

Introduction

Land and labour are critical variables in agricultural production especially in Tiv society where daily life predominantly revolves around farming. Given this importance, the alterations introduced by colonialism have continued to post significant consequences on the economy of the Tiv of central Nigeria. This paper, driven by the need to examine these changes therefore,

embarked on the task of interrogating colonialism, land use, labour and the implications for the economic life the Tiv of Southern Nasarawa area between the periods 1900 and 1960. It exposes the impact of colonialism on Tiv agricultural practices in the area under study. Here, other agricultural ancillaries are also looked at. They include: Textile industry, Blacksmithing, Fishing and trade. All these are looked at to unravel their relationship and relevance to agricultural practice in terms of either the products of agriculture or instruments of agriculture. The Tiv of Southern Nasarawa area are significant in the agricultural sector based on their role in the agricultural production of food and cash crops, animal production and other agricultural ancillaries. These activities have projected the Tiv as actors of trade in the Southern Nasarawa area. Tiv agriculture from 1900 - present stretches from the colonial period to the post - colonial period. The concept of agriculture during colonial rule in Tivland was extremely narrowed. Unlike the pre-colonial Tiv who perceived agriculture as the cultivation of crops, the colonial officers viewed it as the cultivation of export crops such as beniseed, palm oil, soybeans etc. It was this colonial worldview of agriculture that prompted Njoku to submit that:

> Colonial definition of agriculture was short-sighted, because it was concerned with export aspect of agriculture and showed little interest in the production of domestic staples. To this end, the government took steps to ensure increase production of exports not only did it encourage production of traditional exports, it also introduced new ones such as cocoa and cotton.[1]

In spite of the colonial interest in cash crop production, most part of the colonial period did not experience real programme for agricultural development in Tiv areas of Southern Nasarawa State. It was this situation that moved Toyin Falola to comment as follows;

> …agriculture under colonial rule was to serve colonial needs. This was why respective parts of Nigeria came to specialize in the production of certain so-called Cash crops (or export crops). Palm oil and kernel were prominent in parts of eastern Nigeria. Cocoa in western Nigeria.[2]

The quotation above reflects the experience of the Tiv in the area now referred to as Southern Nasarawa State, where large portions of land were devoted to the production of groundnuts, beniseed, cotton, and soybeans among others. The people were compelled to give desperate attention to the cultivation of these crops, which in the actual sense had little consumption value. This was effectively done through the imposition of certain policies like taxation on the people by the colonial authorities. In a way, the Tiv of this area were compelled to produce agricultural products that won colonial interest in Nigeria, groundnut, cotton and shea butter were chosen as products in Northern Nigeria.[3]

Methodology

The study is structured as a historical qualitative inquiry into the transformation of Tiv agriculture in the Southern Nasarawa area. Its evidence base, as presented in the original manuscript, combines historical and economic literature with oral testimony. The cited sources include works on Tiv political and economic history, colonial economic policy, anthropology and agricultural history, together with oral interviews conducted with farmers, elders/retirees and personnel associated with the Nasarawa Agricultural Development Programme. The study focuses principally on the period 1900–1960, while the post-colonial section is used to trace the longer-term agricultural consequences and continuities of the colonial transformation.

The analysis is thematic and historical. It compares the organization of land, labour and agricultural production in the pre-colonial period with developments under colonial rule and then

considers post-colonial agricultural programmes and production patterns. The approach is therefore concerned less with numerical measurement than with explaining historical change, institutional intervention and their implications for Tiv agricultural and economic life.

Results

Pre-colonial Tiv agricultural economy

Agriculture was the major occupation of the Tiv people during the pre – colonial period. For this reason, farm labour and land were assets that were highly valued especially because both were major factors in the production process. Although other non-farming activities such as fishing, carving and weaving existed in pre-colonial Tiv society, most activities in Tiv society during the period revolved around farming. The soil in Tivland supported the production of a wide range of crops such as yams, cassava, millet and guinea corn until the colonialists introduced cash crops. Apart from this, every compound had sufficient labour to sustain production and the fact that farming carried a lot of respect in the pre – colonial society made agriculture the dominant occupation. Indeed, farming made the Tiv society to be self-sufficient in food production hence the possession of large farms indicated wealth and affluence and such people were refered to as shagbaor. Based on the foregoing, conscious efforts were made by the Tiv to pass the farming tradition on to succeeding generations by encouraging hardwork among the youth and children.

