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comparative study of Nyanza and Western Provinces
1900-2002**

Gordon Onyango Omenya

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**THE RELATIONS BETWEEN ASIAN AND AFRICAN COMMUNITIES: A
COMPARATIVE STUDY OF WESTERN AND NYANZA PROVINCES OF
KENYA, 1900-2002**

**LES RELATIONS ENTRE LES COMMUNAUTÉS INDIENNE ET
AFRICAINES AU KENYA: UNE ÉTUDE COMPARATIVE DES WESTERN
ET NYANZA PROVINCES 1900-2002**

THESE

présentée à

L'UNIVERSITE DE PAU ET DES PAYS DE L'ADOUR

Les Afriques dans le Monde

Ecole doctorale des Sciences Sociales et Humanités

Par

OMENYA, Gordon Onyango

Soutenue le 10 décembre 2015

Pour obtenir le grade de **DOCTEUR EN HISTOIRE**

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DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been submitted for a degree in any other university.

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We confirm that the work reported in this thesis was carried out by the candidate under our supervision.

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DEDICATION

To my wife Jane and children Kayo, Kito, Chieko and my dad Okech Omenya Charles

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GLOSSARY OF LUO AND ASIAN TERMS

<i>Buch Johala</i>	Native Chamber of Commerce
<i>Luo Pinje</i>	Multilineal territories
<i>Nanga</i>	Cloth
<i>Nyamach</i>	A type of beads mostly worn by Luo women for aesthetic purposes
<i>Jonanga</i>	People who wear clothes
<i>Jopidi</i>	Baby sitters
<i>Jokeya</i>	Carrier corps
<i>Jokarachuonyo</i>	People from Karachuonyo (Kendu Bay)
<i>Muindi</i>	An Indian
<i>Jaluo</i>	A Luo whether a man or woman, girl or boy
<i>Tach Nyangile</i>	Tin lamp
<i>Rupia</i>	Indian rupee
<i>Duka</i>	Shop
<i>Gurudwara</i>	Sikh house of worship
<i>Halal</i>	Food that adheres to Islamic laws as defined in the Koran
<i>Kavirondo</i>	A colonial term used in reference to Nyanza and Western regions
<i>Jemadars</i>	Army officers
<i>Kala</i>	Black in Gujerati
<i>Dukawalla</i>	Asian shop owners
<i>Boyi</i>	Shamba boys/houseboys
<i>Ayahs</i>	House girls
<i>Abonyo or bai</i>	Local term used by the Luo in reference to the Indians (banyans)
<i>Fitina</i>	Kiswahilli word for inciting
<i>Mistri</i>	An Indian word for a construction worker
<i>Kalasinga</i>	This was a name given to the Sikh by Africans in Nyanza region. The Africans referred to the Sikh as <i>Kalasinga</i>

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAHT	Asian African Heritage Trust
BCGA	British Cotton Growing Association
CMS	Church Missionary Society
DFCK	Development Finance Company of Kenya
EAYM	East African Yearly Meeting of Friends
FAM	Friends African Mission
GAS	Government African School
IBEAC	Imperial British East Africa Company
ICDC	Industrial and Commercial Development Corporation
IDB	Industrial Development Bank
KANU	African National Union
KICOMI	Kisumu Cotton Mills
KIE	Kenya Industrial Estate
KNFA	Kimilili Native Farmers Association
KNTC	Kenya National Trading Company
LNC	Local Native Council
NHC	National Housing Corporation
ODM	Orange Democratic Party
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
LUTATCO	Luo Trade and Thrift Company
PIO	People of Indian Origin
PNU	Party of National Unity
RAWA	Ramogi African Welfare Association

ABSTRACT

Cette étude compare les relations entre les communautés asiatique (indienne) et africaine dans la province de Nyanza et la Western province en suivant la problématique des relations inter-communautaires. Elle examine, compare les racines de la présence asiatique (indienne) et de l'occupation humaine dans ces deux provinces depuis 1901 ; elle explore les fondements et la dynamique des relations socio-économique entre les deux communautés. Des études ont porté sur les Indiens au Kenya. Toutefois, aucune recherche scientifique n'a été faite pour comparer les relations entre les communautés asiatiques et africaines vivant dans différentes provinces du Kenya, dont la province de Nyanza et la Western province ; ce déficit a justifié une telle étude devenue nécessaire. Suivant un plan chronologique, des périodes politico-économiques, l'étude s'articule autour de quatre hypothèses de base sur un modèle, commun ou non, d'occupation du territoire, sur les causes des conflits Afro-indiens, sur le rôle économique de la communauté, indienne sur les niveaux d'intégration inter-communautaire dans les deux provinces. **L'étude utilise le cadre théorique postcolonial comme un outil d'analyse.** L'étude révèle des espaces postcoloniaux comme des espaces chaotiques et pluriels, caractérisés par des contestations et négociations socio-économiques. Toutefois, ces contestations sont pacifiées et neutralisées par la nature hybride des qu'un certain nombre de valeurs indiennes ont été empruntées par les africains.

Keywords: Asians, Race, Relations, Diaspora, Integration, Africanization, Nyanza, Western, migration.

CHAPTER ONE

INDIAN DIASPORIC COMMUNITY: METHODOLOGY, IDENTITY, PROBLEMATIQUE AND HISTORY

Abstract

This chapter explores the concept of Indian diasporic communities within the local and global context. The argument put forth here is that the term diaspora evokes geographies of Identity and makes the whole Asian community a subject of study not only globally but also locally. The theoretical formulation underpinning this study is explored with the post-colonial theoretical framework taking center stage as the tool of analysis. The Indian question within the Kenyan context is raised in this chapter as the basis upon which Afro-Asian socio-economic and political contestations were anchored on. It is against this background that Afro-Asian socio-economic relations in Nyanza and Western provinces of Kenya are discussed. These discussions are supported by epistemological and empirical evidence obtained from oral informants, secondary and primary data across the two provinces of study.

1.1 Conceptualizing Indian Diasporic Communities within the Global and Local Context

Among the Jews, Hebrew term '*galout*' (exile) evokes the nostalgia of origins, whereas the Greek term 'diaspora' is related to a specific and critical event: the dispersion of the Jewish community after the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem and the annexation of Judea by the Romans. Even if the term 'diaspora' appeared for the first time in *Thucydides' war of the Peloponnesus* to describe the scattered Greeks (Sheffer, 2003:9), it has remained associated with the Jews until the 16th century. In French, this singularity of the Jewish condition was emphasized by the spelling of the term, which started with a capital letter. However, between the 17th century and the 1960s, this term has become more banal and it was progressively attributed to the Greeks, the Armenians and the Chinese. Throughout this period, the term 'diaspora' designated 'the condition of geographically dispersed people, who were mobilized by different political organizations and who, in spite of their dispersion, retained a form of unity and solidarity' (Schnapper, 2001:9). But since the end of the 1960s, the semantic field of the term has widened and it has been applied to every group of dispersed people, from the expatriates to refugees and from immigrants to activists in exile (Gayer, 2007:1).

This indiscriminate use of the term is particularly pronounced since the 1980s and may be explained by the crisis of assimilation policies and the subsequent rise of the politics of diversity in western host states (Shuval, 2003). This semantic confusion, which originates from the new perceptions of migrant ethnicities, has made the use of the term highly problematic. This is because it now refers to extremely diverse processes and often used in a metaphorical way (Marienstrass, 1989; Safran, 1991; Skinner, 1993). The historicity of the diasporic condition has also blurred; by looking at diasporas in the *longue-duree*, geographers and sociologists often fall prey to what Stephanie Dufoix has called a fixing illusion, which postulates the a-historicity, the permanence of transnational communities through the ages without fundamental changes in their modes of organization, as if their existence was somehow natural (Dufoix, 1999:151).

The term 'diaspora' now implicitly postulates the existence of intangible links between dispersed people and their homeland, although such links, which have to be constructed and nurtured, take a variety of forms in time and space. This dynamic dimension of diasporic identifications had been emphasized by early pioneers of diasporic studies such as Gabriel Sheffer (1986). However, analysts of diasporas now tend to neglect this dynamics by taking the existence of Armenian, Chinese or Indian diasporas for granted. Social links between these diasporas and their homelands thus become reified, since every emigrant or political exile is supposed to belong to the diaspora. At the same time, the identifications of these dispersed peoples become a-historical, since diasporic consciousness seems to be unchanging (Gayer, 2007:3).

To break away from such reifications, diasporic studies have to acknowledge present changes in the circulation of people, ideas and funds while questioning the historical trajectories of these evolutions. Beyond this quest for historicity, diasporic studies must rely on solid definitions of the term 'diaspora' itself. Political sociology and social anthropology can both help us to ground this definition in solid theoretical premises. Informed by historians, political sociologists have shown us that traditions are modernized, sometimes even invented. Social anthropologists, for their part, have taught us to look at culture as a process rather than a substance. Gayer, (2007:4) sees diaspora as trans-local social grouping which, under certain circumstances, fashion a common identity for their members, distinct from that of their host and home societies. This distinct identity is based on memories of a temporally and geographically distant past, which are reconstructed to suit the needs of the present.

In other words, diasporas are self-conscious and politically organized mnemonic communities. Their members are brought together by shared memories of their (even mythical) homeland and they ground their lives in a trans-local space which may be partially virtual. Like every other social group, diasporas also ground their identities in constructions of otherness, both internal (fixing the boundaries between ‘proper’ and ‘incorrect’ behaviors inside the community) and external (fixing the boundaries between the community and its social partners). These trans-local populations have a wider range of options than more territorialized communities in this regard. Moreover, diasporic construction of otherness presents a high volatility due to the plurality of factors affecting them, in the trans-local space where they evolve (Gayer, 2007:4). Taking Asian in Kenya as a diasporic community, it is evident that boundaries between members of this community and Africans existed but only became fluid due to sheer need of necessity. This is because these two communities had to interact and socialize at some point within the postcolonial spaces of Nyanza and Western provinces of Kenya.

The idea of diaspora also depicts abandoned homelands and a sense of belonging. In recent times, migrant groups, national and international institutions, international organizations, scholars and economic actors have adopted different uses and meanings of the term. While researchers (see Brubaker, 2005) advice caution in defining a diaspora, international organizations for development and state institutions, particularly in emigration countries, have reconfigured the idea of diaspora to include citizens who have simply migrated elsewhere and activated forms of economic investment. The interest and the involvement of Diasporas (Bakewell, 2009) in the processes of development is a relatively recent phenomenon, involving an increasing number of actors and subjects as well as strategies (Marabello, 2013:212).

In the 1990s, the concept of diaspora emerged as a major theme in the human sciences (Lie, 2001). The trend led not only to an excessive production of literature concerning this topic, but also produced some new journals such as “Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies” in 1991 (Herzig, 2006:48). The concept offers an alternative way of thinking about transnational migration and ethnic relations in contrast to those that rely on ‘race’ and ‘ethnicity’ (Wahlbeck, 2002). Yet, diaspora was a term used by historians to describe the Jewish people’s search for a home (Tatla, 1999). Diasporas, however, are strongly connected with colonialism. In fact, colonialism itself ‘was a radically diasporic movement, involving

the temporary or permanent dispersion and settlement of millions of Europeans over the entire world' (Ashcroft *et al*, 1998:69).

The Indian Question in Kenya in general, was a creation of colonialism. Herzig (2006:60) observes that during the last decades, the Asians in Kenya have passed through several stages of migration, which can be taken exemplarily for different approaches. During the early years, they were a typical labor diaspora due to the indentured workers. With the increase of passenger migration, they established themselves as middleman minority or a trading diaspora. Later, with increasing globalization, the Kenya Asians became a transnational community in addition to the diaspora. Older forms have not disappeared but decreased while new forms have emerged. This means that still some parts of the Kenya Asians represent the typical type of petty trader with family members and relatives as unpaid laborers. Due to the impacts of globalization, transnational activities like travel or communication have increased after Kenya received her independence. Therefore, some Kenyan Asians started to live a transnational life- however, not all. And in contrast to other transnational communities, the East African Asians are connected not only with their place of origin but also with Europe and North America. The concept of Indian diaspora and Asians is thus used exchangeably to help in the reconstruction of the history of racial relations in Kenya's Nyanza and Western regions.

1.2 Context of the Problem; between Universal and Regional/local Problematique

1.2.1 From the External World to Africa Hinterland

Relationships between racial groups posed some of the most urgent problems in the world. For example, the United States of America, South Africa, Zimbabwe and Uganda are some of the countries, which have in the past experienced serious and often mounting racial tension (Hurd, 1973). After the collapse of formal colonialism in many parts of race relations Africa, racial hostilities among different groups have never faded. The problem of race relations assumes even greater significance in plural societies in which the population is divided not merely on the basis of race but also by language, culture, value systems and religion. In such societies, unless there exists a common consensus or a sense of nationhood, which transcends ethnic and racial barriers, a divisive tendency may intensify, creating an atmosphere of suspicion, hate and violence (Bhatt, 1976).

Studies in the United States of America suggest that white racism is deeply embedded in Western culture. Given its emphasis on property, order and self-control, Western culture tends

to compel people to de-emphasize human relationships and to treat themselves and others as objects to be manipulated and used (Kovel, 1971). As a consequence, discrimination and the denial of equal opportunity to African- American and other non-white groups, continue to create anger, resentment and hostility. Racism has thus been regarded as the main cause of racial riots in several Euro-American societies (Omenya, 2010:2).

It is important to assess the place of immigration in national ideologies and the related policies. As is well known, immigration has been central in the definition of the American national identity as the 'nation of all nations'. The country defines itself as a society of immigrants. But very early on, liberal views on immigration coexisted with exclusionist policies. After the Chinese, South Asians were classified as 'aliens ineligible for citizenship' in the early 20th century and the introduction of national quotas in 1924 strictly limited their entry to the country. This period of exclusion, discrimination and xenophobia is an important aspect of the history of the South Asian presence in the US. Additionally, the post-September 11th period also sheds light on this uneasy past (Aminah and Molinah, 2007:9).

The Indian diaspora is a microcosm of India and no other diaspora has such a global spread and diversity (Sharma, 2011:124). Though they have multiple diversities, all of them have identity of being ethnic Indians (Dubey, 2010:19). People of the Indian subcontinent have migrated to different countries for various reasons at various periods of its history. Among the immigrants of diverse nationalities, overseas Indians constitute a sizeable segment. It is estimated that besides six million Indian citizens, there are more than twenty million people of Indian origin all over the world (Jayaram, 2011:1). Much of India's surplus population, usually at a young age, poured into Burma, Ceylon, South Africa, Fiji, British Guiana and the West Indies as well as East Africa. Most of the Asians were thus drawn to East Africa by a hope of rising above the poverty level (Gregory, 1993:6). Taking 10,000 as the minimum figure, overseas Indians are found in as many as fifty countries, and in seven more countries, they number between 5000 and 10,000. In as many as six countries (Malaysia, Myanmar, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, United Kingdom, and United States of America), their number is estimated to be more than a million. The people of Indian origin form the single largest ethnic community in Fiji (49 per cent), Guyana (53 per cent), and Mauritius (74 per cent), Trinidad and Tobago (40 per cent and Surinam (37 percent). They form substantial minority communities in Asian countries like Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, and Sri Lanka, and in South Africa and East Africa (Jayaram, 2011:1). Dubey (2010: xi) observes that out of the

twenty five million People of Indian Origin (PIO) across the globe, there are two million of them in African continent. They are present in all regions of Africa-Anglophone, Francophone, Lusophone, Arab, Africa, Caribbean and Oceania. They migrated to Africa for various reasons- as part of slavery, trade, indentured workers, construction workers and businessmen. The bulk of them went during colonial period as indentured and construction workers in sugar colonies of Caribbean, Oceania and Africa. Others went Under Kangani/maistry system to Malaysia and Ceylon while the third pattern of movement involved Asians moving as free or passenger Indians primarily in East Africa (Ghai, 1971). Some of them got settled as colonial army soldiers. A good number of them came from different parts of India Gujarat, South Indian States, Bihar, UP and Punjab, they are a microcosm of Indian diversity based on region, language, region, caste and ethnicity. When they settled in Africa as part of different colonial territories such as British, French, Portuguese and Belgium, their diversity became more complex than their Indian diversity. Though Indians in Africa live in the same continent, their diversity, differences in their struggle to settle down, their different quest for retaining identity and need for adaptation to local situation, different insecurity and strength, socio-economic role, level of integration and assimilation, their different intensity and interaction with the locals needs a comprehensive study (Dubey, 2010:xi).

Among all these regions, Africa is an important area because of multiple reasons. First, a large number of Indians migrated to South Africa, Indian Ocean countries and East Africa. They went under different capacities as traders, indentured workers, and free passage Indians. After Indian independence, they went as contract skilled workers. It is also a region where for the first time an Indian leader Mahatma Gandhi, raised the issue of discrimination of PIO in a big way. It is a region that witnessed the best status of PIO as in Mauritius, and the worst kind of crisis of PIOs in Uganda. It is also a region to which Indian leaders before independence and later on government of India actively engaged itself both for association and disassociation with and for PIOs (Dubey, 2010:2; Dubey, 1997).

Lastly, the existence and experience of overseas Indians, their problems and prospects, their aspirations and anxieties, their achievements and failings, their interests and orientations, and so on are discussed under the rubric 'the Indian diaspora'. While the coinage of the term 'the Indian diaspora' is nascent, the term diaspora itself is not new; it is ancient. In current

parlance, however, the term is applied to describe any group of people who are so dispersed (Baumann, 2000).

In Kenya, the problem of race relations is deeply embedded in the historical development of the country (Bhatt, 1976). With the establishment of colonial rule, land belonging to Africans was alienated and this development excited African resentment against the Europeans. The issue of racism reached its peak between 1919 and 1923, when the Europeans and the Asians engaged themselves in bitter struggles over their respective roles in the colony. This struggle was over the occupation of the White highlands and representation in the legislative council. This crisis led to the birth of the British -crafted, Devonshire White Paper (1923) which, declared Kenya an African territory in which the interests of the African 'natives' had to be paramount (Das 1975; Bell, 1964). The Asian Question in Kenya was thus established with the declaration of the Devonshire White Paper and this would later shape race relations between the three races (Africans, Europeans and Asians) within the African post colony of Kenya.

Linked to the Asian question is also the question of the origin of Asians not only in Nyanza province but also in Kenya. The movement of Asians to Kenya originates to varying degrees in the labor demands of the British Empire. In Kenya, a pre-existing mobile population of merchants from Gujarat (and elsewhere) formed the basis for the expansion of the Indian community under the British. While cheap indentured labor was required for the construction of the Uganda railway, the majority of laborers returned to India once their period of indenture was over. However, a number of the Indians from Punjab and Gujarat, attracted by the opportunities opened up by the railway, formed the majority of the Nyanza and Western Asian community. This community, a predominantly merchant class gave rise to the question of class and racial division between the Asians and Africans (Awaaz, 2012). The indenture system through its construction of "coolie" or "unskilled laborer" provided Africans, once at the bottom of the social scale, with an easily recognizable class to whom they could feel superior. Africans regarded Indians as slave coolies because they had accepted the contract labor shunned by Africans and lived in situations little from slavery (Awaaz magazine correspondent, 2011).

Discriminatory legislation in the form of land alienation in the highlands, for example (through the crown land ordinance of 1915 and subsequent labor Acts), a communal franchise, and segregation in townships were some of the attempts undertaken by the British

administrators to seal the three communities into three airtight compartments. Although the Asians, as a predominantly merchant class, were somewhat dependent on the colonial regime, they were still able, through the creation of strong political associations, trade unions and an outspoken press; for example, Kenya Indian Congress, Labor Trade Union of East Africa, Chronicle press and colonial Times respectively, to offer serious opposition to it. Moreover, in their struggle against these and other imperial policies, they were willing to cross-racial barriers and align themselves with early leaders of African resistance to colonial rule (Seidenberg, 1979). The majority of the Asian traders became mercantile intermediaries who facilitated the flow of goods between foreign commercial houses and local markets. The Asians generally opened their shops in and around areas populated by Africans and eked out a living selling basic goods such as salt, sugar, spices and sometimes fresh vegetables which they grew behind their shops. In the Nyanza region, the construction and completion of the Kenya-Uganda railway in 1901 heralded the arrival of Asians in the Lake town area of Kisumu, from where they moved to areas like Yala, Kendu Bay, Kadimo bay, Asembo bay and Ndere among other centers. After the completion of the railway, some of the Asians opted to settle permanently in these areas and undertook to open up shops (Ochieng, 1974). However, by 1911, flourishing Indian bazaars had been established at Mumias in western Kenya, Kisii, Kapsabet and Kericho (Mangat, 1969).