Apart from the production of crops, agriculture among the Tiv also embodied the rearing of domestic animals such as chickens, cattle, pigs and goats. However, the keeping of animals in itself was not considered as a major occupation by the Tiv people hence the animals were kept as a form of tradition and used for some occasions.[4] Cattle which was essentially the Bua Tiv (Zebu cattle) was used for exchange purposes during marriage and other ceremonies.[31] The goats and pigs were used for occasions like marriage as well while chickens were usually cooked for visitors. Although the Tiv enjoyed eating meat, domestic animals were not preferred to wild animals. Except for the pigs and cattle, the goats and chickens slept in the same huts with humans and were allowed to wander for food during the daytime. The pigs and cattle however had separate places but the cattle were always tethered. The goats and pigs were also tethered during the planting season to prevent them from damaging nearby crops.

Since the production of crops dominated agricultural activities among the Tiv several activities within the society were determined by farming activities. For instance, the ages of children were sometimes calculated based on the number of farming seasons that elapsed after the birth of the child. This in turn was practically deduced from the number of plots upon which yams were planted. Since yams were hardly repeated on the fields, the number of fields that were cultivated represented seasons or years. The Tiv people had the same farming calendar which represented an ordered routine or cycle of farming activities that were carried out at specific periods and seasons. In most parts of Tivland, the farming calendar reflected a three year farming cycle. Usually, yams were the most important food crop among the Tiv People and it formed the axis upon which the farming calendar revolved. The preparation of yam farm began in the last third of the year shortly after the new yams were out. The availability of fertile alluvial soil in the Benue plains was combined with practices like shifting cultivation, crop rotation and bush fallowing in order to boost the fertility of the soil until the advent of colonialism.

Like land, labour was also a very crucial aspect of the Tiv economy and as such its significance is still unmitigated since it is still used extensively and intensively in rural agricultural economies. Labour was therefore sourced through the complex social ties which existed within and beyond the Tiv Society. The family constituted the basic unit of production but labour during the pre-

colonial period had a communal dimension. In certain activities such as the clearing of the hyande, labour was sourced from within the family. All adult members of the family including their visitors contributed their labour. Other aspects of farming like the making of heaps needed much labour and the family heads often relied on their social ties such as in – laws and friends or other members of the compound. This help was not usually in vain because it had to be reciprocated at some point. Since the process was a reciprocal one, it was usually not difficult to get co-operation from those whom it was sought. Before the colonial period, those invited were offered food and locally brewed beer. The process of sule lohon was a source of pride among the Tiv and it was often preferred more so as it enabled them to carry out their work within very short period of time. Another important source of farm labour among the Tiv was called ihyumbe. The ihyumbe was a sex - determined system of labour supply which depended on the co-operation of members of a community in order to avoid the monotonous nature of going to the same farm every day. Under this arrangement, the males or females within a community formed groups which took turns in working on the farms of each other. The groups did not receive monetary payment for their work but the member who was being helped prepared food and brewed local beer for members of the group. It is difficult to explain how beneficial this arrangement was to the members.

Colonialization of Tivland and the colonial economic orientation

Studies on the Tiv of the Lower Benue, show that by the beginning of the 19th century, there was growing European desire to explore and discover available economic resources in the entire region. This same motive attracted them to Tivland in general and the Tiv of Southern area in particular. The takeoff of industrial capitalism in Europe required acquisition of colonies and markets abroad in order to invest the surplus capital that was beginning to clog the domestic economy of Western Europe. Europe also needed colonies and markets to exploit agricultural raw materials and mineral resources needed for their emerging industries. Consistent with this motive, the British government through the new Northern Protectorate Administration sought to construct communication network to link Lokoja with Ibi. As they were carrying out this project, they destroyed some Tiv farms, this brought them into conflict with the Tiv and Bassa at Akpanaja, near Anter. According to London Times:

> Captain Canal of the Nobfolk Regiment and 150 men of the WAFF, while escorting the telegraph construction staff North-East of Lokoja were attacked on January 7th by 2000 Mitshi, Munshi or Tiv and Bassa tribesmen, Captain Eaton of the East Kent Regiment was severely wounded…one man was killed and twelve wounded.[5]

This was followed by series of punitive expeditions. In 1901, Lugard sent a contingent of 500 men of the second battalion with three maxim and two seven pounders,6 he was of the belief that Tiv were lawless, treacherous, intractable and unresponsive group who must be pacified.

In spite of all these by 1870, colonialism had established its tentacles of economic relationship in the Benue area. Before 1945, the colonial state rarely intervened in Nigeria economic affairs generally and Tiv land in particular. The attitude was occasioned by the then colonial policy of laissez- faire. This prompted Lord Lugard to think that the only possible way of developing a backward people was for them to be self-fending. This he expressed as follows:

> Let it be admitted at the outset that European brains, capital and energy have not been and never will be expended in developing the resources of Africa from motives of purely philanthropy. That Europe is in Africa for the mutual benefit of her own industrial classes, and of the native races in their progress to a higher

> place. That the benefit can be reciprocal and that it is the aim and desire of civilized administration to fulfill this dual mandate.[7]

This administrative philosophy provided a standpoint for the economic and political policies, which the colonial masters, made in Nigeria, which includes the Tiv of Southern Nasarawa area. The laissez-faire policy was therefore aimed at freeing the colonial government from any financial responsibility to the colony. In spite of this policy, the colonial government at the early stage, attempted to improve agricultural production among the Tiv. This the colonial government did by establishing a Research Center plantation at Ibadan in 1921, one of which was established in 1926 at Yandev, in Benue state, some in Vom, Plateau State among others in the North. This farm centers were mainly established to carry out research and experiment for investigation into improved method of agriculture, high yielding species and pest resistance within Yandev (Tiv zone) where it was located. Despite the hardship faced by farmers resulting from the colonial economic policy, it is worthwhile to maintain that agriculture and indeed the entire economy became better by 1960. It is for this reason that some people saw this period as period of economic boom. Ake Claude however observes thus:

> But the impact of the boom on the amelioration of economic condition in Africa was limited. First the effects of the boom were felt mainly in those parts of Africa, which produced the commodities most in demand in Europe … second, expatriate companies …monopolize the benefit of the boom.[8]

Transformation of land use and agricultural production

Unlike pre-colonial Tiv society, when the people collectively owned land, while tillage of the soil was done through communal efforts, 1910 experienced a different scenario. The colonial administration enacted the Colonial Land and Native Right Law, which provided that all lands in Northern Nigeria belonged to the government.9 This meant that land was no longer a communal property as such, its control and appropriation was to be done by the governor of Nigeria in accordance with native law and custom. By this law, Tiv farmers who traditionally owed their land had to obtain permits to till such land. An important feature of land ownership and usage for crop production in Tiv society was the native court which adjudicated land disputes, usually in favour of the wishes of the colonial government.

Through the assistance of the native court's traditional chiefs appropriated land to their subjects for tillage.10 The implication of this new form of land ownership was that, communities that owned large portions of land were those whose members were active in soyabeans and groundnut cultivation. These were the cash crops needed by the colonizers to feed their industries back home. Families that could not cope with the increasing demand abandoned their traditional heritage and migrated elsewhere in search of farmland. Farmers, who found favour in the new pattern of land ownership introduced by the colonial government, began to accumulate wealth and thus purchase and rented land from the traditional leaders. From the advent of colonies, production of food and cash crops, the expansion of farmland became intensified and noticeable. Traditional leaders in Tivland took advantage of their position and began to owe private land, which they either rented or sold, to prospective buyers.

With the use of the local farm tools such as the hoe, cutlass and pegs, large areas of land were brought under cultivation. Farmlands were cleared before the new rains by late March and early April for the cultivation of early crops such as maize and groundnuts. After clearance, ridges and mounds made depending on the crops that were to be planted. The post-colonial period witnessed the introduction of new farming techniques such as the use of herbicides and machines for land

tillage and fertilizer application. After planting, the weeding of respective crops had to be carried out on time as shown in the table below. This method of crop cultivation ranging from root crops to cereal as well as weeding was meant to enhance crop yield.

Table 1: Traditional Farming Calendar and Agricultural Production in the Benue Area

Cycle	Months of Activity	Crops	Type of Agricultural Activity	Remarks
1	Sept. to Late December	Benniseed, Rice, yams, maize and Ground Nut	Harvesting of Benniseed, cutting and leveling of grass, harvesting of early yams, g/nuts and maize	Transition period from wet to dry season
2	Later part of December up to March	Yams, Beans, bambara nuts, sweet potatoes.	Final full harvest of most crops, provision of storage banns other facility grainaries drying racks etc, preparation of heaps, monds early planting of seed yams.	Very dry and cold weather harvest time.
3.	April to June	Yams, Beans, cassava, G/nut, all cereals.	Digging, planting ridges for cassava, G/nut, rice, melon, sowing of vegetables, cow pea, pigeon and sorghum. Planting bambara nuts, cotton, final plating.	Transition from very hot/dry weather to early rains, beginning of earnest farming activities.
4	June to September	Almost all crops	Repeat performance of cycle 3 above for most crops, watching and keeping off birds and rodents from millets, g/nuts, rice etc.	Peak period farming activities and hunger periods.