Himbara (1994:38) observes that joining the march into the interior parts of the territory (such as Kendu bay, Kakamega and Luanda in Western province) were not only Indians who had been associated with the railway, and civil servants crossing over into private enterprise after completing their contracts, but new immigrant traders from India. These new immigrants established themselves in almost every inland township.

Vihiga area of Kakamega District in western province was relatively close to Kisumu, the terminus of the Uganda Railway from 1901 and the major center from which colonial capitalism penetrated western Kenya. Men from Vihiga were drawn to work in railway construction as the line reached Kisumu. Vihiga quickly came to form a part of Kisumu's economic sphere as illustrated by the fact that until 1920, the region was administered from Kisumu (rather than Mumias) as part of the Central Kavirondo. Here, as elsewhere, productive forms were restructured as a result of a variety of initiatives and influences. Asian traders took residence in Kisumu in increasing numbers after 1901. Vihiga was one of the first areas to attract itinerant Indian merchants as they purchased livestock from Africans at first

and later sorghum. With encouragement and protection from colonial state, Asian traders took up residence at trading centers in Vihiga. The largest and most significant of these was Luanda in Bunyore, a site of a pre-colonial market. Indian traders were also encouraged to accompany administrators on tax-collecting safaris so as to push an export trade in grains (Maxon, 2003:36). The role played by the Asians in opening up economic spaces in the interior parts of Kenya cannot be ignored. The social relations that emerged due to these economic ventures and interactions with Africans are also important and cannot be ignored. However, no scholarly study has been undertaken to compare socio-economic relations between Africans and Asians within the two provinces of Kenya's Nyanza and Western regions. Many studies have singularly looked at the role of Asians in the political struggle and their economic contribution to the Kenyan economy at the national level. Omenya's study (2010), however came closer to assessing Afro-Asian political, social and economic relations but only in Nyanza province without making any attempt to compare these relations with Asians and Africans living in Western Kenya. This is the scholarly gap, which this study fills.

Therefore, given the crucial role that the Asians played in the social and economic transformation of the Kenya colony both at the national and local levels, it is important for scholars to delve deeper into their relationships with the African communities they interacted with. However, there are no local level studies on such relations, although it is quite clear that Asian immigrants went deep into rural Kenya in areas such as Luanda, Mumias, Kakamega, Webuye (in Western province), Yala, Ndere, Kamito, Kendu bay and Kisumu (in Nyanza province). Few studies available have looked generally at multi-racial relations between Europeans, Africans and Asians at the national level (see, Dubey, 2010, Rothchild 1993, Mangat 1969, Jain 1993 and Gregory 1993). Historical documentation comparing interracial relations between Africans and the Asians in the Nyanza and Western regions of study has not received serious scholarly attention. The Africans and Asians in both Nyanza and Western provinces of Kenya have not sufficiently been captured in regard to their relationship with each other. Both Western and Nyanza regions therefore provide a significant platform to compare and understand these relations.

1.3 Selected Literature Review

Up to the middle of the 1950s, there was hardly any research on the Asian minority in East Africa (Molnos, 1965) as well as Kenya. Only in the years before and shortly after independence, a few studies were published. Most of these are either fictionally, historically

or ethnographically written or edited by East African Asians but without any comparative approach in relation to Afro-Asian interactions within the smaller towns in Kenya such as Kakamega, Kisumu, Bungoma, Webuye and Siaya. Examples of such studies include “Portrait of a Minority (edited by Ghai and Ghai 1970b); and the study by Shanti Pandit (1963). In addition, during the 1960s, there were the works by N.S Thakur (1963), J. Lovegrove (1963) and Olof Tandberg (1963). A. Bharati (1964) as well as Yash and Dharam Ghai (1971), made a statement on the political situation in East Africa, whereas Indira Rothermund (1965) wrote about the political and economic role of the minority in East Africa Asians.

Robert Gregory (1971) and J.S. Mangat (1969) published two historical overviews. However, the latter asserted that the existing literature relating to the Asians in East Africa leaves important gaps in the overall assessment of the implications of their large-scale immigration into East Africa during the colonial period. Donald Rothschild’s (1973) sociological study provided a demographical analysis of and brief social history of the South Asians during the colonial period. Visho Sharma (1976) wrote and investigated ethnic interaction while Daniel Don Nanjira (1976) wrote an overview of the status of ‘aliens’ in East Africa. Yash Tandon and Arnold Raphael (1978) focused on Human Rights aspects of a minority. Similarly, Jessica Kuper (1979) analyzed racial identities of Goan and Asians in Uganda and John Zarwan (1974) introduced the social evolution of the Jains in Kenya. Moreover, in the 1980s, Dana Seidenberg (1983) published her study on the Asian history in Kenya while Cynthia Salvadori (1989) wrote ethnography on the Asian communities in Kenya (Herzig, 2006:42).

Since the 1990s, there has been a growing interest in the Asians in East Africa; Michael Twaddle (1990) presented a historical overview covering the last hundred years and Robert Gregory (1993) did an economic and social history about Asians in East Africa. Christian Kiem (1993) contributed with a political assessment, while Dana Seidenberg (1996) and Cynthia salvadori (1996; 1997) edited several compilations about Asian experiences in Kenya. James Brennan (1999) explored South Asian nationalism in Tanganyika, while Gijsbert Oonk (2004) investigated the changing culture of the Hindu Lohana community in East Africa.

In the 1990s several dissertations were also written on the subject as well. In her Ph.D. thesis, Richa Nagar (1995) investigated identity politics among the South Asians in postcolonial Dar-es-salaam and published some additional articles on the subject. Carmen Voigt-Graf (1998)

wrote her masters' thesis on the Asian communities in Tanzania while Herzig's (1999) masters' thesis dealt with the Kenyan Asians. Shrin Walji (1974) and Parveen Walji (1980), both Kenya Asians, wrote their Ph.D thesis on Asians in East Africa. Other fictional writings have been done by Vassanji (1989, 1991 and 2003) among others. All these studies have contributed immensely to the understanding of the Asiatic community in East Africa. However, all of them fail to address comparative issues of Afro-Asian relations within Nyanza and Western provinces of Kenya (see also Michel Adam, 2009).

Most studies have so far focused on the relationships between immigrants, their homelands and host societies but very few studies deal with issues of comparison on interracial relations amongst Africans and Asian diaspora in Kenya. Among the major exceptions is the book edited by Crispin Bates (2001) where several case studies of inter-ethnic relationships are examined in the Indian subcontinent and in the diaspora. However, these case studies have only looked at relations between different Asian ethnic groups, for instance, ethnicity and community politics in Fiji, Mauritius, East Africa, Trinidad, Pakistan and India to mention a few. Interestingly, no specific African country had been chosen as a case study in this otherwise highly interesting book. Many researchers have tended to neglect a comparative study to Afro-Asian relations thereby leaving a scholarship gap that this study intends to fill. Apart from Bates, Gayer (1998) draws a comparison between the patterns of relationship between South Asian populations in London and Paris. He shows how diasporic populations can invent a common identity in the opposition to the racism of the host society as is observed in London for instance, while at the same time they can reinvent (and not simply import) the conflicts affecting their homeland; for instance, Hindu/muslim communalism, Sikh separatism and so on (Aminah and Molinah, 2007:4). The above foregoing is useful to this study because they enrich our efforts to appreciate racial tension and construction of identity between Asians and Africans in Nyanza and Western provinces of Kenya.

Apart from a few studies in Kenya, not so much has been written on this topic revolving around comparing the relations between Asians and Africans within two provinces of Kenya. And yet, these diasporas are not only increasingly important at the demographic level (approximately 20 million Indians, 4 million Pakistanis, 4 million Bangladeshis) and more diversified, but they are also getting increasingly involved in the socio-economic development and politics of both their host-society and their homeland. As a result of the migration process, many of these immigrants experience a redefinition of their identities, some identities

may become subsumed (like language or caste-based) while others may be given a new salience, and even take precedence over other identities (like religion), which is likely to have implications on inter-ethnic and inter-racial relationship. Nevertheless, such a process can vary from one country of immigration to another, depending on the models of integration prevalent in each country and other variables (Aminah and Molinah, 2007:4).

1.3.1 Comparative Approach to the Diasporic Community in Host Countries: The US, France and the United Kingdom Cases.

Looking at the global picture as far as the Indian immigration and diaspora is concerned, France, the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States of America (USA) has demonstrated a unique combination of historical processes, political ideologies and state policies regarding immigration which has fashioned a specific national context and particular ways of dealing with immigration, immigrants and ethno-religious pluralism. The classic opposition between Anglo-Saxon multiculturalism and the French model of republican integration clearly needs to be qualified by taking into account two elements: Firstly, the very different histories of migration in these three countries have been as instrumental as national ideologies in fashioning these two ‘models’. Secondly, a convergence of issues and policies related to immigrants is to be observed: multiculturalism is increasingly questioned in the United Kingdom and quotas and affirmative action are being debated in France (Aminah and Molinah, 2007:8).

Although South Asian migration to the USA is the oldest as it started in the late 1880s with the arrival of Punjabs on the West Coast, it has become numerically significant much more recently, with a second migration wave that started in the mid 1960s, after the USA liberalization of the immigration policy. This legislation also privileged educated and qualified people and this explains the very high socio-economic profile of South Asians in the USA today which contrasts with that of their counterparts in France or the United Kingdom. With approximately 3 million people, South Asians amount to 1 per cent of the total American population (Aminah and Molinah, 2007:8). In the United Kingdom, South Asian migration history owes much to the colonial past: the earliest migrants came as subjects of the British Empire whether *ayah*, lascars or princes (Visram, 1986). And so did those who settled in mass in the 1950s, as their status of British subjects was perpetuated within the Commonwealth. A new legislation strictly limiting immigration from 1962 along with a Race Relations policy, which strived at fostering good relations between the different ethnic

groups, initiated a second wave of mass migration, mostly made of the wives and children of the 1950s settlers. The majority of them were from unqualified, rural background and they came to the UK as part of a chain migration process. In the 1970s, they were joined by urban qualified migrants, who mostly arrived from East Africa (Aminah and Molinah, 2007:8). The discussion above is useful since it sheds light on how government policies influence race relations. It also gives insight on how Afro-Asian integration can be achieved.

South Asian migrants who settled in France came more recently and in much smaller numbers: They came mostly in the late 1970s and currently amount to no more than 130,000. The Pondicherrians represent a special case: thanks to their French nationality, they came much earlier, in the 1950s, after Pondicherry became part of the newly independent India. Amongst migrants directly coming from South Asia, they constitute the only group having a colonial connection with France. Since the French people have no colonial representation or categorization of South Asians- apart from Pondicherrians- South Asians in France have been subjected to lesser levels of racism and discrimination than North Africans in France or Asians in the UK. As a result of the French model of individual integration and all aspects pertaining to a specific process, the emergence of well structured South Asian communities in France has so far been delayed (Aminah and Molinah, 2007:9).

Aminah and Moliner (2007:9) further argue that the historical phases of migration constitute another important variable as far as migration is concerned. The nature of migration, whether individual or chain migration is also an important factor in the extent of their interactions. Chain migration, like in the UK, tends to limit the need and the opportunities to interact outside self-sufficient community networks. In France, South Asian migration is composite; while the majority of migrants arrive as part of a chain migration process, a significant proportion do so on an individual basis. As for the USA, most of the migrants in the 1960s and 1970s migrated on the (individual) basis of their qualifications. However, in the following decades, an increasing number arrived; thanks to the family reunification provision and hence became part of a chain migration process as well. However, South Asians in the USA do not form major ethnic enclaves (except in some areas like Coney Island, in New York, which is largely dominated by Pakistanis, or Devon Avenue in Chicago, which has a more mixed South Asian population) and daily interactions with other South Asians tend to be much more limited than in the UK. This observation will therefore, be useful in helping us understand

how different identities (ethnic and racial) can exist within the chaotic plural space of a post colony.

As for France, in sharp contrast with the USA, immigration holds a marginal role in the national ideology. Traditionally, France does not perceive itself as a country of immigrants (Schnapper, 1991). And in contrast with its early politicization in the UK, from 1945 to the mid 1970s, immigration remained solely linked to economic requirements: It was central to French economic development, but remained very marginal in political debates (Lapeyronnie, 1993; Well, 1991). However, once labor migration was curbed again for economic reasons, and the first wave of migrants gave way to the arrival of their family, France was confronted 15 years later with the same issues as in the UK, namely the integration of its migrant population. The French model of integration is usually described as universalistic and egalitarian, based on the ideal of republican individualism and citizenship that rejects any public expression and recognition of cultural diversity (Lapeyronnie, 1993). Cultural assimilation is supposed to be achieved on an individual basis, as the republican model does not acknowledge ethnic communities or any other intermediary social body between the State and individuals. Particular identities considered as an obstacle to social progress, are to be abandoned. The contemporary rendition of the concept of '*laïcité*', epitomized for instance by the 2004 Act which banned again the wearing of religious signs in State-run schools, is regarded as the prime instrument of republican integration; religion is to be confined to the private sphere and public expressions of faith (as the wearing of Islamic headscarves or Sikh turbans) are considered as a threat to the entire republican framework (Aminah and Molinah, 2007: 12). Using Molinah's arguments as the basis, the current study explores the extent to which the Kenyan experience was similar or probably different from that of France.

As opposed to the USA and the UK, where the settlement process has already taken place in the past decades and where there is sizeable elite, most South Asian migrants in France still belong to the first generation and primarily hail from underprivileged social categories, with a fairly low educational background. This situation has considerably hampered the leadership formation process as most migrants are still busy settling down and have a low visibility. While this pioneer stage and the profile of South Asian expatriates explain the strength of economic ties over other forms of bonding, it does not account alone for this relative lack of leadership. The local context does indeed play a crucial role. The French model of integration does not encourage any type of mobilization at the community level, hence; do not officially

recognize community leaders as such. However, in some conflictual cases (like the “l’affaire du voile” for young Muslim girls and the turban issue for the Sikh schoolboys), the French government has been confronted with the need for ‘ethnic representatives’. Interestingly, in the case of the Sikhs, despite the official policy of *laïcité*, (secularism) the representatives they have reached for are hailing from the local *gurdwara*. As for the Muslims (who are mostly from North and Sub Saharan Africa), the French authorities have lately engaged in a process of looking for ‘legitimate’ leaders in response to various ‘challenges’ (the *hijab* {veil worn by Muslim women}, and the perceived threat of fundamentalism, for instance). But this process is fraught with hurdles not only because of the internal diversity of Muslims but also because there are competing leaderships that are either recognized (or even nominated, as a legacy of the colonial period) by the French government, or by the ‘community’ but hardly ever by both (Aminah and Molinah, 2007: 14). The importance of religion in the re-definition of individual and community identities combined with the settlement in a multicultural society, like the USA, has implications on the relationships between South Asians, as it has tended to (re) create cleavages.

In Britain, sociologists have established a linkage between colonial representations and policy vis a vis the various communities the British ruled; in particular their role in fostering sharply defined communal identities and British policy towards immigrants in postcolonial Britain. The policy, as it culminated in the 1980s, deals with communities, not individuals as in France, defined primarily in the case of South Asians in terms of religious affiliation. This has more specifically institutionalized and legitimized the most conservative or orthodox definitions of these identities. This has had several consequences: South Asian community leaders are primarily religious leaders (specially so in the case of Sikhs and Muslims); religious based organizations have received the greatest share of public support and funding. They have been more successful in mobilizing immigrants than pan-Asian or pan-Indian ones and they do so on religious issues, (the turban of the Sikhs, the provision of *halal* meat in school for Muslim children). In short, communities are encouraged to stress their cultural specificities, while competing for public resources and recognition, and in this process minority identities tended to be reified and institutionalized (Moliner, 2007:12).

This provocative literature, though theoretically and methodologically inconsistent with this study, provides useful insight and background for understanding and analyzing the Asian predicament in Kenya and the extent of their inclusion/integration within the fabrics of

African society in Nyanza and Western Provinces of Kenya.

Studies on the Indian communities abroad over the last half of the 20th century confirm that the Indian diaspora' is not a homogenous phenomenon; it is a heterogeneous and complex phenomenon, subsuming under the many diverse phases, patterns and processes. Recognizing this, Cox and Beale (1997:1) define diversity as a mix of people in one social system that have distinctly different socially relevant group affiliations. Attempts at theorizing 'social identity' which are premised upon such a definition, emphasize how people define themselves in terms of the importance of their socio-cultural characteristics (Tajfel and Turner, 1986). However, within these separate communities, there was no entrenched class cleavage such as one, which developed in the industrial societies of Europe. Instead, there was a high degree of social and economic mobility. Caste restrictions on economic activity quickly disappeared. Thomas (1999:5) is, however, uncomfortable with such theorizations in which 'us' versus 'them' is intrinsic to any expression of socio-cultural diversity. Thomas is right in emphasizing the importance of both differences and similarities in the population of any society. Excessive emphasis on differences (say, one identity marker such as race, religion or ethnicity) often results in pitching groups or communities against one another. The conflicts between the Afro-Trinidadians and Indo-Trinidadians (nationals of Trinidad of Indian ancestry) in Trinidad or Africans and Indians in South Africa (with race as the key identity marker); between Hindu Tamils and Muslim Malays in Malaysia (with religion and ethnicity as the key identity marker) or between Indians and the indigenes in Fiji (with ethnicity as the key identity marker) are some illustrations of this involving the Indian diasporic communities. Thomas' arguments are thus useful in laying the basis of racial conflicts between Asians and Africans in Western and Nyanza provinces of Kenya.

Amit (2011:82) also argues that the diversity of the Indian diaspora has also exposed the limitations of theoretical binaries like assimilation/persistence, for understanding the multiple trajectories of transformation among the diasporic communities. One could visualize such strained relations within the Indian diaspora when one of the other differentiating feature is emphasized: the relations between Hindus and Muslims in Trinidad; and between the descendants of Bhojpuri and Tamil migrants in Mauritius are cases in point (Jayaram, 2011:5). As members of society, people internalize these inequalities and power relationships in terms of domination and subordination, and view them as hegemony/oppression or even as 'isms' like racism. Such hegemony/oppression or 'ism' often unrecognized, can impact

people's attitudes in terms of internal prejudices/stereotypes and/or external discriminatory behaviors (Jayaram, 2011:5). These works provide the basis of analyzing Afro-Asian social and economic relations within Western and Nyanza postcolonial spaces. Sharma (2011:124) in his work on the Indian communities in overseas territories of France such as Reunion island of the Mascarene Islands in the western Indian Ocean located hardly 180KM southwest of Mauritius, has a vibrant Indian community of approximately 230,000 people. The French Caribbean Islands of Guadeloupe and Martinique also have significant presence of Indian communities. The Indians in these overseas territories of France are an important component of the extraordinary diversity of the Indian diaspora. However, they have faced bigger challenges to their identity than probably any other overseas Indian community. In these overseas French territories, Indians are faced with the problem of identity and culture and they are struggling to recapture their cultural and civilization heritage. Most of the Indians in these territories can be classified as PIOs and indentured "*laborers*". Already under French rule, in the 18th century, there were visible minorities of Indians in the capital Port-Louis; some of them menial "*laborers*" or dockers, others conducting business on varying scale. Many of these immigrants, mostly Tamils or Indian Muslims, were creolized during the 19th century; that is they converted to Christianity, lost their language and were absorbed into the emergent colored middle-class. But a substantial proportion of these urban migrants have retained their identity as Indians up to this day, and this indicates that throughout the history of Mauritius, to date there has been an economically influential group of 'respectable' citizens of Indian descent. Some of these families have exerted an influence comparable to that of the French planters- and like the planters, rich urban Muslims are fiercely endogamous and take great pride in their origins (Eriksen, 1992:4).