Source; Crop Production Manual produced by the Benue State Agricultural Development Authority (BNARDA) p. 7 also see M.O. Odey *A History of food crop production in the Benue Area 1920-1995; the dialectics of Hunger 1995*.

As can be gleaned from table 1 above, land among the Tiv was subjected to constant usage because of the demand for increased crop production in order to meet increasing needs.[11] In the attempt to catch up with the new order, there emerged the necessity for farmers to increase land acreages numbers of farm families and hours spent on the farm. Shifting cultivation which had been the practice adopted by the Tiv during the pre-colonial period to allow cultivated land to regain nutrients had to be abandoned. The intensive use of land resulted in a growing disequillibrium in the delicate balance of traditional farming techniques and the demands of production, which called for an ever-increasing production of both food and cash crops. It is in this regards that knot misunderstood the whole process, thereby observing that the Tiv farming techniques were wasteful. To Knott;

> If the Tiv are to continue their present wasteful destructive and incompetent farming methods, they will continue to encroach on the land of their neighbors, and after having exhausted them, push on yet further into such unoccupied areas as lies beyond.[12]

What actually led to soil infertility was the persistent cultivation of land, with the desire to boost cash production not observing fallow periods. The colonial government failed to realize this effect of loss of fallow period, and rather blamed soil infertility on the poor farm methods of the Tiv

people. The most remarkable change in the economy of the Southern Nasarawa area during the colonial era especially between 1900 and 1960 was the emergence and development of cash economy. This had its foundation in the development of agricultural exchange and export products which were commonly referred to as cash crops. The entire agricultural system among the Tiv of Southern Nasarawa went through a number of transitional stages. The primary concern of farmers in this area during this era was the production of food and clothing to take care of their immediate needs before the modernization or improvement of transport facilities in this area, crop production for export was grossly limited. [13]

The geographical conditions in the area were quite favorable to agricultural production; the pressure posed by needs such as European imposed taxes was severe and with the introduction of cash crops and waged labour, change became inevitable. Consequently. food crops were cultivated intensively only in localized dry areas. At a point in this period, there was rapid rise in the value of agricultural export produce such as groundnut, beni seed and soya beans. Consequent increase in the purchasing power of the farmers became quite noticed. This was however slowed down by the two world wars and the general economic depression. The development or transformation of transport facilities such as tarring of roads, opening up of motor able access roads, and construction of rail ways and the improvement of water transport coupled with the gradual spread of education naturally led to greater emphasis on commercial agriculture.[14] From that moment onward, production for local sales and for export became the main aim of famers. Those who eventually ventured into this were successful as there was improvement in the volume and quality of products for export.

It can however be noted that improvements in the quality of the farmers' work did not keep pace with the increased physical outputs actually achieved. Various factors were responsible for these short falls in production. These include problems associated with cultivation, drainage, protection of crops from wind, pruning, manuring and control of pest diseases. These aspects of agriculture were given no significant attention from the peasant farmers. The government was faced with the challenge of tackling these problems. The agricultural production techniques had largely remained primitive in nature. These had to a large extent resulted in defective crop production method for export crops.[15] One of the noticeable challenges of agricultural practice in the Southern Nasarawa State was the absence of or poor financial grants for farmers by the colonial government other than the locally organized communal labour and a few agricultural associations. This constituted serious agricultural bottle neck especially in the face of the outbreak of serious epidemic of diseases in the major crops in the early thirties. Farmers did not have immediate relief for these agricultural challenges. Most of these problems of agricultural production were associated with the production of the major agricultural product.

To ease some of these problems, policies were put in place such that it became impossible for strangers or foreigners to secure absolute ownership of land. The colonial government saw the need for introduction of improved varieties of crops and also distributed such plant seeds as beni seed and cotton to peasant farmers. The government also promised to buy the produce, with additional incentive of bonuses for good agricultural production results. Another dimension of government encouragement of cash crop production was seen in the establishment of a number of institutions for the general advancement of agricultural production. Between 1912 and 1916 many agricultural experimental stations were established in some parts of Nigeria. The ones closer to the Southern Nasarawa State were those in Zaria and the Agricultural research station at Vom in 1925. In 1934 also another agricultural station was established at Samaru and a veterinary school in Kano. This was established with the support of the colonial development and welfare fund.