In Reunion, the French policy of cultural assimilation made it mandatory for the immigrants to adapt to the new clothing. The women stopped wearing their traditional dresses and men had to wear trousers in public space, and not in private places. In addition, the Indian nose ring, anklets and toe were no longer worn (Dubey, 2010:146). The French policy of assimilation forced them to become accustomed to the new and prevailing models of the society. The policy laid stress on French cultural attributes-; 'To speak and act like a Frenchman and adopt the French language and Creole language'. This was further encouraged with the expansion of French education and public schools. As a result, there is a complete loss of language. Today, the Indian languages are exclusively used by a few priests to read Hindu scriptures and to recite prayers in the temples. The situation of the Indian Diasporic

community in Reunion is thus interplay of two aspects namely identity and integration. Especially, when the community is the inhabitant of the territory of France where assimilation is preferred to multiculturalism it, in fact, becomes difficult to maintain their own identity. Despite the hazards faced by the Indian diaspora socially, culturally and linguistically, they are maintaining certain traits of the Indian society even though they have lost one essential trait of identity, the language (Bhattacharjee, 2010:147). The above discussions are relevant to this study since they shed light on approaches and methodologies of ensuring complete integration between the Asians and members of their host country. This study applies this approach in examining Afro-Asian integration in towns such as Kisumu, Kakamega, Bungoma, Webuye and Siaya.

It is evident that the Indian settlers in the Anglophone countries contributed immensely to their host country in the economic field as well as in the political field. But for being minority and culturally exclusive, they were subjected to various hostilities. However, their situation is in sharp contrast to Indian diaspora in Francophone African countries. Ajay (2010:115) observes that PIOs in Francophone Africa were subjected to the rigorous French Assimilation Policy. As per the policy, they were expected to become 'Frenchmen' in their language, mannerism and religion. This led to loss of their identity. Economically, they were very affluent but politically their role was marginal, except in few countries such as Mauritius where the PIOs constituted the majority. Although Ajay compares Indian settlers both in the Anglophone and Francophone Africa, his observations are useful to our current study since it sets out the comparative aspects which is the subject of our study within Kenya's provinces of Nyanza and Western. Demographers argue that when a community exists as the majority, it becomes more open to members of the other race or ethnic community.

In case of South Africa, the situation of Indian settlers is also somewhat similar. The integration of Indian settlers in South African society has not been possible so far because of their specific and distinct characteristics that make them exclusive, especially in regard to their religions, customs, habits, their higher economic status and high educational achievements. Many black people see South African Indians with great suspicion, believing that they have benefitted from apartheid period and do not want to integrate (Ajay, 2010:xiv). Padhan (2010:91) argues that Indians in South Africa contributed to the socio-economic and political development of South Africa. He points out that South African Indians have contributed significantly to the South African economy. They are among South Africa's

highly successful businessmen, professionals, civil servants, academics, corporate managers and even politicians. Politically, they remained active. They played important role in the anti-apartheid struggle and acquired political positions after the 1994 elections in South Africa. The above study is useful to our current study as it helps in exploring the changing social, economic and political dynamics of Afro-Asian relations in the Kenya's Nyanza and Western regions.

The analysis of South African Indian literary themes on postcolonial studies reveal the dialectic of sameness and difference from South Asian and South African literary discourses that gives South African Indian fiction in its distinctive texture. First and foremost, Indian capture the polarized arrangement of race on which apartheid was predicated and which post apartheid South Africa has maintained. The South African Indian diaspora is rendered distinctive by the racial tensions engendered by apartheid and preserved even after the end of segregation. Despite its simplistic structure, apartheid created an intricate racial situation; Indians were inserted in a geographic location controlled by a powerful European minority settled in the midst of dispossessed Africans. Indians have had to contend with forces of whiteness even as they struggled to forge community with Africans. The Indian presence in South Africa invites us to address the question of what it means to be Indian African in a land divided into an unyielding binary of indigenous African versus settler African. The triangulated relationship between European settler, African indigene, and Indian diasporic is unique to certain parts of Africa, and involves a reworking of the more common formula for racial interaction in South Africa provided by the authors of the influential 'The Empire Writes Back; that of white settlers and black native locked in an unending combat. Despite this tripartite configuration of races, the Indian relationship with blacks in all its energy, joy, frustration and mutual distrust dominates South African fiction (Rastogi, 2008:8). The dialectics of sameness and difference on South Asian and South Asian literary discourse is useful in eliciting the differences and similarities about Afro-Asian interactions in Nyanza and Western Provinces.

In Seychelles, the situation of Indian diaspora is quite different; constituting about six percent of the population, they are a successful community. Unlike the PIOs in Reunion, some of them still retain their language and have maintained contacts with India. African majority is happy with well-integrated Indian Diaspora and uses them as driver to successfully solicit active cooperation from India (Dubey, 2010: xvii). In regards to Madagascar, the Indian

community, *karanes* provides a unique case study as they constitute only two percent of the total population of Madagascar and controls a big part, more than 50 percent, of the economy. The small Indian community of Madagascar made itself conspicuous by its economic importance but socially they maintain very low profile. They are economically affluent and socially exclusive, and they restrain themselves from intermingling with natives. This has created dislike for the Indian community in the minds of the native Malagasies. Like the PIOs in Madagascar, the PIOs in Mozambique, a Lusophone country, achieved success in the economic sphere. However, compared to the PIOs of Madagascar, the PIOs of Mozambique are much more educated and actively participate in the public and political spheres barring some exceptions (Dubey, 2010:xvii).

In East Africa, Eriksen (1992:1) contends that the Ugandan case is an example of the worst kind of hostility that the PIOs experienced, when Idi Amin expelled the Indian settlers. PIOs in East Africa are economically one of the most affluent groups. Even in the economic, social and political fields, their contributions are immense. But unfortunately, their success has made them face a lot of animosity from the natives. It is therefore evident that Afro-Asian socio-economic interaction has been taking place. This interaction, which has contributed to shaping socio-cultural environments in which Indians and non-Indians alike move, is constituted partly by inter-ethnic interfaces and partly by social contexts where ethnicity is irrelevant (Eriksen, 1992:1). While Indian communities of the diaspora are conditioned culturally and socially by the host society, the influence exerted by Indians themselves on the societies in question is never negligible (Eriksen, 1992:2).

During the first week in August 1972, General Idi Amin Dada, President of the Second Republic of Uganda, announced the mass expulsion of Asians over a period not exceeding three months. Indians in Uganda were shocked and many were stricken with panic. Many Indians especially non-citizens who had engaged in the professions, trade, commerce and industry had viewed the assumption of power by Amin in January 1971 with considerable relief; a huge weight was being lifted off their chests; the weight of much frustration over citizenship/entry permit applications, and of fear over the many economic reforms which Obote had pursued in an effort to redress the economic inequalities between Africans and non Africans (Patel, 1972:12). For Indians, a bitter turn had taken place in October 1971 when all Indians, wherever they were, were required to be present for the Indian Census or forfeit their claim to living in Uganda. Many Indians whether they happened to be in or outside Uganda

went to special camps to be counted in what had come to be known as the “Cattle Count”. It is interesting that despite Amin’s faith in racial intermarriage as the best form of integration, children of Indo-African parentage were not exempted from the Indian Census (Patel, 1972:12).

In the first Indian Memorandum Conference on 7th December 1971, where the Indians had prepared a memorandum for presentation to Amin, the Indians voiced their hope that the conference would mark a new era in race relations in Uganda. The memorandum detailed the Indian viewpoint on social integration, education and employment, civil rights, problems relating to citizenship and immigration, the contribution of the Indian community to the economic development, and commerce and industry. On social integration, Indian custom, the colonial pattern of segregation and vilification of Indians in the news media were given as reasons for the low level of integration. Considerable attention was given, however, to the leading role of Indians in service organizations, sports, charities, and cultural bodies to indicate that Indians had helped to promote integration. Integration was a two way process, and a flagrant omission in their minds was that official functions excluded Indians; thus inter-racial marriages would help rectify the situation, but these had to be left to free choice although Indians were conservative in this area (Patel 1972:13). Consequently, the military junta in Kampala undertook to expel Asians from Uganda in the early 1970s. Amin argued that his government was determined to make the ordinary Ugandan a master of his destiny by empowering him to enjoy the wealth of his own country (Nyanchoga, 1996; Chege, 2004).

Amin asked for self-examination on the part of Indians and a memorandum from their leaders indicating practical steps for meeting complaints against the community. Nevertheless, Amin was ready to lay a large part if not all the blame on the Indians. In addressing the Indians, he made it quite clear that “it is you yourselves, through your refusal to integrate with Africans in this country, who have created this feeling towards you by Africans”. Amin’s salvo created extreme disquiet among Indians, indeed the Head of State had added fuel to the more generalized attacks against Indians, for he had blamed only the Indians for bad African-Indian relations (Patel, 1972:15).

On August 4, 1972, while travelling south from Karamojong, President Amin addressed the Airborne Regiment in Tororo, a town in eastern Uganda bordering Kenya. In his speech which covered a wide range of topics, Amin announced that Uganda had no place “for the over 80,000 Asians holding British passports who are sabotaging Uganda’s economy and

encouraging corruption". Amin informed the soldiers that he wanted to see Uganda's economy in the hands of Ugandans, especially black Ugandans. What appeared a casual insertion in his speech before resulted in the troops finally spelling the end of the Indian presence in Uganda (Patel, 1972:17). The Makerere Students' Guild welcomed the expulsion as a step in the Ugandanization of the country's economy. Subsequent to Amin's expulsion announcement, Kenya and Tanzania closed their borders to Indians fearing some might enter into their territories (Patel, 1972:17-18).

The historical separation of races did not help matters. If anything, it reinforced an insular attitude and behavior which found Indians preoccupied with ameliorating the effects of discrimination against them in many aspects of their lives. Institutionalized separation of the races also fed the fire of misunderstanding between the races in Uganda. On the socio-economic scale, Indians were the middlemen, and while there were many poor Indians in Uganda, as a group they were patently better off than the indigenous African. This also helped shape their attitude and behavior as a community apart from and superior to that of black Ugandans. But of course Indian attitudes and behavior, however much shaped by historical circumstance within Uganda were also shaped by Indian tradition. Elements of this tradition often militated against close contact with black Ugandans. It was not unusual to find that Indians possessed attitudes of superiority and negative pictures of the ability and efficiency of Africans. No doubt one could find instances of African inefficiency and lack of ability especially (as far as the Indian was concerned), in the business world- but stereotyped thinking on the part of Indian with respect to Africans was fairly general. Many Indians prided themselves the inheritors of an ancient civilization and looked upon the African as a person who had a long way to go before attaining the heights of Indian civilization. These attitudes were certainly not well received by the African, and resentment at this sort of stereotyped thinking was understandable (Patel, 1972:19).

As Mazrui (1972:3) has argued, indophobia is not something invented by Amin. The Indian was frequently looked upon as merely a trader, without much attention to the occupational diversification, which characterized each succeeding generation. The typical Indian *dukawalla* engaged in bargaining while selling his goods and this fed the impression that the typical Indian was a cheater. In many African states, Asian settlers had to bear the wrath of its government and people. Zambia, in whose freedom struggle India contributed a great deal, its leader Kenneth Kaunda got his political training in India, Asian settlers were subjected to

harsh treatment by the government. In February 1988 para-military troops pushed into clothing shops of businessmen of Indian descent in Lusaka in early morning to enforce a law that parliament had passed just a night before. This law provided for seizure of business thought to be trading in black market. The owners of such business had no legal recourse. Kaunda said 'We have been forced to do this to deal with the selfish minority of businessmen because we must protect the silent majority'. The Asian bashing in Africa had brought home another point to India. The consistent support to African freedom struggles and Afro-Asian solidarity must not make India expect that African governments would reciprocate by taking care of 'suspected' Asian settlers (Dubey, 2010:31).

1.3.2 Kenya's Asians

Most Asians, both Hindus and Muslims, came to Kenya from various parts of India in the early days of the Colonial rule in 1896. A lot of them went in a dhow – consisting of about 350 men (Salvadori, 1996). But the British took an estimated more than 30,000 Asians, mainly of Punjabi origin, to work as laborers, artisans and clerical staff on the Uganda Railway, which started on the Eastern coastal town of Mombasa. Once the construction of the railway line was completed, a number of the indentured laborers returned to India but some remained who were later joined by hundreds of independent immigrants, who were mainly Gujaratis and a few Goans, who came over as shopkeepers, artisans and professionals. Most of the Asians came to Kenya, not just as individuals, free lancing adventurers, but as people who were members of already existing communities. The History of Asians in Kenya can be traced back to the few original immigrants who settled and succeeded and then went back to India only to return with members of their families. This was a very strong corporate and was considered to be traditional in Indian societies which has helped economic systems.

In Kenya, the Asians were forbidden by law from owning farmland but they settled in townships such as Kisumu, Kajiado, Athi River, Kitale, Nakuru, Naivasha, Mombasa, Machakos, Thika, Nyeri, Nanyuki and later Nairobi. Not only did they live there, but in some cases, they built towns and became urbanized. The concentration in towns went on to facilitate the developments of community associations as well as services (see Adam 2009). This enabled each community to establish their own places of worship, schools, centers which provided focal points for their communal lives. Basically, Asians in Kenya were self sufficient, socially and spiritually and above all extremely successful economically. It was the latter that led to their resentment with the Africans. In 1969, six years after Kenya became

Independent, the Trade Licensing Act came into existence where non citizen traders had their licenses revoked as a part of the government's policy of promoting citizen businesses - African. In the postcolonial period, Afro-Asian relations in Kenya has been dynamic, characterized with conflicts and symbiotic relationships

1.3.2.1 Asians and the Kenya Economy

Gupta (2007:133) explains that, in general, a non-expanding economy creates a much greater pressure on minorities to vacate economic space than does a rapidly expanding one. In the latter, the majority population is finding economic space with economic growth and can continue to gain both absolutely and relatively without necessarily having to displace the minorities. Consequently pressure on Asians to vacate economic space, without an alternative opportunity in the manufacturing sector or in higher level skills, was much greater in Tanzania and Uganda than it was in Kenya - at least over the 1965-80 period. After 1980, Kenya's performance deteriorated for a number of reasons: the high oil prices, the growing lack of confidence by African capitalists (mostly Kikuyu, against whom discriminatory policies have been adopted) and Asian capitalists (as their insecurity heightened) meant reduced investment and reduced economic growth in Kenya. This in turn accelerated in the eighties and nineties the process of exit by Asians from Kenya as well. Although Gupta's work is more general and fall short of covering Kenya's Western region, his study is useful since it sheds light on the contested economic spaces between Asians and Africans. This study appropriates Gupta's work in analyzing how the contested economic spaces shaped Afro-Asian relations in Nyanza and Western Provinces of Kenya.

1.3.2.2 Briefs on the Socio-Political Economy of Asians in Kenya

According to Maganda (2012: 6), historical and ideological evidence has revealed that migration, settlement and trade between India, Arabia and East Coast of Africa flourished as early as 10th century A.D (300 years). This was followed by British colonialism accompanied by the construction of the Kenya-Uganda Railway (KUR) from 1895 that facilitated early Asian political, social and trading activities in Kenya (Chittick, 1975; Seidenberg, 1996; Salvadori, 1996). Neera Kapila (2009) documented a narrative of the construction of KUR from 1895 to 1902. It reveals an epic of human struggle against nature, wild animals and diseases through the Rift Valley escarpment to the shores of Lake Victoria. It is a story of courage, dedication and perseverance, which is also replete with conflicts and tensions of a

very engaging human drama. It depicts the railway construction as a landmark event in the history of modern Kenya, which opened the country to a global capitalist market. It also restores the centrality of the Indian in the making of modern Kenya by retracing the beginnings and pioneer heroes. Although the above observations do not highlight any aspect of Afro-Asian relations in either Nyanza or Western province of Kenya, it is relevant in the mapping of the trajectories of the settlement of Asian communities in the two areas of our study.

Maganda (2012) further observes that the Asia community's political participation and representation in Kenya has been minimal and steadily declining despite significant historical and contemporary contribution in the political, economic and social development. Although Maganda's work is majorly on the political participation of Asians in Kenyan politics, his contribution to the history of Asians in Kenya is useful to the current study since it provides another opening for examining the dynamics of the political economy in Nyanza and Western provinces and how this affects Afro-Asian relations in the two regions.

Looking at the Asian heritage in Kenya, the National Museums of Kenya and the Asian African Heritage Trust (AAHT) (2000) co-organized and gathered and exhibited photos on the Asian African experience, memoirs, heritage, identity and history with extensive input from the Asian community. This exhibition generally examined the controversial 'Asian question' in the context of civic, cultural, political, historical, economic and social identities and citizenship for the fifth generation African Indians in Kenya. The exhibition was organized into three themes; the labor heritage which examined the ancient historical origin of Asians, settlement, trading activities in East Africa; the social heritage which displayed hundreds of photographs of Asian African families over the past centuries; cultural practices, social services, writers, scholars, businessmen and sports; and lastly, the intellectual heritage which described the struggles, protest movement and opposition to British colonialism by Asian political activists. Although this exhibition was relevant in understanding the general contribution of Asians in Kenya, it fell short of comparing Afro-Asian relations in Kenya's Western and Nyanza provinces.

Herzig (2006: IX) observes that there is a substantial South Asian minority of Indian and Pakistani origin living in Kenya, known as the Asians. They belong to an urban, very heterogeneous and relatively wealthy minority. Most of the Kenyan Asians originate from Gujarat and Punjab, a few come from Portuguese colony of Goa (Herzig, 2006: ix). Life in a

foreign social environment obviously had a significant impact on the South Asian cultures in East Africa. In order to perform successfully in a foreign context, the Asian minority from the very beginning acquired knowledge and developed networks, i.e. cultural and social capital, in order to be able to keep up with the host- and colonial society. The creation of communal organizations can only be fully grasped when taking this into consideration. These organizations help develop and maintain social networks, which form the basis of economic, social and cultural reproduction. The first schools for example, were founded by community organizations, which also show the high importance Kenyan Asian attached to education. For them, a profound education is a pre-requisite for social mobility. The issue of communalism as illustrated by Herzig is very useful to this study since it sets out the basis upon which social relations between Africans and Asians are defined in Western and Nyanza provinces of Kenya.

Similarly, racially stratified social structure was particularly evident in the areas of occupation, income and education. Educational inequality formed an obvious and important indicator of the racial caste structure. Such arguments are important since they guide us in exploring how the colonial education system laid the foundation for social interaction between the Asians and Africans in the Nyanza region of study Maxon (1995) and Nabende (1996).

With regard to periodic markets, urbanization and regional planning in Western Kenya, Obudho (1976) argues that in the main townships in Nyanza, the population of Asiatic people increased very steadily. The same source reports that Asians were behind the building of a cotton ginnery and oil refinery at Kisumu. Asians too were responsible for the evolution of the sugar refinery jaggeries at Kibos, in Mumias and Kakamega. This study utilizes the rich data provided by Obudho to interrogate the various forms of relation which developed between the African and the Asian communities in the Nyanza and Western regions of Kenya.

1.3.2.3 Politics and Economic Realignment

Highlighting the response of the African peoples of Nyanza to the new economic problems and opportunities created by European settlement and administration, Fearn (1961) argues that the Nyanza economy was based upon the agrarian and fishing enterprise of the Africans. This economy was facilitated by the marketing opportunities provided, during the mid 1930s, through the financial, technical and organizational contribution of the immigrant races. Thus,

to Fearn, the stimulation of the developing economy of Nyanza came from the European sources but aided by Asian enterprises in marketing and trade. The above arguments are relevant to the present study since apart from explaining the backbone of the Nyanza economy, Fearn's work also credits Asians and Europeans with the development of the region. This study utilizes the arguments in Fearn's work in exploring the Afro-Asian relations, which developed as a result of the Indian participation in the commercial activities of the region (Omenya, 2010: 16).

The Asian exodus in 1968 in anticipation of immigration restrictions being imposed by the British Government provided more economic space to the Africans, but also confirmed the Africans in their view that the Asians' sojourn and commitment to East Africa was a temporary one (Gupta 1998). Anyumba (1995) states that, the independent Kenyan government came up with the Trade Licensing Act of 1969 as a policy which restricted Asians from doing business along some major streets within the town centers and the Africanization programme which was to ensure that Africans controlled the economy of the country. These policies impacted negatively on the economy of Kisumu. He observes that in mid 1970s, complaints about Asians were still common in the press. Official government warnings were still being issued from time to time to Africans who secretly resold business premises to Asians. The above observations are useful in determining how government policies influenced conflict, hostility and hatred between Asians and Africans. It will also help to shed light on how the Trade Licencing Act of 1969 impacted on the Asians in Western Province and how they coped with these economic changes.