These were the closest to Southern Nasarawa State. Thaddeus Biaga Ikper[16] also testified that various functions were performed by these institutions; some of which include; the provision of training programmes for a number of people who later qualified as agricultural officers of various grades; and encouragement of farmers to improve their systems and techniques of production through dissemination of new ideas to the few who were ready to adopt such new methods. The consequence of this was that various agricultural shows were organized to encourage competitiveness in agriculture. In addition to this, more efforts were made to improve production techniques of some crops like Beni seed, cotton, maize, yams and groundnuts. The Nigerian government also devoted time in another major aspect of agricultural production as well as the improvement of the quality of agricultural products especially those which constituted major items of export. It can therefore be explained that agricultural production among the Tiv in the Southern Nasarawa area took a new dimension from the pre-colonial agriculture. During this era, agriculture was no longer restricted to subsistence production for domestic consumption; it was now production for consumption and commercial transactions. This went beyond local markets since cash crops were transported to outside areas. It is on this note that transportation and its sources became necessary.

Changing patterns of labour

Tiv consider labour as a very important factor in the process of production, which serves as a source of their lively hood. Tiv people encourage hard work among all members of their families and communities. They call it Tom. Which directly means work? As the Bohannans explore Tiv economy, they make the following observations;

> Tiv work hard, and they agree, that "Hoeing fields is the most important work of the Tiv." but they do not find their work painful. (Even when they get tired, or when would prefer to do something Else); they do not traditionally sell "labor" on the market, although they are beginning to do so. They do trade work for work. What the Tiv people hate most is laziness.[17]

Labour among the Tiv people is organized based on sex, age and status. They consider some works to be meant for men and some are meant for women. Similarly, some works are specified for the aged people while some are meant for children. The Tiv people agree that women are weaker sex and so cannot perform all categories of works. For instance, the task of pushing down grasses for clearance (*Ihiande uyoughun*), can only be performed by men. Making of mounds and ridges is considered men's task. Planting of yams, maize, millet, and groundnut as well as weeding of farm are the responsibility of the women. Harvesting of yams, packing and storage is also women's work. The Bohannans note also that these roles are quit distinct as they say.

> If one asks men, why women don't do men's work, one is told that they aren't strong enough, that it would be immodest or that they would run away from the man who required it. if one asks men, why men don't do women's work, they say that such work does not require a man and that men have quite enough to do already.[18]

Although as the Tiv society grows into modern times, men sometimes do works meant for women while women do vice-versa.

Changes in the traditional pattern of land ownership introduced new elements in the communal labour utilization, which existed in the pre-colonial Tiv society. However, this communal form of labour organization remained the most effective form of labour organization. This however to a length augmented by commercial labours from within and outside the Tiv communities. At this

instance, communal labour was gradually replaced with commercial or wage labour. During the post-colonial period, even though farmers earlier invited their kin to help work on a piece of land, the colonial demand for expanded production of cash crops made it necessary for farmers to supplement communal labour with hired labour.

Although commercial labour became prominent in Tiv land, it was mostly practiced in the production of cash crops. The Tiv people did not consider the institution of migrant labour a very healthy institution. This is because they felt labour migration would cause shortage of working population. Commercial labour came into Tiv land in two basic categories, first category were those who came from other communities within Tivland. Many of these migrants were people of bad behaviors. In the view of Azelo.[19] some of such migrants were those who were accused of theft, some were those who were accused of having unlawful affairs with other peoples' wives. A good number of such migrants were gamblers. Such left their land in escape from the wrath of the law of their land. Those who were gamblers actually used money realized from commercial labour for gambling. The second category is that group of laborers who came from outside the Tiv community. It can also be noted that although Tiv people were not used to selling their labour or services to none Tiv people, during this colonial period with the introduction of commercial labour, some Tiv young people went to work on some Mkwarra farms for money. Some worked on some wealthy Alago people's farms as well as some Migili (Koro) people. They did this only when they had finished working on their farms and needed money to solve their immediate needs.

Agriculture among the Tiv of Southern Nasarawa Area in Post – Colonial Times

Just like it was the case with colonial agriculture, it is equally difficult to sieve out major crops from minor crops among the Tiv of this area. According to available information at Nasarawa Agricultural Development Programme (NADP), all of the above-mentioned crops are produced by the Tiv of Southern Nasarawa area, be they cereals, tubers, tree crops, food or cash crops. The only difference is that they are produced at varying quantities in various geographical areas of Southern Nasarawa area based on soil, topography etc. which have enabling condition for the production of such crops. The following major crops are produced in various areas in the Nasarawa area; cassava is produced all over the area. But it is produced in higher quantities in Doma, Keana, Kadarko, Rukubi, Agyaragu and a few other places in Southern Nasarawa State inhabited by the Tiv speaking people. Yam is also found all over Tiv areas in Nasarawa State but produced in larger quantities in Doma, Awe, Lafia and Obi local government areas. Millet, guinea corn, maize and rice are also produced all over Tiv area in Southern Nasarawa State. They are however produced more in Keana, Doma and Obi Local Governments. Soyabeans is produced in Ajimaka, Doka, and Ankoma. Groundnut is produced all over the Tiv areas in Nasarawa State in large quantities. Citrus is also produced only few areas in Southern Nasarawa State. Beniseed is produced in Alagye, Ajimaka, Rukubi, Doka, Obi, Asakyo, Azara, Agyaragu, and Kadarko in large quantities. Melon is produced in larger quantities in such areas as Keana, Awe, Azara, Obi, Ajimaka, Dadu, Igbabo, and Doka areas. Colonial agriculture provided foundation for post-colonial agricultural practices in Nigeria generally and Southern Nasarawa area in particular. It is against this background that in 1975, the National Agricultural Development Programme (NADP) was established in this area, its main objectives as postulated by George Zauka[20] were to improve and promote agricultural output as well as to enhance rural development through the construction of rural roads and dams. According to Zauka, this body was also charged with the responsibility of providing improved seeds for farmers. Since establishment, the funding of this programme has been vested in the hands of the World Bank, Federal and State governments. The tentacles of this programme are spread

across all Local Government areas of Nasarawa state. During varying periods of various administrations, the NADP has affected a diversification of agricultural activities through Fadama farming. It has also provided employment opportunities for both young and old people; the programme has also improved agricultural farm technology through Fourth nightly training (FNT), Monthly Reviewed Training (MRT), among many others. During various administrations, various categories of agricultural programmes evolved from the NADP. For instance, during the administration of Alh. Abdulahi Adamu as Governor of Nasarawa state, Fadama 1 and 11 was introduced. This agricultural programme was introduced by government to basically aid farmers to improve on the production of animals, Fish, birds among others through certain financial grants. Another agricultural programme introduced by this administration was the New Rice for Africa (NERICA). It originated from a cultivar group of inter specific hybrid Rice, developed by the African Rice Centre. This programme concentrated mostly on Rice production. Here, financial grants were given to farmers to enable them produce the improved Rice which was later bought by the government at a price favourable to farmers. Governor Abdulahi Adamu also brought on board the National Food Security programme which encouraged mainly the production of birds. IFAD was another programme which encouraged the production of Cassava, Cotton, and Rice.

John Osewu[15] testified that the administration of Alh. Aliyu Akwe Doma, came up with such programmes as BADAKOSHI and Fadama 111. FADAMA 111 programme gave financial grants to farmers and monitored what they were producing. This was mainly an agricultural empowerment programme for youth and women. It encouraged Rice and Fish production. On the other hand, BADAKOSHI programme provided cash loans as well as tractors to farmers. These agricultural programmes impacted greatly on the farmers in various dimensions. Farmers acquired agro technical knowhow, accessed agro-chemicals such as insecticides, knowledge on application of chemicals and above all the improvement of farm yield. This also helped farmers to handle some of the problems of livestock diseases which took heavy death toll on their livestock. Various steps were taken by the Nigerian government to combat this menace. The research laboratory at Vom successfully produced or reliable anti-vinderpest serum in 1925. This provided on effective immunity for cattle and goats and, with the later training of more veterinary staff for immunization of livestock, this problem was greatly reduced.

Discussion

The evidence presented in the manuscript demonstrates that colonialism did not simply introduce new crops into an unchanged agricultural system; it altered the institutional and economic conditions under which land and labour were organized. In the pre-colonial period, communal landholding, family labour and reciprocal labour arrangements supported a largely self-sufficient food economy. Farming was closely integrated with social life, and the possession of productive farmland was associated with wealth and status. Colonial agricultural policy redirected this system toward the production of commodities that had exchange and export value. The emphasis on groundnuts, beniseed, cotton and soybeans, combined with taxation and improved transport, encouraged farmers to devote increasing amounts of land and labour to commercial production. This helped expand the cash economy and increased the purchasing power of some farmers, but it also reduced the relative dominance of food-crop production. The transformation of land tenure was particularly important. The shift from predominantly communal control toward colonial administrative control and the involvement of native institutions changed farmers' access to land. The manuscript links this development to the emergence of land accumulation, renting and sale,

as well as migration by families unable to cope with the changing demands. Thus, agricultural commercialization was accompanied by changes in social relations and differentiation within the rural economy. The intensified use of land also had environmental consequences. The earlier practice of shifting cultivation and fallowing provided opportunities for soil recovery, whereas the demand for continuous cash-crop production encouraged more intensive cultivation. The manuscript argues that the resulting decline in soil fertility was wrongly attributed by some colonial observers primarily to supposedly poor Tiv farming methods, without sufficient recognition of the effects of reduced fallow periods.