Zarina Patel (1996; 2006) in her biographies of Makhan Singh and Alibhai Mullah Jeevanjee and the biography of Manilal Ambalal Desai (2010), painstakingly chronicled the intriguing history and struggles of the three anti-colonial freedom fighters whose lives and times epitomized the crucial and central role the Asians have played in the political development and multiracialism in Kenya. She traced the post-independence political consolidation of power by the Kenyatta regime, marginalization and political assassinations based on ideological confrontation between capitalism and socialism. Patel's biography on Desai is a historical kaleidoscope of colonial Kenya from 1890 and the subsequent political and freedom struggles against colonialism. It thus served as an eye opener to the fundamental question of the 'Asian question' in Kenya. Similarly, Pheroze Nowrojee (2007) in his biography of Pio Gama Pinto also painfully narrated Pinto's contribution against the British colonial

government and his tribulations and struggles for racial equality, freedom and independence for Kenya. He also discussed Pinto's struggle for social justice, social democracy and economic freedom under authoritarian regime of President Kenyatta leading to his assassination in 1965 (see also Maganda 2012). These works are political activities of Asians in Kenya and hardly captures any aspect of race relations between Asians and African in Western and Nyanza Provinces.

The literature reviewed indicates that some studies have been undertaken on the Asian question. However, there are several gaps which the review has identified and which require scholarly attention. Given the importance of the South Asian diaspora in postcolonial studies, the excavation of a body of writing that bestows wholeness and complexity on these very important fields as well as introducing the world to an emergent, exciting and aesthetically dense body of literature becomes a compelling necessity. This study therefore addresses some of these gaps by looking at the Afro-Asian socio-economic relations in Nyanza and Western Provinces of Kenya. From the literature reviewed, it is evident that very little comparative research has been undertaken to interrogate the Afro-Asian relations in both Nyanza and Western Provinces of Kenya. This study utilizes the numerous sources in related fields to harness relevant data in order to address this hiatus. In addition to the failure by scholars to seriously address the Afro-Asian relations in Nyanza and Western Kenya, none has given these relations a postcolonial theoretical interrogation from an African perspective. This is the gap, which this study fills.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

The Asian Question is still a dominant factor in the history of Kenya. The increasing contribution of Kenyan Asian both socially and economically cannot be ignored. In Kenya, no specific study has been carried out to compare the relationship between Asians and Africans within her different provinces despite the fact that there exist a reasonable number of Asians in all the major provinces of Kenya. Many of the studies on Asians' presence in Kenya have generally addressed the issue of Asians at a national level and not at the local level. This is the gap that this study fills. This study interrogates and compares the socio-economic relations between Asians and Africans in Nyanza and Western provinces of Kenya from 1901 to 2002. It examines the role of the diasporic Indian migrant communities within the two provinces of Kenya socially and economically. Given the paucity of studies in scholarship in the study of race relations between the Asians and the Africans in Nyanza and Western regions of Kenya,

this study examined Afro-Asian socio-economic relations in Nyanza and Western provinces with a view to establish the possibility of conflicts, integration, differences and similarities in regard to Asian contribution to the economies and social life of Nyanza and Western provinces of Kenya from 1901 to 2002.

The study addresses the following questions:

1. What are the roots of the Asian presence in Kenya's Nyanza and Western regions?
2. Were the causes of suspicion, tension, and conflict between Asians and Africans in Nyanza and Western regions similar or different?
3. How did the Asians and Africans in Nyanza and Western interacted and contributed economically and socially within the two regions?
4. What were the levels of integration between Asians and Africans in Nyanza region in comparison to Western region of Kenya?

1.5 Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the roots of Asian presence in Kenya's Western and Nyanza regions.
2. To comparatively analyze the causes and manifestations of suspicion, tension and conflict between Asians and Africans in Western and Nyanza regions from 1901-2002
3. To investigate and compare the role-played by Asians and Africans in the socio-economic activities and developments in Western and Nyanza regions of Kenya from 1901-2002.
4. To compare and contrast the levels of integration between Asians and Africans in Western and Nyanza regions of Kenya.

1.6 Research Premises

The study revolves around the following fundamental premises. That

1. Asian presence in Western province followed the same pattern of formal settlement as it happened in Nyanza region
2. The causes of Afro-Asian conflict in both Nyanza and western regions were the same.
3. Asian Socio-economic role in Western and Nyanza regions was negligible
4. The levels of racial integration in Nyanza and Western regions are different.

1.7 Significance and Justification of the Study

As indicated, earlier a number of studies have been done on Asians not only in Kenya but also within the East African region. Donald Rothschild's (1973) sociological study provided a demographical analysis of and brief social history of the South Asians during the colonial period. Visho Sharma (1976) wrote and investigated ethnic interaction while Daniel Don Nanjira (1976) wrote an overview of the status of 'aliens' in East Africa. Yash Tandon and Arnold Raphael (1978) focused on Human Rights aspects of a minority. Similarly, Jessica Kuper (1979) analyzed racial identities of Goan and Asians in Uganda and John Zarwan (1974) introduced the social evolution of the Jains in Kenya. In the 1980s, Dana Seidenberg (1983) published her study on the Asian history in Kenya while Cynthia Salvadori (1989) wrote ethnography on the Asian communities in Kenya (Herzig, 2006:42). These studies majorly dealt with the activities of Asians both at the regional and national levels. Most of these studies, however, shy away from interrogating and comparing the socio-economic relations between Asians and Africans in the Western and Nyanza regions of Kenya and more so at the local levels.

While it may be true that there is a growing body of literature on the Asian diaspora in Africa, still, no study has been undertaken to compare Afro-Asian social and economic relations within the hinterlands of Kenya's provinces of Nyanza and Western. Such an approach to race relations especially among Asians and Africans in the two regions has not received sufficient scholarly attention. Since it has not been given much attention by researchers and scholars, it is a matter of recurrent subject that merits recognition and academic research. This position not only makes the study significant but also urgent.

Given the crucial role that the Asians played in the socio-economic transformation of the Kenyan state, it is important for scholars to delve deeper into their relationships with the African communities with whom they interacted. Historical documentation comparing the relations between Africans and the Asians in the Nyanza region of study is extremely scarce. This study is also significant in that it will enrich and expand the historical studies of Asians and Africans in Nyanza and Western provinces of Kenya as it employs a comparative approach to the understanding of Afro-Asian relations. It will also add to the scarce literature on the study of Asians in the hinterlands of Kenya. The results of this empirical study will considerably improve the understanding of the Indian diasporic community in Kenya. It will also stimulate and facilitate policy makers, researchers and scholars towards promoting and

fostering inter racial relations and integration between Asians and Africans not only in Western and Nyanza provinces of Kenya but also in the entire country. This study therefore brings in a comparative approach to Indian study that has hitherto been ignored by African and Africanist scholars. It also provides an African perspective to the idea of Asian studies from a postcolonial point of view. Such an approach has never been put in practice as far as Asian studies in Kenya are concerned. The study generally focuses on the Indians whose origin was Gujerat and Punjab in India with less focus on their religion such as Hinduism, Sikhism.

This study is deeply indebted to the works of scholars such as Gisbert Oonks (2013), Gregory Roberts (1971), Ghai Yash (1971), Mangat Singh (1976) and Gupta Desh (1998), Zarina Patel (1996) and Dana Seidenberg (1996) among others whose ideas have been harnessed to reconstruct the history of Asian diasporas in Western and Nyanza provinces of Kenya. While their studies are extremely useful, they have specific limitations for this study given that they do not take into account the comparative outlook and aspects of Afro-Asian relations in reconceptualizing some of the common anxieties, roles and activities of the general Asian migrants in Kenya and more specifically Nyanza and Western provinces. These developments, therefore, do not only make this study necessary but it also gives it the scholarly urgency that it deserves. Central and north Kavirondo are used interchangeably to denote Nyanza and western regions of Kenya respectively.

1.8 Scope of the Study

This study compares the relations between Asians and Africans in Nyanza and Western provinces of Kenya from 1901 to 2002. It looks at the socio-economic roles of the diasporic Indian migrant communities within the two provinces of Kenya. The choice of Nyanza is significant because the first formal Indian settlement was established in Kibos in 1905, a few kilometers from Kisumu town. Western province also provides a rich history of economic activities which drew Asians to settle within the region. As a matter of fact, both Nyanza and Western provinces were initially one before their separation. Men from Vihiga in Western Kenya were also recruited to work in railway construction as the line reached Kisumu. This linkage between men from Western Kenya and the railway construction which was basically dominated by indentured Indian laborers provides an entry point upon which Afro-Asian socio-economic relations in Western province is interrogated.

This study starts at 1901 since this is the period when the Railway line reached Kisumu marking the entry of Indians and later on extended to western parts of Kenya. It also symbolizes the official extension of western capitalism into the interior parts of Kenya through the construction of the railway line. The year 2002 provides a good historical period since it marks the end of President Moi's term in office after leading the country for twenty four years. It is during Moi's reign and his nexus with the Asians that Afro-Asian tension and conflict increased. The year therefore provides a good opportunity to assess and compare how Moi-Asian nexus affected Afro-Asian socio-economic relations in Western and Nyanza provinces of Kenya.

Although the study focuses on two provinces, it is important to note that substantial Asian population in these two provinces were concentrated in specific places. The study does not, therefore, cover the entire two provinces in terms of geographical coverage but limits itself to specific locations where the Asians settled in large numbers and played a key role in their socio-economic interactions with the Africans. These areas are Kisumu, Kendu Bay, Ndere as well as Kakamega, Bungoma (Webuye and Malakisi) and Mumias. Most of these areas were majorly small trading centers before Kenya's independence. This study is also limited to social and economic issues alone, hence Afro-Asian political relations is not covered.

1.9 Theoretical framework: the Postcolonial Theory as a Tool of Analysis

A variety of theoretical models have been proposed to explain why international migration is triggered off (Bach and Schraml, 1996; Massey *et al.*, 1993). For a long time, push-pull models, dependent on neo-liberal economic theory, were used as the classic explanation for migration starting from the observation that individuals migrated primarily for economic reasons (Anthias, 2000; Borjas, 1989; Lee, 1966).

Neoclassical economics focuses on differences in wages and employment conditions between countries, and on migration costs; it generally conceives of movement as an individual decision for income maximization (Herzig, 2006: 46). The 'new economics of migration', in contrast, considers conditions in a variety of markets not just labor markets (Stark and Bloom, 1985). It views migration as a household decision taken to minimize risks to family income or to overcome capital constraints on family production activities. Related to the household approach, a new actor-oriented perspective, the (sustainable) livelihoods approach emerged

(Chambers and Conways, 1992; Rakodi, 2002), which has also been applied to migration research.

‘Dual labor market theory’ and ‘world systems theory’ generally ignore such micro –level decision processes, focusing instead on forces operating at much higher levels of aggregation (Herzig: 2006:46). The former links immigration to the structural requirements of modern industrial economies while the latter sees immigration as a natural consequence of economic globalization and market penetration across national boundaries (Massey et al 1993). Since these economic theories all play on a different level of analysis, they can only explain specific problems of each level.

Migration may begin for various reasons, for example, a desire for individual income gain or an attempt to diversify risks to household or family income. However, the conditions that initiate international movement may be quite different from those that perpetuate it across time and space (Herzig: 2006:47). Although the initiating conditions may continue to cause people to move, new conditions that arise in the course of migration come to function as independent causes: migrant networks spread, institutions supporting transnational movement develop, and the social meaning of work changes in receiving societies (Boyd, 1989; Portes and Sensenbrenner, 1993). The general thrust of these transformations is to make additional movement more likely, a process known as cumulative causation (Herzig, 2006:47).

The middleman minority theory is one of the older approaches of describing the Asian minority in Kenya (Ghai and Ghai 1970b; Kiem 1993), a sociologist has developed a ‘middleman minority’ theory which was later formalized and extended by Edna Bonacich (1973). She described middleman minorities that: in contrast to most ethnic minorities, they occupy an intermediate rather than a low-status position. “They tend to concentrate in certain occupations [ethnic niches], and play the role of middleman between producer and consumer, employer and employee, owner and renter, elite and masses” (Bonacich, 1973:583). In addition, frequently the relationship between middleman minority and host society is dominated by ethnic and economic conflicts (Buchholt, 1992; Buchholt and Mai, 1989). According to Bonacich (1973), middleman minorities always begin as sojourners, i.e. they do not plan to settle permanently and therefore maintain a ‘myth of return’. Since internal solidarity plays a very important role, ethnic and regional associations are strong, mutual assistance is prevalent, and trust retained among members from the same general area. Middleman minorities also typically show the following traits: a resistance to out-marriage,

residential self-segregation, the establishment of schools for their children, the maintenance of distinctive cultural traits, and a tendency to avoid involvement in local politics except for affairs that directly affect their group (see Herzig, 2006:48). They form highly organized communities, which resist assimilation (Bonacich, 1973: 584-586).

According to Herzig (2006:48), many of the characteristics described in Bonacich's middleman minority theory did fit for the Kenyan Asians too. The aspects of sojourning resemble the conditions under which the majority of Asians lived during the early decades of their East African diaspora. Although this theoretical formulation addresses pertinent issues as far as discussing the Asian diasporic communities in Kenya is concerned, it does not recognize that opposite binarism where Asians and Africans live separately and separately conduct their social and political activities had been overtaken by events as demonstrated by the two variants of postcolonial theory such as hybridity and plurality. The postcolonial theory deals with the reading and writing of literature written in previously or currently colonized countries. It also denotes the intellectual production of formerly colonized peoples after colonization. It focuses particularly on the way in which literature by the colonizing culture distorts the experience and realities of the colonized people and shows how, through the same literature, colonial subjects have been condemned to an inferior status (Omenya 2010:28).

In addition, the postcolonial theory demonstrates that literature by the colonized people should articulate their identity so that they could possibly reclaim their past in the face of that past's inevitable otherness (Lye, 1998). This theory is based on the concept of subversive resistance against the tyrannies of Western forms of knowledge and cultural institutions. It is thus a counter-discourse of formerly colonized others against the cultural hegemony of the West with all its imperial structures of feeling and knowledge (Xie, 1997). In many ways, therefore, post-colonialism signifies an attempt by the formerly colonized peoples to re-evaluate, rediscover and reconstruct their own histories and cultures. It is also an act of rethinking the history of the world against the inadequacy of terms and conceptual frames invented by the West. It further represents an urgent need and determination to dismantle imperial structures in the realm of culture (Xie, 1997).

On the other hand, it is worth noting that postcolonial relationship is not primarily a relationship of resistance or of collaboration but can be characterized as illicit cohabitation, a relationship made fraught by the very fact of the colonial authority and its 'subject' having to

share the same living space. The post colony is made out of one single 'public space' but of several sub-spaces, each having its own separate logic yet nonetheless liable to be entangled with other logics when operating in certain specific contexts. Thus, the postcolonial subject has had to learn to bargain in this conceptual market (Omenya, 2010:29).

Furthermore, subjects in the post colony have also had to have a marked ability to manage not just a single identity for themselves but several, which are flexible enough for them to negotiate as and when required (Mbembe, 1992). The relation between the Africans and the Asians could possibly be viewed within the context of the various forms of contestations over values, and interests on the plural postcolonial space. The theoretical perceptions posed by Mbembe have given this study a crucial analytical tool with which to analyze the diverse Afro-Asian relations in Kenya that, by and large, carries significant bearings on the struggles by the different communities within the Kenyan post colony (Omenya, 2010:29).

This study adopts two variants of postcolonial theory to interrogate its data. Variants of the postcolonial theory such as the concept of 'Plurality', and 'Hybridity' as put forth by Achille Mbembe and Homi Bhabha respectively have been used to assess the Afro-Asian relations in the study locale. This is because the crisis of race relations has to be understood in the context of the crisis of the postcolonial state in Africa. Such a crisis is reflected in the conflict over power sharing, identity and access to resources; in the incapacity of the state to provide for and protect its citizenry, in the collapse of the social and economic structures in the rural areas (Honwana, 1999).

In his book Orientalism, Edward Said (1978) argues that Orientalism is a study of how Western academia has represented the Orient over the last two centuries. Inspired by Michael Foucault, Edward Said constructed Orientalism as a manifestation of power and knowledge. Examining Orientals as a discourse, Edward Said argues that the western academia is responsible for the creation of the 'Other' the Orientals, who are significantly different from those in the Occident (Ahluwalia, 1996). Edward Said alludes to a collective of identifying 'Us' European as against all 'those' non-Europeans and indeed it can be argued that the major component in European culture is precisely what made that culture hegemonic both in and outside Europe; the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison to all the non-European peoples and cultures (which were seen as backward). To him, therefore, the relationship between the Occident and the Orient is a relationship of power and dominion of varying degrees of a complex hegemony (Said, 1978). Said's theory is embedded in what he

calls textualism. This allows him to envisage the Orient as textual creation. Textualism entails concern with authority and positioning in Oriental discourse. This produces the West as a locality of power and center distinctly demarcated, the 'other' as the object of knowledge and inevitable subordination (Ahluwalia, 1996).

This juxtaposition of Us/Them, We/Other, central to Said's work is instructive when we examine African studies and the manner in which it has chosen to identify, describe, characterize and represent a continent that has been marginalized particularly in the last century. Said's Orientalism as a variant of postcolonial theory allows Africans to be represented as the 'other' and ensures that they continue to be marginalized. However, Bhabha (1994) does not think these strict divisions vividly describe the true arrangements of the postcolonial space (Omenya, 2010:31).

Bhabha (1994) raises concern over the failure of the postcolonial discourse to deliver stable and fixed identities. He describes colonial identities as almost the same but not quite. He argues that, the grim polarities of the colonial encounter are necessarily bridged by a 'third space' of communication, negotiation and, by implication, translation. It is in this indeterminate zone or 'place of hybridity' where anti-colonial politics first begins to articulate its agenda and where the 'construction of a political object that is new, *neither the one nor the other*, properly alienates our political expectations, and changes, as it must, the very forms of our recognition of the moment of politics' (Bhabha, 1994).

This is because the explosion of European dominance and the age of empire, coupled with the massive movement of peoples since the advent of both the slave trade and indentured labor as well as the mass migrations of the twentieth century mean that postcolonial identities and locations are now highly intertwined, intermixed and complex. The corollary to the ambivalence of colonial authority, of stereotypical modes of representation is, for Bhabha, the hybridities of colonial and postcolonial condition (Zezeza, 1997).

Based on Bhabha's criticism, Edward Said revised his concept of the *We/Other* binarism captured in *Orientalism*, by admitting that such intellectual rigidity was untenable in a situation where relations and identities are temporary, fluid, and constantly changing. As is evident in many colonial discourses authored in the West, the colonized have been given the identity of the other, the inferior, and the savage (Said, 1978).

Notably, African identities are complex and rooted in the postcolonial experience. This is because there exist long-standing and populous Arab, Asian, European and Middle Eastern Diasporas in Africa, which play critical roles in the ongoing evolution of African societies and to the formation of African identities. Historical and contemporary interactions between the African populations and other people, including the Europeans have created multiple and sophisticated cultural hybrids, which defy and, in fact, transcend the simple binarism of the *We/Other* (Mwangi, 2002).

According to Loomba (1998), the term hybridity in postcolonial discourse refers to the integration or mingling of cultural signs and practices from the colonizer and the colonized. In this regard, the *We* would have some elements of the *Other* and vice versa. It, therefore, becomes difficult to differentiate between the *We* and the *Other*. In the Afro-Asian relations, there are certain values, which the Asians borrowed from Africans and vice versa. This makes Said's variant of *We/Other* inadequate as a tool of analysis in this study. This inadequacy of the *We/Other* as a variant of postcolonial theory puts hybridity and plurality in a better position as a theoretical tool of analysis to interrogate Afro-Asian relations.

Ahluwalia (2001) points out that those concepts as hybridity, which in postcolonial studies we have come to see, as proposed by Bhabha, have always been intrinsic to African identity formation. In the African context, multiple identities are part of the very fabric of society. The variant of hybridity has been used therefore, to determine whether the relationship between the Asians and the Africans who were colonial identities has been influenced by the hybridity of their cultures in the Western and Nyanza regions of study or their interaction created hybrid identities beyond the known identities of black and Asian.