Labour relations changed alongside land use. Communal labour remained important, but the expansion of cash-crop agriculture created a need for hired labour. Some Tiv increasingly sold labour for money, including labour outside their immediate communities. The outward movement of labour and the attraction of alternative economic activities reduced the availability of farm hands in some settings and contributed to changes in the organization of agricultural production.

The colonial period also produced contradictory outcomes. Agricultural research stations, improved seeds, agricultural shows, transport development and price-related interventions created opportunities for higher output and commercialization. However, the manuscript emphasizes that colonial economic policy was principally directed toward colonial economic needs and that the benefits of the agricultural boom were uneven. This helps explain why increased export production could coexist with persistent weaknesses in food production and rural welfare. The post-colonial experience described in the manuscript indicates that the commercial and institutional orientation established during colonial rule continued to influence agriculture. Programmes such as the Nasarawa Agricultural Development Programme, Fadama programmes, NERICA, IFAD and BADAKOSHI sought to improve agricultural technology, provide finance or inputs, support livestock and fish production, and expand rural development. These later interventions therefore represent both continuity with the commercialized agricultural system and attempts to address some of its production constraints.

Conclusion

Given the centrality of land and labour in agricultural production, the alterations caused by colonialism pertaining land ownership and introduction of waged labour changed the nature of the economy of the Tiv in Nasarawa South. It has been argued here that the motive of colonialism was essentially surplus extraction. Thus, land which was hitherto communally owned had to be set free to facilitate extensive production of cash crops and this uncontrolled usage led to the loss of soil fertility. The introduction of waged labour also altered production patterns as the outward migration of labour set in. Social stratification became more pronounced more so as only those with sufficient financial capital could cultivate and earn enough therefrom to sustain their households. Also, the other economic activities created by colonialism pulled away many farm hands and this combined with the emphasis on cash crop production to cause food shortages across Tivland. Thus, while colonialism boosted cash crops production, it diminished food crops production and caused the outward migration of waged labour to areas where the wages were higher.

Recommendations

i. Policies for agricultural development in Tiv areas should recognize the central importance of secure and equitable access to productive land while avoiding arrangements that encourage uncontrolled concentration or unsustainable use of farmland.

ii. Agricultural programmes should support soil fertility management, including practices that restore soil nutrients and reduce the adverse effects of continuous cultivation.
iii. Greater attention should be given to balanced production of food and cash crops so that commercialization does not undermine local food availability.
iv. Support for farmers should include timely access to improved seeds, extension services, agricultural finance, appropriate technologies and markets, building on the useful elements of the agricultural programmes described in the study.
v. Rural infrastructure, particularly roads and other transport facilities, should be strengthened because access to markets is closely connected with the commercialization of agricultural production.
vi. Labour-saving and productivity-enhancing technologies should be promoted alongside measures that preserve productive rural labour and reduce unnecessary outward migration from farming communities, and
vii. Future agricultural interventions should incorporate the knowledge and experience of Tiv farmers and local institutions rather than treating traditional agricultural practices as inherently inefficient.

Contributions of the Study

i. The study contributes to the historical understanding of Tiv agriculture by connecting changes in land ownership, labour organization and crop production within a single analytical account.
ii. It demonstrates that colonial agricultural transformation involved institutional and social changes, not merely the introduction of export crops.
iii. It highlights the relationship between cash-crop commercialization and changes in food production, labour mobility, social differentiation and soil use.
iv. By bringing together documentary literature and oral testimony, the study preserves perspectives on agricultural change that are not fully captured by official colonial records, and
v. The discussion of post-colonial agricultural programmes shows how colonial-era transformations continued to shape subsequent agricultural policy and practice in Southern Nasarawa.

Limitations of the Study

i. The study is geographically focused on the Tiv-inhabited parts of Southern Nasarawa and therefore, its conclusions should not automatically be generalized to all Tiv communities outside the area.
ii. The main historical analysis concentrates on 1900–1960, while the post-colonial discussion is comparatively broader and is primarily used to demonstrate continuity and later interventions.
iii. The evidence base includes oral interviews conducted at different dates and secondary historical sources; consequently, some aspects of agricultural change depend on retrospective testimony and previously published interpretations, and
iv. The manuscript provides rich qualitative historical evidence but does not present systematic quantitative measurements of changes in crop yields, land area, household income or labour migration.