The concept of plurality as a variant of the postcolonial theory has also been employed to interrogate the Afro-Asian relations within the postcolonial space of Kenya's Nyanza and Western regions. Recognizing the plurality of the postcolonial space which also signifies opposing values and interest, Achille Mbembe (1992) observes that the African post colony is chaotically pluralistic and that it is in practice impossible to create a single, permanently stable system out of all the signs, images and markers in that disposition. That, in Mbembe's view is the reason why everything in the postcolony is constantly being shaped and reshaped, as much by the rulers and the ruled, in attempts to rewrite the mythologies of power. In a sense, Achille Mbembe echoes in a different way, what Bhabha states.

Like any other theory, the postcolonial theory has been criticized and characterized as being epistemologically indebted to both post structuralism and postmodernism. Such a reading denigrates the authenticity of postcolonial theory and renders it subservient and theoretically vulnerable to charges levelled at post structuralism and post modernism (Ahluwalia, 2001).

Nevertheless, it is important to note the position articulated by Ashcroft and Tiffin *et, al.* (1995) who points out that the confusion between post colonialism, post structuralism and postmodernism is caused because, a key aspect of postmodernism is the deconstruction of the logocentric metanarratives of European culture which is much like the postcolonial project of breaking down the binaries of imperial discourse. For them, the conflation between post colonialism and postmodernism arises because of their concerns such as decentering of the discourse, the focus on the significance of language and writing in the construction of experience. It also arises because of the use of subversive strategies of mimicry, parody, and irony (Ahluwalia 2001).

True, postcolonialism owes most of its sophisticated conceptual language to postmodernism, but it emerges as a distinct discourse with a set of problematics different from those of postmodernism. Indeed, postmodernism is a tool for critiquing modernity from the European standpoint while postcolonialism is an instrument of interrogating modernity from the point of view of the *Other*, the colonized. Thus post colonialism looks at the specific effects of modernity, propagated by colonialism on people who were never part and parcel of European culture (Kisiang'ani, 2003).

All postcolonial societies are still subject, in one way or another, to overt or subtle forms of neo-colonial domination, and independence has not solved this problem. The development of new elites within independent societies often buttressed by neo-colonial institutions; the development of internal divisions based on racial, linguistic or religious discriminations, the continuing unequal treatment of indigenous peoples in settler/invader society- all these testify to the fact that post colonialism is a continuous process of resistance and reconstruction. This does not imply that postcolonial practices are seamless and homogenous but indicates the impossibility of dealing with any part of the colonial process without considering its antecedent and consequences (Rabaka, 2003).

This study has employed the postcolonial variants of hybridity and plurality to investigate the various ways in which African and Asian communities in the Nyanza and Western regions

have struggled to carve out meaningful spaces through the ever-continuing contestations that are a permanent feature of every postcolony. This theory represents a deliberate effort to put in the spotlight non-European cultures, social systems, economic programs, educational policies, scientific knowledge and social values as it looks at the Afro-Asian relations both during the formal and informal colonization period within Kenya's Nyanza and Western regions.

1.10 Study Locale

Figure 1 Map of Kenya Showing the Position of Nyanza and Western Province



Source: Kenya Administrative Boundaries: Survey of Kenya 1998

The Republic of Kenya is almost bisected by the Equator and is located approximately between latitudes 4 28' S and N, and between 34 and 40 degrees east meridians. Its size encompasses 582,646.4 sq. km. of which 13, 396 sq. km. is water surface. Of the remaining land surface, about two thirds is semi-arid or desert (Ogot, 1981:1). Internally, the country is divided into seven administrative provinces plus Nairobi, which ranks as an extra- provincial district. The provinces, in order of size, are; the Rift Valley (173,869.3 sq. km.), Eastern (157,026.5 sq. km.), North Eastern (126,902.2 sq. km.), Coast (86, 467.2 sq. km.), Nyanza (16, 612.3 sq. km.), Central (13, 175.3 sq. km.), Western (7, 909.9 sq. km.) and Nairobi (683.8 sq. km.) (See Ogot, 1981:2).

This study was carried out in Kisumu town, Kendu Bay, Ndere, Kakamega, Mumias and Bungoma areas of Kenya's Nyanza and Western regions respectively. Nyanza province of Kenya is one of Kenya's seven administrative provinces outside Nairobi; it is in the southwest corner of Kenya. The province includes parts of the eastern edge of Lake Victoria and is inhabited predominantly by the Luo. There are also Bantu speaking groups such as the Gusii, the Kuria and a few Luhya. Initially, this province comprised of North Nyanza, Central Nyanza and South Nyanza which formed the greater Nyanza and was also known as Kavirondo (Barker, 1958). The development of the transcontinental air service on the Cairo-Cape town route, on which Kisumu forms one of the chief intermittent landing stations; the discovery of gold in the North Kavirondo District (Kakamega) in the year 1931; and the steady economic progress of the native reserves in the three Kavirondo Districts gave its development new vigorous impulses. Today Kisumu is one of the busiest centers with a population of several thousand Indians engaged in sugar farming along the Nyando Valley (Wagner, 1970:7/8).

Ndere and Kendu Bay are adjacent to Kisumu town (which is the headquarters of Nyanza province) even though they lie in different administrative districts. For instance, while Kisumu town lies in modern Kisumu District, Kendu Bay is part of Homa Bay District. However, Ndere is an enclave of Siaya district. All these areas are located within range of Lake Victoria and could have attracted the Asians either because of trade in either goods or fish. In addition, the construction and completion of the Kenya- Uganda Railway in 1901 heralded the arrival of Asians in the lake town area of Kisumu (Port Florence), from where they moved to areas like Kendu Bay, Kadimo Bay, Asembo Bay and Ndere among others.

Homa Bay County is a county in the former Nyanza Province of Kenya whose capital and largest town is Homa Bay. The county has a population of 963,794 (2009 census) and an area of 3,154.7 km². Homa Bay was once the District Headquarters for all of South Nyanza District, Nyanza Province, but has now been divided into at least three districts. Homa Bay is now the capital of Homa Bay County as per the new constitution. The town of Homa Bay hosts Municipal Council. The municipality has an urban population of 32,174 and a total population of 55,532. Kendu Bay is part of the wider Homa Bay County.

Kisumu District lies within longitude 33 20'E and Latitude 0 20'S and 0 50'S. The district covers a total area of 918.5 square Km. and has four administrative divisions namely, Winam, Maseno, Kombewa and Kadibo. The district has three parliamentary constituencies namely: Kisumu Town East, Kisumu Town West and Kisumu Rural. Kisumu Town West covers Kadibo division and part of Maseno division while the Kisumu Rural constituency covers Kombewa and part of Maseno division. The topography of the district is divided into zones: The Kano plains and the midland areas of Maseno and Kombewa. There are some notable physical features such as the scarps in the north, east and south. The Kano plains have historically been vulnerable to flooding during the rainy seasons (Kisumu District Development Plan 2002-8).

On the other hand, Siaya District where Ndere lies is one of the twelve districts that comprise Nyanza Province. It is bordered by Busia District to the north, Vihiga and Butere-Mumias to the South East. The total area of the district is approximately 1520 km squared. The district lies between latitude 0 degrees 26' to 0 degrees 18' north and longitude 33 degrees 58' East and 34 degrees 33' west. Siaya district is divided into seven administrative divisions namely: Yala, Wagai, Karemo, Ugunja, Boro, Uranga and Ukwala. These divisions are further divided into 30 locations and 128 sub-locations. There are 5 local authorities in the district with Yala town council being one of them (Siaya District Development Plan 2002-8). Ndere is situated in North Alego location, Komolo sub-location, Siaya District.

Kakamega town is on south-western part of Kenya, located at an average elevation of 1550m. It was developed by British colonial government for defensive purposes in 1903. The town lies about 30km north of the equator and is 52km north of Kisumu town. It is the Headquarter of Kakamega County, the Kenya's second most populous county after Nairobi. According to population and housing census (2009), the town has a population growth rate of 4.0% and its

population was projected to be 119178 by 2012. Kakamega municipality alone is about 49Sq km but has extended into Navakholo and Lurambi divisions.

Kakamega was a town of little significance even by 1920 when it became the government station of the then North Kavirondo District (NK). The township is bordered by the largely uninhabited Kakamega Forest to the east, and sections of the Luyia people including the Kabras to the north, the Isukha to the south, and the Tsotso to the west (Huddleston, 1952; Shillaro, 2000:5). Administratively, NK district was one of the five districts that made up colonial Nyanza Province. The others were Central and South Kavirondo, South Lumbwa (Kericho) and Kisumu- Londiani districts. These districts were large and diverse. In the 1930s, North Kavirondo was largely inhabited by the Bantu-speaking Luyia (see Wagner, 1949) with minority non-Luyha such as the Luo, Teso, and Kalenjin. The district was bordered by the Trans Nzoia and Uasin Gishu settled areas to the north, the Nandi reserve to the east and Uganda to the west (Humphrey, 1947). The majority of Central Kavirondo's inhabitants were Luo, although the colonialists included the Samia subgroup of the Luyia in the district. The Luo, Gusii, and Kuria inhabited South Kavirondo, while South Lumbwa was home to the Kipsigis as well as European settlers as was Kisumu-Londiani. Luo and Asian farmers also resided in Kisumu-Londiani (Ndege, 1993).

Bungoma is one of the eight districts in Western province in Kenya. During the greater part of the colonial period until 1956, what is now Western province constituted one district known as North Kavirondo and after 1949 as North Nyanza. Its headquarters was at Kakamega. In 1956, the district was split into North Nyanza and Elgon Nyanza with the latter having its headquarters at Bungoma. Thus, the study area assumed its present name after 1963. Bungoma district borders Mount Elgon district to the northwest, Trans-Nzoia district to the north, Kakamega district to the east and southeast, and Busia and Teso districts to the west and southwest. The district accounts for approximately twenty five percent of the total area of Western province.¹ It is characterized by a topography generally described as exhibiting a gently sloping surface that rises to elevations ranging between 6,000 feet to over 7,000 feet as one advances towards the north (Fearn, 1961:20).

¹ KNA, DC/NN/1/37

1.11 Situating Kenya within the context of Afro-Asian studies

The origin and the meaning of the name Kenya is a matter of dispute. It is perhaps an Anglicization of the Kamba name for Mount Kenya. Whatever its origins, the name had sufficient authenticity for there to be no question of a change when independence came on 12 December 1963. The name Kenya did not come into official use until 1920, when the former East African Protectorate was renamed. Modern Kenya, it is said was created by the railway. This view, highly Anglo-centric as it is, contains the truth that it was with the building of the railway, with British Government funds, that the political delineation of the area, which became the Republic of Kenya firmly, began. Construction of the Uganda Railway, as it was then called, commenced from East African coast at Mombasa in 1896, and reached its planned terminal on the shores of Lake Victoria in 1901. By 1899 the line had reached a point 300 miles inland at the approach to a high plateau over which it would have to pass on its way to the west. A railway camp at this point was the origin of the city of Nairobi, the capital of Kenya (Hazlewood, 1979: xi). European travelers, traders and missionaries had been introducing themselves into the interior of East Africa increasingly towards the end of the nineteenth century, and interest and activity had accumulated in Uganda. The primary concern in the building of the railway was to obtain access to Uganda. The region between the coast and the lake was an obstacle, and a railway was the only way to overcome it. The completion of the railway achieved this aim, and brought Uganda within days of travel, instead of months, from the Kenyan coast. But the construction was a costly enterprise, and there was no traffic to be obtained along the railway line. The stimulus for the development of the area between the coast and the lake, by the settlement of European farmers, had at least one of its origins in the financial problems of the railway. The railway made settlement feasible; and settlement would provide the traffic to make the railway pay (Hazlewood, 1979: ix). The railway thus laid the foundations upon which Afro-Asian socio-economic and political participation in Kenya was based.

1.11.1 A Brief on Western Province of Kenya

Before 1963 the present Western Province and Nyanza Province formed one province. For the greater part of the colonial period until 1956 most of what is now called the Western Province formed one district with its headquarters at Kakamega. It was first known as North Kavirondo and after 1949 as North Nyanza (Wolf, 1977:6). Being part of Nyanza province, it was only a district whose economic functions were relegated to the district level. Kakamega's economic,

cultural and social importance has been heavily dominated by Kisumu town because of the nearness of these two towns (Obudho, 1983:79). Between 1956 and 1963, Bungoma District and the northern locations of what is now Busia District were known as Elgon Nyanza District with its headquarters at Bungoma. Before 1959, there were only four locations in Bungoma District: Malakisi (North and South Malakisi), Kimilili (Kimilili, Bokoli, Ndivisi), Elgon and South Bukusu (East and West Bukusu). Before 1952, South Bukusu was known as South Kitosh, and before 1927 Malakisi, Kimilili and Elgon were jointly referred to as North Kitosh and were under one chief. Kitosh was the name which the Maasai gave to the Bukusu (Wolf, 1977:6).

Before Bungoma became the headquarters of the district, Kabuchai, conveniently situated on the road from Mumias to Mbale was the seat of the Divisional Court. Mumias was the first administrative center in Western Kenya and was near a ford in Nzoia River where the caravans from the coast to Uganda had to pass (Wolf, 1977:6-7). Mumias was gazetted as a trading center by government notice No.374 of 1933².

Before the construction of the Tororo-Eldoret road, the way to Jinja and Kampala in Uganda went through Kakamega, Mumias, and Busia, or from Kitale through Kimilili, Chwele and Malakisi to Tororo. The main north-south links were from Kakamega to Kitale and from Mumias to Malakisi and from there onwards to Mbale in Uganda. When the railway was completed in the late twenties new trading centers were opened where these roads crossed the railway; at Bungoma and at Broderick Falls (Webuye). At that time Kimilili also became a trading center. Asian traders who dominated the commercial life in the district lived in these trading centers. But since they were few in numbers and far apart, Africans were enabled to set up neighborhood shops and retail daily necessities, while the Asians acted as wholesalers (Wolf, 1977:7). In the early fifties, the African District Council brought the building of shops outside the trading centers under its control. Plots were acquired and for a fee of shs. 200 per annum people were allowed to erect shops constructed of stone or brick with corrugated iron roofs according to a standardized design, in permanent materials. Shops were often arranged around fenced market squares, where people could sell their farm produce and buy goods from peddlers at the weekly markets. The best developed markets of this kind, where the greater numbers of shops are also found, are in prosperous areas between trade centers. The markets, which sprang up adjacent to the trading centers, have become something of an

² KNA/DC/NN/3/4/1

anomaly now that Africans can easily acquire shops there. It has even become official policy to limit the role of Asians in trade. Besides, they still offer the advantage of a flat rate which is much less than what one would have to pay in a proper trading center (Wolf, 1977:8).

The Abaluhya inhabit the Western Province of Kenya, comprising the three districts of Bungoma, Busia and Kakamega (Were, 1967). Apart from the numerically and territorially superior Abaluyia Bantu, the other occupants of Western Kenya are the Teso to the west, the Kalenjin to the north in the Elgon area, the Nyang'ori (Terik) to the southern parts, and small pockets of the Nilotic Luo, mainly in the southern parts. The total area of the province is 3,054 sq. miles of which 53 sq miles are occupied by water (Ominde, 1963).

Webuye town lies 376 Km North West of Nairobi-Eldoret Kampala road about 65 Km Eastern side of Kitale town on the main Uganda Railway line. Located east of Bungoma town, Webuye serves as the meeting point of two major highways; Webuye-Kitale highway through the famous 'T-Junction' area and Eldoret-Malaba highway through 'Dina' area. It started off as Webuye market center then elevated to a town council to cope with the rise in population in the area then elevated to municipal to meet the rapidly growing population (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2009).

Webuye is made up of the five residential estates; Muslim where most Islamic believers stay, Site and service where middle level citizens stay, E-quarter near the Park villa hotel, Chocolate- where Pan Paper workers stay, National estate owned by Pan Paper factory, Guest House where the District Commissioner and OCPD stay and other senior civil servants. Though consisting of mainly two dominant communities; Bukusu and Tachoni, Webuye is a cosmopolitan town since it also consists of other communities like Asians, Kikuyu, Luo, Kamba, Kalenjin and many more. Asian communities reside behind the Webuye trading center while the local people reside in the wards in the outskirts of the town (Westfm.co.ke).

Occupying an estimated 49 square kilometers in area, Kakamega town is located in the North of the Equator, about 400 kilometers west of the country's capital Nairobi. The estimated population of the town is 120,000 according to the 2009 census, although this varies during the day. The town is linked to the City of Kisumu and the northern corridor that runs from Mombasa to Malaba by the debilitated Kisumu-Kakamega highway. Mumias road links the town to the ancient administrative capital of Mumias by a tarmac road running some 30 kilometers. The town enjoys a relatively hot and wet climate throughout the year; thanks to

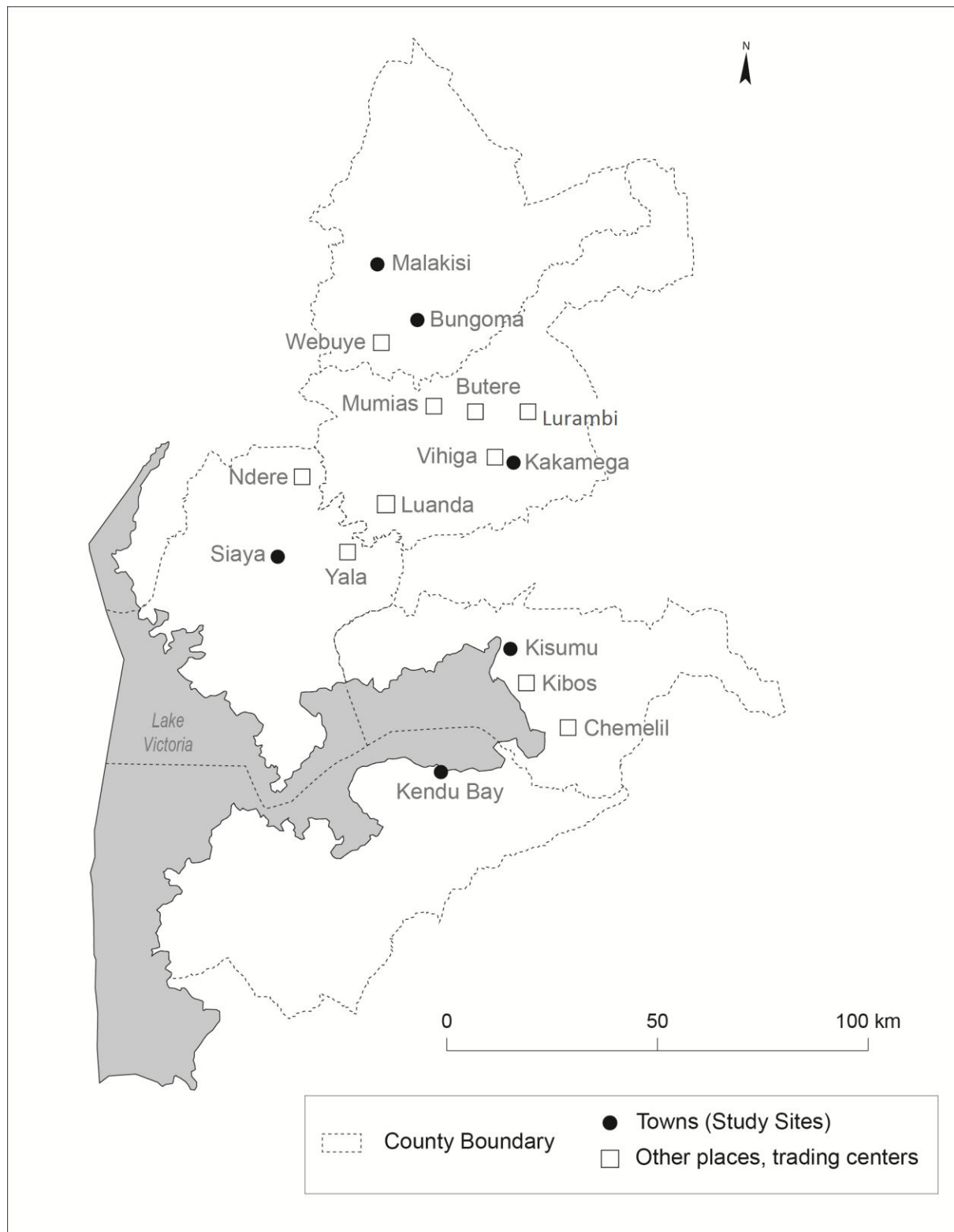
the only remaining equatorial rain forest in East and Central Africa, the Kakamega forest, a rich home of flora and fauna rarely seen in other parts of Africa making it a tourists' attraction.

Malakisi, a typical Indian trading center, in addition to a few dozen corrugated iron *dukas*, it contained a ginnery, the busy center of this small settlement. A special feature of Malakisi during the colonial period apart from cotton growing was a diary, the only European operated economic enterprise in the whole reserve apart from the gold mining industry in Kakamega area and the economic activities of the missions (Wagner, 1970:13). Kakamega, until the discovery of the gold fields was a quiet station with a few Indian *dukas* and a native market (Wagner, 1970:13).

From the ethnic, linguistic and political points of view, the Bantu Kavirondo do not form a homogeneous group, even though they are clearly distinct from surrounding tribes. The term 'Kavirondo,³' the origin and etymology of which are still obscure, never appears to have been used by the natives themselves. Nor does there seem to exist any word in various Bantu Kavirondo dialects from which the term '*Kavirondo*' could possibly have been derived. According to Sir Harry Johnston's inquiries, the term '*Kavirondo*' was employed and spread by Swahili and Arab traders. It is certain that the Swahili and Arab caravans who first reached the north-east coast of Lake Victoria Nyanza came back with the impression that the people in that direction were styled "*Kavirondo*". Owing to its constant use by the Europeans, the term '*Kavirondo*' has nowadays been to some extent adopted by the natives, but they use it with reference to the district rather than themselves. When talking to other natives, even outside the district, they always style themselves by the name of their respective sub tribe, such as Wanga, Vugusu, Logoli, Nyole among others (Wagner, 1970:19/20).

³ Kavirondo is the general name of two distinct groups of ethnic groups, the Bantu speakers and the Nilotic speakers. Kavirondo is the former name of the region surrounding Kavirondo Gulf (now Winam Gulf) as well as of two native peoples living there. under the regime of British East Africa (The "Nilotic Kavirondo" and the "Bantu Kavirondo"). Broadly, this was defined as those who dwelt in the valley of the Nzoia River, on the western slopes of Mount Elgon, and along the northeast coast of Victoria Nyanza

Figure 2: Geographical Areas of Research



Source: Kenya Administrative Boundaries: Survey of Kenya 1998

Figure 3: A Map Showing Administrative boundaries of Kisumu, Kakamega, Siaya and Bungoma



Source: Kenya Administrative Boundaries: Survey of Kenya 1998

1.12 Research Methodology

1.12.1 Research Design

Given the dearth of published literature on this topic, primary sources constituted the information fountain for this study. To reconstruct the history of the relations between Asians and Africans in Nyanza and Western provinces of Kenya, life histories and oral narratives of diasporic Asians and Africans both men and women in Nyanza and western provinces were collected through field research. Data was gathered through in-depth interview with local Africans and Asian settlers in the two regions. These interviews targeted both Africans and Asians in the age bracket of between eighteen years to seventy years old. To execute the interviews, a purposive sampling procedure was employed. In this method of sampling, the researcher selected people to participate in the research for a given reason. Though the method is subjective, the information derived from this procedure was ably counter-balanced. Through snow balling technique, a number of key informants especially Asians were identified. The choice of key informants was based on both Asians and Africans mentioned by other oral informants during the interview, people who were normally acknowledged and respected by the rest of the community on the basis of being able to recall certain issues of the history of the people concerned. In total, about three hundred people of Asian and African origin were interviewed. Those interviewed included: businessmen, shop attendants, teachers in Asian schools, Asian students especially in high schools and domestic workers. This was supplemented with qualitative research and observational methods in both formal and informal settings, involving oral and written feedbacks from respondents. The questions mainly asked were centered on social and economic issues between Asians and Africans.

1.12.2 Research Instruments and Equipments

Questions guideline which embraced information on the interaction of both Asians and Africans from a comparative perspective, as well as the social and economic institutions, which informed their interaction from 1945 to 2002, was used. The interviews were to a large extent, informal, as the researcher was not bound to follow the question guideline strictly. The questions formulated were not treated rigidly but flexibly posed to harness as much information as possible. They were flexible depending on the knowledgeability of and the patience of respondents.

The discussions were based on themes such as the settlement of Asians in Western and Nyanza provinces, Afro-Asian interactions in trade and Afro-Asian social interaction on housing and education in places such as Mumias, Webuye, Kakamega, Bungoma, Kisumu, Kibos and Ndere areas. Here, the main aim was to examine how Asians were carrying out their trade and whether there was any similarity or difference either in Nyanza or Western province. Were the conditions in both provinces favourable and the same? The study was also keen on examining whether this relationship was mutually supportive, beneficial, conflictual or indifferent and whether the causes of conflict were similar or different in the two regions of study. In some cases, questionnaires were used especially among Africans working for Indians in supermarkets such as Yatin, Nakumatt and Khetias. Questionnaires were effective since most Africans employed by Indians were comfortable filling them in confidence without subjecting them to interviews in their places of work. A research question guideline with open and close-ended questions was therefore prepared to elicit information from respondents because it was fluid enough to accommodate issues from interviews.

A tape recorder was used to collect and store information, which was transcribed later from *Dholuo* and *Luhya* into English. Given that the field research covered a wide geographical area, it was necessary to use some research guides or assistants in the process of research operations. The research assistants were briefed and guided on the kind of information to look for at the national archives and during interviews with the informants. Some assistants were conversant with the archival research. To counter problems of refusal to divulge pertinent information, the researcher used assistants within the region who are well known by the locals to guide and introduce him. This aided in easy collection of oral data. The information obtained from such oral research was corroborated with other data for validity and reliability. As Shillaro (2000) argues, to augment and corroborate oral sources and deal with myriad problems associated with “the spoken word”, such as exaggeration, respondents’ refusal to divulge information perceived to be “sacred, secret or dangerous”, and memory, this study utilized extensive archival materials in the Kenya National Archives in Nairobi and the Public Record Center in Kakamega which were very central to this study. It is from these data that we formed the basis for analyzing and interpreting the relations between the African and Asian communities within Nyanza and Western Provinces of Kenya.

1.13 Data Collection

1.13.1 Primary and Secondary Sources

This study benefited from an array of both primary and secondary sources as far as data collection was concerned. To harness secondary information, written sources such as books, journals, thesis, magazine articles, dissertations and periodicals relevant to the study were consulted. These were obtained from several libraries and research centers including Le Center de Recherche et d'Etude sur les Pays d'Afrique Orientale (CREPAO-LAM-UPPA-France), LAM Boardeux III Universite- France, Le Center d'Etudes de l'Inde et de l'Asie du Sud- Paris, France, the Kenyatta University's Moi library, University of Nairobi's Jomo Kenyatta library, Pwani University library, Macmillan library, French Institute of Research in Africa (IFRA) and the British Institute of Research in East Africa (BIEA) library-Nairobi, Nation Center library, the Kenya National Library Service- Upper Hill among others. The written materials from these libraries and research centers constituted important secondary data for the research.

Primary sources comprised oral and archival sources. A sample survey involving three basic elements; interviews with a representative cross-section of the populace being studied utilising a standardised question guideline was employed. Archival research was majorly and extensively conducted at the Kenya National Archives, Nairobi as well as at the Kisumu and Kakamega Provincial archives. The main documents which were scrutinized included Provincial (Nyanza and Western) and District (Kisumu, Siaya, North kavirondo, Kakamega) annual and quarterly reports, political record books, intelligence reports, minutes of the Local Native Councils, confidential reports, correspondences on matters such as education, trade, cotton industry, housing and local politics. These are first-hand records from participants and observers that have been passed down to posterity. The sources yielded information on the operations of Asians in Nyanza and Western Provinces of Kenya as well as their interactions with the indigenous Africans. Information obtained from archival materials enhanced the later discussions with the respondents during oral interviews.

To check on the reliability and validity of the archival information, it became necessary to corroborate such information with other data especially that obtained through oral sources to minimize any subjectivity. The documents were critically evaluated and counter-checked to

establish their veracity and reconcile the information elicited. The documents were also scrutinized against both secondary and oral sources.

Oral interviews, as a primary source of data collection were conducted to collect oral histories and experiences of participants in relation to their interaction both with Asians and Africans who were considered appropriate. These interviewees were consulted and interviewed in order to get more relevant information. In order to insure comparability of responses, interviews in this study were standardised.

1.14 Data Analysis

After collection of qualitative and quantitative data, it was analyzed separately by putting into consideration the similarities and differences of responses from the various respondents. Since study is comparative in nature, the main focus was laid on how different and similar events and scenarios emerged in terms of Afro-Asian relations in Nyanza and Western provinces of Kenya. Similarly data from secondary sources was subjected to textual criticism in order to establish their accuracy. Recorded or tape recorded interviews, as stated earlier, were also transcribed before being analysed.

In analyzing and interpreting the data, the historical method was used. It is the application of this method that leads us to the knowledge of what is uniquely historical (Wafula 2000). The logical historical method entails the analysis and explanation of harnessed data both historically and logically (Onimode, 1985). It involves a critical investigation of events, developments and experiences of the past; the careful weighing of evidence and the validity of sources of information on the past and the interpretation of the weighed evidence. The historical method is necessitated by the fact that the historical inquiry into social phenomenon needs more than mere knowledge of facts and events in their chronological order. Facts must be applied to establish the historical specificity of social phenomenon in terms of its constituent elements and of the relations between these elements, which determines the structure of the phenomenon and give it coherence (Aseka, 1989: 66). The study engaged procedures of historical investigation and analysis of data to bring about a corroboration of the diverse data. This was to minimize prejudice, bias and exaggeration during the process of analyzing data. Most of the data was presented in a qualitative form, which is descriptive in nature. All the data was analyzed using the postcolonial theoretical framework. In analyzing the data, archival materials together with interviews and secondary sources were compared to

verify their objectivity. Similarly, recorded interviews were transcribed after which the information was analyzed qualitatively. At the same time, oral information given in mother tongue was translated into English for easy understanding and analysis.

In conclusion the analysed data enabled us to compare the relations between Asian and African communities in Western and Nyanza provinces within the problematique of race relations and examines the roots of Asian presence and settlement in Nyanza and Western provinces of Kenya since 1901 and explores the dynamics and the foundations upon which the socio-economic relations of the two communities were formed. Following historical chronology and different political-economic periods, the study revolves around four basic premises: a same pattern of settlement, similar causes of Afro-Asian conflict and the Asian economic role. It also premises that the level of racial integration in the two provinces was the same. Postcolonial theoretical framework was used as a tool of analysis leading to the assumption that the postcolonial spaces of Nyanza and Western provinces became chaotic and plural spaces characterized by socio-economic contestations and negotiations. But these contestations were pacified and neutralized by the hybrid nature of their outcomes especially between the Asians and Africans. Further, it was revealed that a number of values were borrowed from the Asians by Africans and vice versa.

This chapter has contextualized the problem of race relations in the other parts of the world before narrowing down to Kenya. It has demonstrated that Asians continue to live as a diasporic community across the world. In their stay as a diasporic community, the Asiatic community has interacted socially and economically with their hosts thereby creating some kind of relationship. This chapter also laid down the objectives of the study as well as the theoretical framework upon which this study is analyzed. It also justifies the need and urgency for this study as well as the various methodologies used in data collection. In the next chapter, the study examines the diasporic Asian migration and settlement in Western and Nyanza provinces of Kenya.

CHAPTER TWO

DIASPORIC ASIAN MIGRATION AND THEIR FIRST SETTLEMENT IN WESTERN AND NYANZA PROVINCES OF KENYA

Abstract

In this chapter, the patterns of Asian migration and settlement in Western and Nyanza regions are examined. It is argued that Indian trade with the East African coast and the construction of the Kenya-Uganda railway from 1895-1901 led to a permanent Indian settlement in the region. Various identity formations on the diasporic Asian communities are also examined. It is argued that the use of identity markers (such as Persons of Indian Origin, Non Resident Indians) in relation to subtypes of Indian immigrants is key in shaping Afro-Asian socio-economic relations in Western and Nyanza regions. It is concluded that the first formal Asian settlement in Kenya was established in Kibos and Nyando areas of Nyanza region where they engaged in experimental farming; a strategy by the colonial government to put them away from the white highlands. Although Asian settlement in Nyanza was more agricultural oriented, their settlement in Western province was non-formal and commercially oriented. This was achieved by opening up shops along the railway line in trading centers such as Webuye, Luanda, Butere, and Kimili.

2.1 Phases and Patterns of the Indian Diaspora

To start with, two main phases of emigration of Indians to other countries can be distinguished: Overseas emigration in the nineteenth century; and Twentieth century migration to industrially developed countries. For analytical convenience, these could be termed the colonial and the postcolonial phases of Indian diaspora (Jain, 1993). It is no doubt, possible to identify overlaps between these two phases: the emigration of Indians that began in the second quarter of the nineteenth century continued into the early decades of the twentieth century. The trickle of emigration of Indians to the industrially developed countries, which assumed phenomenal proportions in the post-colonial phase, could be noticed in the nineteenth century itself. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize the distinctive nature of these two phases of emigration, for their causes, course and consequences (Jayaram, 2011:229).

It should be emphasized, however that the emigration of Indians has had longer history than what the reference point of colonialism seems to suggest. In the history of ancient India, we

come across accounts of the Buddhist *bhikkus*⁴ who travelled into remote corners of Central and Eastern Asia. Maritime history of pre-colonial India records evidence of continuous contact between the kingdoms of the Coromandel Coast and the islands of Southeast Asia. The contact of the Palas of Bengal with Sailendra kings of Indonesia and the expeditions of the South Indian Cholas, which vanquished the great Indonesian empire of Sri Vijaya are repeatedly referred to by scholars, yet none of these contacts led to a distinctive Indian population overseas (Tinker, 1977:1).

The trade with East Africa however led to a permanent Indian settlement there. McNeill (1963: 210) observes that there is some reason to think that a colony of Indian merchants lived permanently in Memphis, Egypt. In the nineteenth century, when European explorers like Burton first ventured into the interior (in Africa), they were guided on their way by Indian merchants (Tinker, 1977:2-3). These early migrants to East Africa belonged mainly to the small trading communities like the Ismailia, Bhoras, and Banyans of the Gujerat region.

As for the magnitude of emigration and its spread, the European colonization, marked by the penetration of mercantile capitalism in Asia, was the most crucial phase in the Indian diaspora. Large scale emigration of Indians into far off lands was facilitated by the integration of peripheral economies into the emerging world capitalist system, the onset of a revolution in the transportation and communication, and the opening of the Suez Canal. The phenomenal trade surpluses earned by the European mercantile class in the wake of geographical discoveries were invested in mines and plantations in Asia, Africa and elsewhere. This created an enormous demand for a cheap and regulated labor force. By the first quarter of the nineteenth century, the demand for labor was accentuated by the ever-expanding colonial economy, the growing opposition to slavery and its eventual abolition (by England 1833, by France in 1848, and by Holland in 1863), and the inability of the European countries to meet the shortfall in labor by deploying their own labor force. A combination of factors made India an extant reservoir of cheap, docile and dependable labor, especially to work in the plantations (Jayaram, 2011:230). Emigration from India did not cease with the abolition of indenture and other systems of organized export of labor. There was a steady trickle of emigration of members of trading communities from Gujarat and Punjab to South Africa and East Africa (Kenya Uganda and Tanzania), and those from south India to Southeast Asia.

⁴ Bhikkus- Is a Buddhist monk or layperson who has taken a vow to lead a life of virtue; a Buddhist religious devotee

Most laborers immigrated to East Africa to work on the construction of railroads. Centuries of trade along the littoral realms of the Indian Ocean had shaped the interactions between Africans along the Swahili coast and Indian merchants from the coastal areas of western India. From the late nineteenth-century onwards, these merchants began to push into the interior of East Africa, thereby transforming the geographical and material context of their interaction with Africans. Indian traders and laborers together with service-class immigrants from colonial India emerged as the economic middle tier that facilitated the entry of imperial trade, commerce and governance in East Africa. As these agents of empire traversed the Indian Ocean, they brought with them a range of political ideas and concerns which they modified according to the new evolving structures of colonial rule (Sana, 2011:134). Positioning themselves within the economic middle tier, which Vassanji (2003) describes as an in-between position would later shape their social and economic relations with Africans within the postcolonial spaces of Nyanza and Western Kenya regions.

The reasons for the paucity of scholarship on Indians in Nyanza have much to do with Indians occupying a middle place in a dichotomous racial model that had no room for shades of gray, both in its oppressive and oppositional modes. The Indian presence in Kenya disturbed the binary black/white opposition that had structured colonialism as well as the discourse on race. The Indian presence complicated the binary of settler and indigene by introducing a third state of national being; that of postcolonial Diaspora (Rastogi, 2008:3/4).

A new and significant wave of emigration took place after India became independent in 1947 (post independent diaspora). These were the emigration of professionals and semi-professionals, the emigration of skilled and unskilled laborers and the emigration of Anglo-Indians to Australia and England. There are two other typologies of Indian emigration: the colonialism induced diaspora and the colonialism-facilitated diaspora. Under the Colonialism-Induced Diaspora, the ancestors of the diasporic communities included in this category immigrated to the colonies- the British (British Guyana, Ceylon, Fiji, Jamaica, Malaya, Mauritius and Trinidad); the French (Guadeloupe and Martinique); and the Dutch (Surinam) mostly as plantation labor, and their immigration was supervised by the colonial authorities. They are today the fourth or sixth generation of settlers, and many of them have celebrated the sesquicentenary of the arrival of the first Indians in their settlement. Similarly, in the Colonialism-facilitated Diaspora, it can be said that the ancestors of the diasporic communities included under this category immigrated to Great Britain, Canada, or to some

African countries during colonialism. They were members of the trading communities from Gujarat and Punjab (South Africa and to East Africa: Kenya Uganda and Tanzania) and from south India (Southeast Asia) or laborers working on the construction of railroads in East Africa (Jayaram, 2011:235).

Mbembe (2001) is precise in describing the postcolony as a place marked by the colonial domination and which is trying to reconceptualize itself. He argues that the postcolony is characterized by multiple identities and that under colonial rule and beyond, a constellation of distinctively indigenous interests came into being. It played a key role in the transformation of ancestral systems of power and in the realignment of alliances, including economic ones, between 'natives' and colonizers.

Based on the ethnic composition of the settlement country and the politics of ethnicity and identity there, as also the duration and legal stays of the Indian immigrants. Three subtypes under the post-independence diaspora as explained earlier can be distinguished. These include the People of Indian Origin (PIOs). These are immigrants who have been in Australia, Canada, the UK, Africa or the US for a sufficiently long period to acquire the citizenship of the respective country or even the permanent resident status (for example, green card holders in the US). Secondly, Non Resident Indians (NRIs); these are immigrants who have not been in Australia, Canada, the UK, Africa or the US for a sufficiently long period to acquire the citizenship of the respective country or even the permanent residence status. The NRIs generally hold work permits and extended visas for a legally sanctioned stay in these countries. Many of them would like to prolong their stay in the country of their current residence, so that they can become eligible for permanent residence status and, eventually, citizenship later. They are thus the PIOs in the making. The illegal Indian immigrants in these countries would also fall into this category because as and when they are caught, they will be deported to India. Lastly, there are Transient diasporics: These are mainly migrant workers, who notwithstanding the duration of their stay in the country in which they are working, cannot hope to become a settlement community. Since their return to India is ever impending, they are only transient diasporics (Jayaram, 2011:237). The Indian government currently encourages members of the Indian diaspora to contribute to the development of their country of origin. Whatever their nationality and according to Indian law, people of Indian origin living abroad have a special status titled Non-Resident Indian (Adams, 2010:261). Kenya, which is the focus of this study, experiences all these categories of Indians.

It is against this backdrop of the global nature of Indian communities that a study of their socio-economic engagements with members of the host community wherever they settled is important. This study therefore, looks at this global community within the local space of Western and Nyanza provinces of Kenya within a postcolonial theoretical framework. The study assumes that the Indian diasporic communities in the above regions played a negligible role as far as the economic development of these two provinces were concerned. It also hypothesizes that the process and levels of racial integration in the two provinces are different and there are both similarities and differences in the collective situation of Indians in Nyanza and Western provinces of Kenya.