Suggestions for Further Research

i. Future studies could quantify changes in cultivated land, crop yields and household income before, during and after the colonial period.

ii. Comparative research could examine Tiv communities in Southern Nasarawa alongside Tiv areas of Benue State to identify similarities and differences in the effects of colonial agricultural policies.

iii. Further research could investigate gender-specific changes in agricultural labour and how commercialization affected the responsibilities and economic position of men and women.

iv. Environmental studies could examine the long-term effects of reduced fallow periods and continuous cultivation on soil fertility and agricultural sustainability.

v. More detailed oral-history research could document the experiences of farmers, traditional authorities, labourers and traders across different generations, and

vi. Research could also assess the long-term effectiveness of post-colonial agricultural programmes such as Fadama, NERICA, IFAD and BADAKOSHI in addressing the structural challenges inherited from earlier agricultural systems.

Ethical Approval and Consent to Participate

This study was exempt from full ethical review by National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC, 2007) and Benue State Ministry of Health Research Ethics Committee guidelines under category as it involved minimal risk, non-sensitive ethical principles of voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, and right to withdraw were strictly observed.

Author Contributions

The study was conceptualized, drafted, and data collected by Dr. Koko Godwin Nyinongu, while Dr. Tor Geri Godfrey was responsible for the design and manuscript preparation. All authors contributed to the critical review and revision of the manuscript, participated in the final editing process, and approved the final version for submission.

Consent for Publication

All participants provided consent for their anonymized responses to be used in this publication.

Competing Interests

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

Endnotes and Source Notes

O.N. Njokwu, Economic history in Ahokegh Felix, The Development of soyabeans production in Tivland of Benue State 1945-2003. M.A thesis, Benue State University 2003. P. 75

T. Falola in R. Olufemi Ekundare, an Economic History of Nigeria 1860 – 1960 Methuen and Co. Ltd. New Lane London EC 1973. P. n112-15

T. Falola in R. Olufemi Ekundare, an Economic History of Nigeria 1860 – 1960 Methuen and Co. Ltd. New Lane London EC 1973. P12-15

T. Makar, The History of Political Change Among the Tiv in the 19th and 20th Centuries, Enugu, Fourth Dimension, 1994: P. 87-155.

London Times, cited in Sergent, R.A "Anglo-Tiv Relations 1885-1906" B.V.P.P No 10, 1979 p.11.

London Times, cited in Sergent, R.A "Anglo-Tiv Relations 1885-1906" B.V.P.P No 10, 1979 p.11

T. Makar, The History of Political Change Among the Tiv in the 19thand 20th Centuries, Enugu, Fourth Dimension, 1994: P. 100-117.

C. Ake, A Political Economy of Africa. (Ibadan: Longman, Nigerian Plc, 1981) p.1

Paul and Laura Bahannan, Tiv Economy, London 1966. P.5.

Paul and Laura Bahannan, Tiv Economy, London 1966. P.5.

Tseror T., Tiv and their Neighbours PLHA Press, Jos 1992

Knott in R. Layton, An introduction to Theory in Anthropology Cambridge University press 1997 P.10

Oral Interview; George Zauka, 58yrs, Male, Staff of Nasarawa Agricultural Development Programme (NADP), Lafia Interviewed at Lafia on 31/1/2014

Oral Interview; George Zauka, 58yrs, Male, Staff of Nasarawa Agricultural Development Programme (NADP), Lafia Interviewed at Lafia on 31/1/2014

Oral Interview; Thadeus Ikper, 76 yrs, Male, Farmer, Interviewed at Tse-Ikper on 21/5/2010

Paul and Laura Bahannan, Tiv Economy,(London, Longman Green and Co.Ltd 1963. P.5.

Paul and Laura Bahannan, Tiv Economy,(London, Longman Green and Co.Ltd 1963. P.5.

Oral Interview; John Azelo, 78 yrs, male, Elder/Retiree, Makurdi, 16/9/2013

Oral Interview; George Zauka, 58yrs, Male, Staff of Nasarawa Agricultural Development Programme (NADP), Lafia Interviewed at Lafia on 31/1/2014

Oral Interview; George Zauka, 58yrs, Male, Staff of Nasarawa Agricultural Development Programme (NADP), Lafia Interviewed at Lafia on 31/1/2014