Michel Adam (2010:215) observes that the existence in Kenya in general of an Indian minority does not only conjure up coloured pictures and architectural lines. Many Africans do not realize the extent of the influence of Indian culture on Kenyan national culture. It is more than just a few recipes and dishes of Indian origin and several Indian words (particularly Gujarati) in the Swahili vocabulary. However, in a more explicit manner, Adams (2010) argues that the presence of the Indian diaspora is very remarkable both in the rural and urban economies. Disproportionately to their numbers, Indo-Kenyans play a large economic role, controlling most of the wholesale and retail trade, a substantial part of industry and numerous banking and insurance companies and service in general. Since the Asians earned larger incomes and paid larger taxes, it also shows the important role played by them in the economic development in general and commercial development in particular (Ramchandani, 1976:245). Although Adams analysis of the economic role of Asians was not specific to Nyanza and Western provinces of Kenya, his study disapproves one of the premises of this study regarding the economic role played by Asians in Nyanza and Western provinces of Kenya.

2.2 Understanding Asian Migration, Settlement and interactions in Western and Nyanza Provinces of Kenya

Migration is often a very disruptive experience that generates a sense of insecurity resulting from uprooting and marginality. In their adaptive strategies, immigrants redefine their self-perceptions and their collective identities. Recent scholarship has insisted that collective identities, far from being immutable, are constructed, multiple and flexible. This transactional aspect of identity is reinforced in a context of migration; diasporic constructions of the Other(s) are remarkable for their multiplicity and their instability (Gayer, 1998; Aminah and

Moliner, 2007:2). In the host country, South Asians diasporic community interacts with other South Asian groups, with different ethnic minorities and with the majority population, who potentially represent powerful figures of Otherness. And the representations and relationships thus generated are highly unstable, as they depend on complex interactions between the global context, the regional, the national and even local ones (community relations) (see Aminah and Molinah, 2007:3).

Migration tends to reinforce antagonist perceptions of 'us and them', and to strengthen national/ethnic/religious identifications. Peter Van de Veer (1995) has offered the most comprehensive analysis of the dialectic link between migration and nationalism. Although nationalist discourse is opposed to expatriation, and to mixing of population and the transgression of national boundaries it implies, migration fosters nationalism both among the indigenous population (through defensive, xenophobic forms of nationalism) and among migrants, through exacerbated expressions of national identity, defined along ethno-religious lines. In this process, mutually exclusive religious nationalisms are fashioned. They are based on a reinvention of the past, on naturalizing the link between people, culture and territory and on antagonist constructions of the others (Aminah and Molinah, 2007:3). Defensive and xenophobic forms of nationalism played a critical role in the Afro-Asian relations in Kenya's Western and Nyanza provinces towards and after the World War period.

The everyday processes of drawing social boundaries between 'us' and 'them' are essential for the construction of social collectivities. Various social boundaries cross-cut and overlap are viable and fluid, and socially constructed. The bargaining processes along these boundaries are crucial for the construction of collective identities. The relations between the insiders and the outsiders are characterized by power relations. Finally, the experience of migration often leads to a self-conscious reflection on religious traditions, beliefs and practices. This redefinition of things religious tends towards rationalization, homogenization, drawing of clear-cut boundaries with other religious groups and exclusion of heteropraxy (Herzig, 2006: x). Interactions with others prove an important component in this process of redefinition; what was taken for granted at home has to be explained, sometimes advocated in a hostile environment and finally transmitted. The issue of religious and cultural transmission to the next generation is indeed perceived as crucial (Aminah and Molinah, 2007:3).

Changing identities result in crossing or even in shifting social boundaries, which have impacts on interracial relations. Boundary construction that separate 'us' from 'them' is

followed by a narrative that indicates *why* they are different from us. These narratives very often are based on ethnic stereotypes, which are crucial for interracial relations. Since the direct relations between Asian and Africans were mainly economic, the interracial stereotypes concerned mainly the economic sphere (Herzig, 2006:125). Although the Asians community migrated and settled among Africans within Nyanza and Western provinces their identity, and social orientations remained exclusive from the Africans whose land they settled in.

The origins of the modern Asian population of East Africa can be traced back to roughly the middle of the nineteenth century, although there has been a historical commercial connection between East African coast and the western seaboard of India since about the second century A.D. (Mangat, 1976: 467). The Asians had been known on the East African coast as traders long before East Africa became divided between the British and Germans. However, their trade activity was restricted to the coastal areas with little penetration into the interior. The first immigration inland was encouraged by the British as a multidimensional approach to introduce foreign influence there. The Asians were familiar with the operation of a monetary economy and, since this was an important asset to colonialism, it was important to encourage Asian immigration which would facilitate the introduction and establishment of this new form of economic relations (Kabwegyere, 1972:10).

Two factors in particular contributed to a major revival of Indian trade with East Africa during the nineteenth century; first, the consolidation of the Omani rule in Zanzibar and along the coast; and secondly, the relatively enlightened commercial policy of Seyyid Said (1806-56), which ensured freedom of enterprise for the Indian traders (Mangat, 1976:467). A number of reports by General Rigby in 1860, by Sir Bartle Frere in 1873 and by Fredrick Holmwood in 1875 as well as the accounts of various contemporary explorers attest to the extensive growth of the Indian role in Zanzibar at this time. Such developments were to form the background for the various proposals after the partition of East Africa in 1886 to associate British Indians with the imperial effort to 'open up' the interior. While the old established Indian traders were able to penetrate the interior in search of trade under the protection ensured by European rule, in the British sphere the reliance on British Indian precedents and manpower paved the way for officially sponsored immigration of Indians into Kenya and Uganda (Mangat, 1976:468).

This policy received its first and rather tentative expression under the Imperial British East Africa Company, 1888-95. But it was later more fully implemented; especially after the

decision to construct the Uganda Railway ‘upon the Indian methods and chiefly by means of Indian coolies (*Indentured laborers*)’ was taken in 1895 (Mangat, 1971:469). In May 1891, Sir Guilford Molesworth, consulting engineer for railways to the Government of India who had been engaged to make the first of several reports on the proposed railway, stated that it probably would be necessary to depend on imported labor. Within the same year, Capt J. R. L. Macdonald, who had been employed for seven years in India on railway construction and frontier defence was appointed Chief Engineer, and to survey the route for the railway. He brought with him from India not only several European officers of the Royal Engineers, but also 37 India *Kalasis* (riggers) and four Indian *jemadars* (Army officers). In March 1893, after the survey, Macdonald recommended the employment of Indian laborers.

People from Madras and south of India generally, he advised, would be best employed on the coastal section of the line between Mombasa and Kibwezi; while Punjabis, Pathans and natives of Northern India would do well at the higher altitudes and that, the Indian commercial body, would help solve the problem of obtaining African labor (Gregory, 1971:49). Looking at this development within the imperial lens, it is evident that the British attempted to entrench their imperialism within the country by establishing the railway that was meant to open up the interior parts of the territory as well as to ease British administration. As Mungeam (1966:124-130) puts it, once built, the railway had to be made to pay for itself. This objective could only be achieved through the imposition of hut tax and by the judicious introduction of settlers.

The Uganda Railway Committee appointed by the British Foreign Office in October 1895 under the chairmanship of Sir Percy Anderson, arrived at the conclusion, as a later report in 1897 indicated, that “it would be hopeless to expect that the railway could be constructed at any reasonable cost and speed unless they were allowed to recruit Indian labor freely” (Gregory, 1971:50). Accordingly, negotiations were opened with the Indian Office in October 1895 with a view to an amendment of the Indian Emigration Act of 1883 to legalize the recruitment of labor for the Uganda Railway. A subsequent notification by the government of India in May 1896 provided for approved three-year contract terms- involving on an average an overall expenditure of roughly £ 2 per month per coolie- under which such labor could be hired. After this date, therefore, recruitment and shipment of Indian indentured workers for the Uganda Railway began in earnest, and was to continue on a substantial scale until 1902 (Mangat, 1976: 469).

In 1897 an agency was established in Karachi to deal with the railway's growing demands for men and materials; and a branch office was opened in Lahore in order to exploit fully the resources of the 'coolie recruiting grounds of the Upper Punjab.' By 1902, nearly 32,000 *laborers* and artisans, and another 5,000 subordinate employees, had been recruited in India and this 'alien army', working under the direction of British experts and officials, undertook the construction of the railway. Of the total number of workers recruited during this period, only 6,724 opted to remain in East Africa after the expiry of their contract so that only a small proportion of the later Asian population of East Africa can be regarded as the descendants of the indentured railway workers. The real significance of this immigration of Indian workers, in fact laid in the impetus that their officially sponsored immigration and the Indian presence in the interior initiated by it, provided for future Indian immigration to East Africa. As Sir Harry Johnston remarked in 1899:

I wonder if in England the importance of one aspect of this railway construction has been realized. It means the driving of a wedge of India two miles broad right across East Africa from Mombasa to Victoria Nyanza. Fifteen thousand coolies, some hundreds of Indian clerks, draughtsmen, mechanics surveyors and policemen, are... carrying the Indian penal code, the Indian postal system, Indian coinage, Indian clothing, right across these wastes, deserts, forests and swamps (Mangat, 1976:470).

This process was accelerated by the employment of British Indian troops and subordinate staff for the establishment and extension of British administration. In 1895, a special Indian contingent consisting of 300 troops was raised for service along the coast and the Uganda Railway. Early in 1897, they laid the first rails. Less than five years later, in December 1901, the track of 582 miles to Kisumu on the shores of Lake Victoria was completed (Gregory, 1971:51). In 1898 a similar contingent was raised for Uganda following the mutiny of the Sudanese troops there in 1897. Both these contingents were subsequently disbanded; the former at the turn of the century when the King's African Rifles were organized, and the latter in 1913. Meanwhile additional military reinforcements were sought from India from time to time, especially during the 1890s, for the purpose of 'pacification' of the East African territories (Mangat, 1976:470).

In the wake of the railway construction, workers came including several small-scale shopkeepers or *dukawallahs*, especially from the north-western Indian regions of Cutch and Gujarat to sell goods to railway construction workers, but also to service the little towns that

had by then begun to appear along the main lines of transport. These early waves of immigration were actively encouraged by the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEACO) which believed that Indians were better suited to the role of petty traders than Europeans because they were more willing to tolerate hardships and lower profit margins (Ojwang, 2013:10-11).

Early contacts between Indian traders and East Africa that go back over centuries were however sporadic. But, the major influx of Indians in East Africa came with colonization when they were brought in as indentured laborers to build the railway from Mombasa at the coast to Uganda (Tandon, 1973). It was argued that since some indigenous people had not as yet been initiated into a labor and money economy, as their Asian counterparts had been, the latter were ready targets to provide labor for the railway construction (Bennet 1966:4). It is observed that the first major and organized immigration of the Indians to East Africa was at the behest of colonialism and as its unwilling tool to aid imperial expansion as indentured labor to build the railways (Tandon: 1973:1).

Michel Adam (2010:217) supports this view in his argument that the massive arrival of Indians in Kenya dates to the beginning of British colonization. From an administrative point of view, the British East Africa Protectorate was at its beginning a mere extension of the empire of India, which notably imposed the use of the Indian rupee in the new colony. An important part of the subordinate civil service in Kenya was therefore made up of staff from India, in particular many Catholic Goans. The British army of occupation was equally constituted of Indian recruits, mostly Sikhs and Muslims from the Punjab. The first Indians in Kisumu were thus petty traders and indentured laborers, mostly from Punjab, Cutch and Gujarat brought forth by the colonial government to help in the building of the Uganda railway.

The Imperial government viewed the growing British Indian role in East Africa with considerable favour; Indeed in May 1900, the Colonial Foreign Office commented that 'in the present condition of the African Protectorates they are likely to benefit from Indian immigration.' Various early officials ranging from Captain (later Lord) Lugard in 1893 to Sir Harry Johnston during 1899-1901 gave enthusiastic support to the idea of encouraging Indian and agricultural settlement in the East African territories with a view to their speedy development. Indeed, a series of proposals were formulated by the East African governments at various times in the course of the early colonial period in order to facilitate Indian

Immigration. But, apart from the small settlement of Indian agriculturists at Kibos, near Kisumu, after 1903, most of these proposals came to nothing. The whole question of state-aided Indian immigration into East Africa was eventually placed before a committee appointed by the Colonial Office in 1909 for detailed consideration. The Sanderson Committee, as it was called after its chairman, concluded in favour of continued voluntary Indian immigration into East Africa- in view of its role in the development of the area but the committee was opposed to any schemes for officially sponsored or indentured Indian immigration (Mangat, 1976:472).

The above argument is supported by Michel Adam (2010:218) who observed that at the end of the construction of the railway, about 30,000 Indian workers, almost all those contracted by the company, returned to their country. Contrary to a persistent myth, the majority of Indo-Kenya today is therefore not the descendants of these first migrants. As a result, the flow of immigration was boosted by other means. Hoping to ensure a quick development of the country, the British administration first tried to encourage the settling of a small Indian peasantry near the railway line. Thirty-hectare plots of land were offered to Patel peasants from Gujerat in Kibwezi, Makindu, Machakos, Limuru and Kisumu for production of maize, vegetables, sugar cane and cotton, a plant with which Indians have a long and vast experience. It is worth noting that after the proclamation of Kenya as a British protectorate in July 1895 (Mungeam, 1966: 7), the British administration immediately introduced a racial issue through the racial segregation policy, which they imposed on the Kenyan colony. This was the genesis of racial issues within the postcolony which spread to Nyanza and Western Kenya provinces (Dilley, 1966:3).

Conclusively, the immigration of indentured Indians did not cease with the completion of the Kenya-Uganda Railway in 1901. The question of whether the Indians were to stay in Kenya, thereafter, was voluntary. The majority among them chose to return to India after completing their contracts while a few voluntarily decided to remain. Demographically, only about six thousand chose to remain in the country. Of those who stayed behind, many became traders while others became market gardeners⁵ (Bhatt, 1976). Those who stayed were allowed to engage in any activity that was not only beneficial to them, but also to the newly established colonial government. Apart from labor and commerce, the British administration considered the Asian as an important agent of colonial change (Dilley, 1966:3). The social class of those

⁵ Shah, O.I 2012, Shop owner along Obote road in Kisumu

who remained cut across businessmen, security officers and petty *dukawallahs* who did not really represent Asian elite group.

2.3 The First Indian Settlement in Nyanza, Kibos Area

There were several inquiries on the possibility of acquiring land in the British East Africa territory for both Asian and European settlement. The founders of the IBEAC and the proponents of the Uganda railway, as already mentioned, envisaged such a settlement. From 1900, Lords Salisbury and Lansdowne, successive British Secretaries of State for Foreign Affairs, repeatedly urged the Protectorate commissioners to consider the promotion of Indian immigration (Omenya, 2010:58).

Because the white highlands were reserved for the European settlers, schemes for settlement of Indians in and outside the highlands were submitted by George Mackenzie, former director of the IBEAC, General W. H Manning, former acting commissioner of the British Central Africa Protectorate and George Whitehouse, Chief Engineer of the Uganda Railway (Gregory 1971:67; Kalaine 1998).

Sir Harry Johnston, Special Commissioner in Uganda (from 1899-1901), was one of the earliest proponents of this idea of Indian settlement. He believed firmly that both the Indian and Indian agriculturalists were needed in Central and East Africa. In Sir Harry Johnstone's opinion:

The yellow man was just as much needed in Africa as the white man and the black because he would inevitably occupy 'a middle place' between the two other races. Moreover, not only would Indians stimulate trade in backward areas but, if encouraged to settle as farmers, they would also introduce Africans to 'better system of Agriculture (Hollingsworth, 1960: 51).

Sir Harry Johnston hoped that new agricultural experiments within the area would enable the Africans to learn how to carry out irrigation from the Indians and to cultivate sugarcane and cotton. He stated that 'Indian trade, enterprise, and emigration require a suitable outlet' and that East Africa was and should be from every point of view 'the America of Hindu'. Similar views were expressed by top British politician Winston Churchill who wrote that 'The mighty continent of tropical Africa lies open to colonizing and organizing capacities of the East' (Mungeam 1966:102). Such remarks represented the imperial and capitalist nature of colonialism.

However, the general view of the European settlers on the Indian settlement was negative. There was a concerted effort by the European settlers to exclude the Indians from highland areas. The settler members of the Land Board, a colonial institution, had no misgivings as to how the problem should be solved. One of them moved a resolution and another seconded 'that Indian immigration be discouraged as much as possible for the purpose of settlement and that no government land be allotted to them' (Ross, 1968:309). They also recommended that all future farm leases should insist on occupation by a white man so that even if an Indian did possess a farm, he would be forced to employ a white manager or resident. The official members did not go so far, but they agreed upon an amendment that:

The definition of 'Highlands' be extended, that Indian close settlement in limited areas should be allowed in the lowlands but that Indian settlement should not be encouraged by the government (Ross, 1968:309).

The East Africa (Land Acquisition) Order in Council of 1901 authorized the Commissioner to sell, grant, lease or otherwise dispose of land. Specific terms for this were laid down in the Crown Lands Ordinance of 1902, though the Commissioner was further limited in his discretion by instructions to refer grants above a certain size to the Foreign Office for approval (Bennet, 1966:9).

With the creation of such institutions as Lands Department, Public Works, Land Office and other ordinances, it was very easy for the colonial agents, the Asians, to continue to penetrate and acquire land for settlement, while helping in the expansion of imperialism. Because the British had already colonized India, they had created hybrid Asian agents who glorified British values and civilizations. Further, some British administrators⁶ had supported Asians entering into East Africa because many years of living together had created a hybrid European who appreciated some Asian values. In this case, the British trusted Asians more than they trusted Africans in building the postcolonial space.

Statements on grants of land for Asians were reiterated in correspondence between the Indians and government officials in Nyanza on issues concerning land acquisition and also

⁶ Sir Harry Johnston and John Ainsworth supported the idea of Indian colonization of East Africa Protectorate by arguing that Indians would be more welcome to Africans than the European. Ainsworth also supported Indian settlement of East Africa Protectorate and vowed in January 1896 'to make effort to encourage the settlement of Indian traders(see also Falola, T and Salm, S ed (2005) *African Urban Spaces in Historical Perspective*)

between the government officials themselves regarding application for lease of land and registration by the Asians in Kibos area.⁷

Sir Charles Eliot, the Commissioner of the East Africa Protectorate was initially favourably inclined towards the scheme of Indian settlement. In practice, Eliot himself was fast coming round to the view that European rather than Indian settlement should be encouraged. Admittedly, Sir Eliot had given guarded support to the idea of Indian agriculturalists entering the country, and in January 1902, he told Lord Lansdowne that he was prepared to begin the experiment of settling one hundred Indian families on low lying land at Kibos, near Kisumu (Mungeam, 1966). But he emphasized that, in his view, Indians should be confined to the low-lying parts of the Protectorate and added:

Believing as I do that the East African highlands are for the most a white man's country, and hoping that they will be taken up by white colonists in the near future, I doubt the expediency of settling large bodies of Indians in them as even in Mombasa there is considerable friction between the European and Indian traders (Mungeam 1966:103).

Sir Charles Eliot was determined to find a "White Man's Country" over the whole highland area from Mount Elgon to the border of Tanganyika. He stated:

... the interior of the Protectorate is a white man's country and so I think it is mere hypocrisy not to admit that white interest must be paramount, and that the main object of our policy and legislation should be to find a white colony (Frost, 1978:8).

The British attitude here emphasizes the superiority of the English to the Indian, the Indian to African. This is the policy which governed racial relations during the formal colonization. The problems which were to face the new territory were thus the problems of a plural society. The settlers' frontier established a community which acquired power and privileges and, largely to support its position, discrimination grew up in the colony (Frost, 1978:10). The political spaces were also racial spaces.

The British imposed many conditions on the Indian settlement to restrict them from moving close to the so-called White highlands. Despite the restrictions, the British government still wanted Indians to act as a "reserve army" in case of any African uprising, an indication of the ambivalence on the attitude of the colonial government.

⁷ KNA, PC/NZA/3/22/11-12, 1908/10, Kibos Indian Settlement folio

This was because from the very start, many Africans resisted foreign occupation of their land. So there was also fear of contestation and war as evidenced by plans that were put in place for the creation of the Kibos settlement whose purpose was twofold: One, the Asians were to provide a military buffer zone between the Luo of Kajulu location⁸ who were in conflict with the Nandi community. Asians were therefore to form a buffer between the Luo who occupied Kajulu location and their Nandi neighbours. Asians who were armed by the Protectorate government, were deployed to deter any Nandi attempts to reopen hostilities and regain their lost territory after part of their land was alienated by the Europeans and from vandalizing the railway line. Two, the community was to engage in farming and in irrigating the areas around the Kibos River.

It was envisaged that Asians would be innovators, ostensibly introducing new crops and techniques and thereby creating an impetus for change in the surrounding African community⁹ (Reed, 1975). So the Asians had several identities including being traders, soldiers on hire, railway builders and farmers. They had multiple identities on a plural postcolonial space. Each identity they exhibited had different consequences when applied to their Afro-Asian and Afro-European relations.

In 1903, at the instigation of D.D. Waller, Acting Paymaster of the King's African Rifles in the Treasury Department, the Protectorate established a settlement of Indian agriculturists at Kibos, which was the second railway stop north of Kisumu. This was the first authorized Indian settlement in Kenya.

The site was in the lowlands of the lakeshore, the Nyanza basin, and was not considered within the highlands. Waller, who had lived many years in Calcutta, was relieved of his duties as paymaster and given charge of the project as the protector of immigrants. He collected about thirty Indians who were former employees of the Uganda Railways and helped them to settle in Kibos (Gregory, 1971:69). At Kibos, they planted rice, cotton, sesame and linseed on the excellent black soil (Kalaine 1998:17). Kalaine quoting Eliot states that:

⁸ Kajulu Location is situated within Kisumu district and it shares a border with the Nandi community of Rift Valley province. The conflict between the Luo of Kajulu and the Nandi was due to cattle rustling spearheaded by the Nandi. But also the Nandi community, which resisted colonialism for the longest period in Kenya, never wanted the railway line to pass through their land

⁹ King, O.I., 2012, Pastor with the Jehova witness church and an employee of the Kisumu Breweries Limited (Kisumu branch) residing in Kisumu.

At Kibos, the Indian coolies have set up vegetable gardens and are doing a good trade at the neighbouring stations. Small experiments have also been made in wheat, rice, and sugarcane, which grew with great success. Between 800 and 900 acres in Kibos have been cleared up and planted with cotton, wheat, rice, oats, grams, sugarcane, Indian corn, and vegetables. The Kavirondo (African) people, are imitating the methods of Indian, and are growing various crops; cotton being most successful' (Kalaine, 1998:17).

With so many alien crops introduced, the eating habits also reflected powerful hybridity of cultures between Asians, Europeans and Africans. Contextualized within the rubric of imperialism and capitalism, it is evident that colonial crops ranged beyond cotton, from sugarcane and sisal, to rubber and coffee, all of them tropical agricultural products and their significance was either strategic or simply economic. As early as 1904, the cotton question had become sufficiently important to be included in the King's (His Majesty) speech when he stated that:

The insufficiency of the supply of raw material upon which the great cotton industry depends has inspired me with deep concern...I trust that the efforts which are being made in various parts of the Empire to increase the area under cultivation may be attended with a large measure of success (Mamdani, 1996:37).

The King's statement was in favour of colonization and imperialism. However, it should be noted that since African farmers around Kibos had not been approached regarding this Indian settlement and its intentions from the beginning, they felt under no real obligation during the first days to follow the new practices of the Asian community.

Seldom did Africans inquire about or even go to observe the new techniques or crops at the experimental stations in Kibos. Later, Asians started to interact with Africans within Kibos trading center where Africans bought goods from them and started imitating their agricultural techniques¹⁰ (Reed, 1975). Refusal by Africans at first to learn new practices could mean protest against new forms of knowledge introduced by the Indians within the Nyanza postcolony. This was also an aspect of Afro-Asian relations in Nyanza's Kibos area.

The idea of a settlement scheme was never totally abandoned and was reviewed from time to time. An official report on the possibilities of cotton cultivation in the Protectorate, published in 1904 categorically stated that great benefit would accrue from the settlement of Indians, for

¹⁰ Odingo; O.I., 2012 A retired teacher living in Kibos, Nyanza Province

the latter were keen to cultivate cotton. The report observed that the 'development' of the richest districts of East Africa depended on the introduction of Indian farmers.

Another report published in 1905 referred to the success of the Kibos settlement and praised the efforts of the Indian agriculturists who were producing large quantities of maize and cotton which were some forms of Western knowledge. The mimicry by Africans of the Asian agricultural activities influenced their relations with the Asians. The scheme to import Indian cultivators to expedite the development of agriculture in the East Africa Protectorate was once again revived in 1905 with the strong recommendation of Sir Edward Buck who toured the protectorate in the same year. He recommended the multiplication of the pioneer settlement in the larger uninhabited areas around Kibos. Sir Edward Buck pointed out that the country was ideally suited for the products of the East and the extensive experience acquired in India should be fully utilized (Bhatt 1976).

Because of the success at Kibos and the interest in extending Indian settlement, the Protectorate took further steps to promote Indian immigration. It appointed a committee on Indian immigration under the chairmanship of J.A. L. Montgomery, Commissioner of Lands, with D.D. Waller as one of the four members. In its report of July 1906, the committee recommended that the government facilitates Indian settlement in the lowland between the Coast and Kiu and between Fort Ternan and Lake Victoria. It also outlined a comprehensive scheme for settlement (Mangat, 1969:68; Gregory, 1971:70).

As a first step towards implementing the report, the Governor sent D.D. Waller to India in late 1906 to recruit fifteen more Indian families for Kibos. D.D. Waller tried to recruit in Bihar, Madras, Bombay, and the central provinces, but he found that suitable Indians were very reluctant to leave India, and he met opposition from some administrators, especially Sir Denzil C. Ibbetson, Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, who felt that his province could not spare any agriculturists. From the arguments above, it was evident that there was conflict of interest between the Governor of Punjab and the British administration in Kenya. After his return to Africa without a single Indian family, Waller was convinced that the only recourse was to import indentured laborers who might eventually be induced to settle. In 1907, Kibos consisted of only four Punjabi families, who grazed cattle and grew cotton, sugarcane, chilies and maize on 600 acres (Kalaine, 1998; Gregory, 1971).

Since Kibos was the first Indian settlement initiated by the British Government, there were more inquiries within and outside British East Africa about its success. An application was written by an overseer of Uganda railway at Port Florence (Kisumu), requesting Lord Curzon, the Viceroy of India to intercede so that Indians could get free grants of land at Kibos. The letter partly stated:

Having heard that Sir Charles Eliot, Her Majesty's commissioner has left for India to arrange with you to allow Indians to migrate to British East Africa, I therefore beg to enclose notice for free grants of land between miles 0 and 19 and 534 to 584, which portion assigned for Indians and they be given land promised at 15/- Rupees for 100 acres per year, 2/- Rupees per acre. For freehold and not Rs 100 for 100 acres as is now being given to us Indian cultivators at Kibos where the Indian settlement is to be formed (Kalaine, 1998:19).

These Indians embarked mainly on sugarcane production, an activity that later created what remains currently as the sugar belt region in Nyanza. The Kibos Indian scheme therefore, merits special attention since it contained several of the elements involved in transforming territories into viable economic entities. The Indians in this settlement were thus seen as a vehicle for the entrenchment and development of colonialism.

Although the Africans imitated Asian agricultural techniques in Kibos area, the Indians residing along the Indian settlement bordering on all sides of Kibos, Kajulu and Kano reserves later complained about the Africans from these reserves who came in batches and groups and took away with them sugarcane, maize cobs and small ploughs. There was also increased theft of cattle owned by Asians in Kibos area¹¹.

However, this problem was solved through the construction of a fence as a cattle theft preventive measure. But these acts of theft and attacks should be viewed as a resistance by the dispossessed Africans within the colonial space against forms of knowledge and institutions authored and authorized by the West through the Asian agents. Such activities enhanced suspicion and conflict among the two populations.

In his many *safaris* (trips) in Nyanza Province, Odera Ulalo, a colonial chief of several Luo *pinje* (multilineal territories) would normally go to 'Dagamoyo' the present Kibos near Kisumu, where Indian retail traders had established a market center. The porters, soldiers and leaders who had been on *safari* with him were paid in kind with goods provided by these

¹¹ KNA, PC/NZA/3/15/145, 1943

Indian traders (Ogot, 2003:7). These goods included different types of cloth (known then locally as *Japan*, because they were imported from Japan), ready-made clothes and beads. The most popular beads were the blue ones known in dholuo as '*nyamach*'. These beads were worn mostly by women for aesthetic purposes. Africans were therefore encouraged to wear clothes in order to embrace modernity. It was through this arrangement that the practice of '*nanga*' that is the practice of wearing clothes started in Luoland. Soon '*jonanga*' that is, people who wear clothes, became a social class apart from the other people, the naked ones in society (Ogot, 2003:7). Other Asians who settled and owned land through government leasehold in Kibos were Bosawaram, son to Kalooram, Gulam Mohammed, Haribhai Patel, Chotabhai Patel, chunibhai patel and other Sikhs such as Inder Singh and Sodeagar Singh. Jumna Dass Karami who owned a piece of land in the same area sold his plot to Allidina Visram.¹²

Some of the farmers in Kibos were Sikhs who included, Chanan Singh, Kisan Singh, and Kala Singh. Kala Singh means 'Black Singh' as *Kala* is the word for Black in Gujarati language. The Africans called all Sikhs *Kalasinga*¹³; a merger and corruption of *Khalsa* and *Singh*. This name is neither African nor Asian but a hybrid of the two which was accepted by both Asians and Africans. This was probably an African way of deconstructing Asian names in order to fit into the African situations. Such were the linguistic hybridity which characterized Afro-Asian relations as they settled in Nyanza. Mr Kiran Heyer, a Kisumu-based Sikh, says the term *Kalasinga* is unique. "To him, the nickname was a show of how Kenyans were receptive of the Sikhs and other Asians in those early days" (Daily Nation 19/1/2014).

Continued Indian acquisition of land and settlement in Kibos was also enhanced by what would be considered as local demand. Increased demand for African grain flour all over the country created a big necessity of more flourmills in this district to cope with demands. Due to this increased demand, Alibhai and Rahimtulla, both Asians erected more flourmills around Kibos. This was facilitated by the two obtaining a Temporary Occupation Licence from the Lands Department. This necessity therefore ensured mutually beneficial Afro-Asian relations as Africans used the Asian posho mills to grind their cereals¹⁴.

¹² KNA, PC/NZA/3/22/1/2-9, 1910-12

¹³ Devji, O.I., 2006, Indian dealer in spare parts at Kamas in Kisumu

¹⁴ KNA, PC/NZA/3/22/1/13, 1915

The Asians in Kibos also acquired land by public auction. Plot number 111 of 25 acres owned by Ramchand and Labchand located in Kibos was sold to Ram Ghasita, who later sold this piece of land to Chawdri Ram Jawaya by public auction on the 17th May 1909¹⁵. Hence, transfer of land took place by sale, government lease, or public auction. Since the Asians had acquired wealth, whenever plots were auctioned, it was almost impossible for an African to outbid them.¹⁶ The idea of auctioning African land was to raise revenue for the colonial government.

Evidently, that the colonial government used the Indian institution to exploit and open up the Kenyan reserve at Kibos and other areas. Acquisition of land was meant to create the notion that Africans did not know how to use the land. It was also to justify the fact that since they could not put land to good use, somebody else, the Indian and Europeans should.

Salvadori (1996:171) asserts that the histories of many Asian communities in Kenya could be traced to their few original immigrants, who settled, succeeded and then sent back to India for members of their own communities to join them. It is reiterated that this strong corporate spirit, integral to the traditional Indian socio- economic system was strengthened by the immigrants' position as immigrants in a strange land.

Forbidden (with a few exceptions) by law from owning farmlands, Asians settled in the townships and villages (in many cases they built the towns) and became increasingly urbanized. According to one informant¹⁷, his grandfather who worked for the railway as a clerk got freehold land near the Kibos River to farm. After getting a settlement, he invited his wife from India. He later invited and welcomed his brothers and other kinsmen interested in settling in Kenya. Initially, they planted local crops like *wimbi*, *mtama* (type of millet) very effectively. They also planted maize and vegetables but when they tried to plant wheat, it was not successful. The family too had a very reliable labor supply from the Luo people. Luo laborers stayed on the same compound as their Indian employers. Househelps were needed because most of the Asians were generally busy in their shops.¹⁸ A situation therefore emerges where Asians also planted local crops thereby suggesting that there were some African

¹⁵ KNA, PC\NZA\3\22\1\6, 1910-15

¹⁶ Kings, O.I., 2006/2013 Goerge Kings was an employee at Kenya Breweries limited (Kisumu Branch)

¹⁷ Ajay Gosh, O.I., 2012 A teacher at former New Kisumu High School in Kisumu town

¹⁸ Kings, O.I., 2006/2013 and Ramesh, O.I 2012 former employee at the collapsed Kisumu Bakeries

agricultural values that the Asians acquired and adopted. By employing Africans as laborers, the postcolonial space of Nyanza was set for Afro-Asian labor relations which formed one of the major aspects of their relations.

There is evidence, therefore, of a relationship which is not primarily that of resistance or of collaboration, but one, which is made fraught by the very fact of the colonial authority and its 'subject' having to share the same living space. In this situation, Nyanza is a postcolonial space made out of one single space but of several sub spaces. The Indian settlement scheme at Kibos, was therefore, created out of contestations between the Luo and the Nandi and also between the Asians and the Europeans over the occupation of the white highlands. The colonial system thus created a new space within the Nyanza postcolonial space. In this space, Asians were settled and used as colonial agents of capitalism and imperialism. This space also laid the foundation upon which Afro-Asian relations were to be established.

The second Indian settlement was established at the Nyando valley, which extended to Fort Ternan and Muhoroni areas and not very far from Kibos, later in 1903 (Abuor, 1972:67). There were fertile soils and favourable climate and irrigation was undertaken from River Nyando. At the beginning, 250 Indians settled here. Mr. Hobley, the Assistant Deputy Commissioner for the East Africa Protectorate reported on this agricultural settlement as follows:

The Nyando valley has been selected as a suitable location for the Indian immigration experiment and a fair start has now been made. About a year ago, before the scheme was mooted, I had allowed several agriculturalists to take up plots of land in the vicinity of the river Kibos and these original plantations have served as nucleus for those now being settled under the auspices of the scheme. There are in the vicinity some 16 settlers holding all together about 340 acres of land. They have already brought upwards about 80 acres under cultivation, some 20 of which are planted with cotton, part of the remaining 260 acres has been broken and will be planted when the rainy season breaks. The chief products of the settlements are cotton, rice, wheat oil-bearing seeds of various kinds and Indigo, to say nothing of various indigenous African cereals. Some of the settlers too are anxious to experiment with opium culture.¹⁹

Similar to the Kibos settlement scheme, the Nyando scheme was an experimental scheme created by the British government later in 1903 in order to test their capitalist ideas by

¹⁹ Kalaine, 1998, *The Indians Role in the Development East Africa, 1890-1920*, National Archives of India

introducing plantation farms. By extending these schemes, it was hoped that the Africans within the interior parts would come under the influence of the British rule.

In the Nyando agricultural settlement scheme, a number of fruits from the coastal areas such as oranges, pineapples, mangoes, and *papayi* (Pawpaw) were grown on experimental basis. The seeds for these fruits were distributed free of charge by the British administrators. The aim was to have them grown on plantation farms to ensure a constant supply of fruits for the residents of Kisumu.

With time, more and more Indians were settled on the Nyando scheme. All these settlement schemes were in close proximity to the railway line and since there were many Indians working on the railway, they provided additional market for the farm produce (Kalaine, 1998:22). The Indian community thus played a crucial role in the early colonial agricultural development within the region. The predominant plantation crops were mainly cotton, coffee and sugarcane. The ideas behind the Nyando Indian settlement scheme were the same as those that set up the Kibos settlement scheme. Asians were used as the colonial agents to exploit the interior reserves and to introduce the rural economies to western forms of capitalism and imperialism.

2.4 Indian Settlement in Western Kenya

Indian settlement in the Western region of Kenya can be understood within the context of the colonial policies that governed the colonial state in Kenya as early as 1900s. Prior to European colonialism, most Kenyans were rural dwellers, except for those in the coastal region that had a long pre-existing urban tradition. Europeans, beginning in the late 1800s, founded most of Kenya's urban areas and set them aside for exclusive European habitation. To the detriment of Africans (i.e., indigenous black Africans) and Asians, different strategies were used to exclude these groups. Exclusion of Asians took the form of under-representation in the municipal councils, especially in Nairobi; limits on their admission into the country following the completion of the Kenya-Uganda railway; barring them from owning rural land in order to protect European settler interests; and restrictions on their ownership of land in Nairobi and other parts of the country like Western and Nyanza provinces, except in designated areas. These designated areas were low-lying areas deemed unsuitable for large scale agricultural production (Otiso, 2005:73).

Asians were barred from owning rural land or engaging in agriculture to prevent competition with immigrant European farmers. However, Asians were allowed to run convenience stores and to function as middlemen mediating the exploitative and sometimes volatile commodity production and exchange relations between the British and Africans. Due to this situation, Asians often bore the brunt of African anger over the low prices that they were paid for their produce. This planted the seed of mutual mistrust and apprehension that continued to characterize African-Asian relations in Kenya. At the end of the construction of the railway project, the Asians found themselves in a precarious position because of lack of land tenure and the insurance of a rural home (Otiso, 2005:79). Not able to return to their ancestral homelands in India and having no rural homes in Kenya to invest in, Asians chose to disconnect from politics and invest instead in their professional and economic development (Otiso, 2005:74).

Coincident with the inland penetration of the railway, and the military conquest of indigenous communities (Lonsdale, 1964:60), the colonial administration facilitated the opening up of markets for Indian merchants as a way of widening the scope of commodity production through sensitizing such production to the presence of the market (Makana, 2006:55). This would thereby assist in what Fearn calls “the economic awakening of East Africa” (Fearn, 1961:108-109). Although initially concentrated at government administrative stations, these Indian trading outposts subsequently came to be stationed near railheads. In what is today Bungoma district, Indian shops could be found at Bungoma, Chwele, Kamukuywa, Broderick Falls, Kimilili and Malakisi.

Indians opened a trading center at Mumias in 1902 and at Kakamega in 1903. Later other trading centers were opened at Lunyerere in Maragoli, Kimilili in Bukusu, Butere in Marama, Luanda in Bunyore, Nambale in Bukhayo as well as in Sio Port in Samia (Osogo, 1965). A number of Asians were also drawn and attracted by the discovery of goldmines in Kakamega. Gold mines were started in Kakamega by a British Company called Rosterman Goldmines Company in 1932, but they did not last long. However, they taught the Luhya to value money. The goldmine adventure enhanced economic relations between the Africans and Asians engaged in the trade (see Shillaro, 2000; Osogo, 1965).

In his annual report for 1917, the District Commissioner for North Kavirondo observed, for

instance, that Malakisi had a total of nine shops with an Indian population of twenty three.²⁰ Broderick Falls (Webuye) would on the other hand develop as a major maize bulking depot in the wake of more sustained efforts by the colonial state to stimulate commodity production in the 1930s²¹. In this formative period in the process of extending the market, however, Indian traders relied heavily on African itinerant traders for the collection and bulking up of produce prior to its delivery at centrally located Indian shops (Makana, 2006:56).

Although trading centers soon became the most effective link between rural areas and the modern economy, they remained insignificant for planning purposes because, first, Asians initially built their shops on land belonging to Africans. Secondly, since Asians lacked land tenure, they built makeshift structures. Like periodic markets, trading centers where Asians lived in were collecting, bulking, and distribution centers. Some of the trading centers later grew to become important urban centers, particularly after independence (Otiso, 2005:80).

2.5 Distribution of Asians within Townships in Western and Nyanza Provinces: The Duka model

Most Asians in Kenya came from an impoverished rural background in India in search for a better life abroad. They settled in the Kenyan townships and became increasingly urbanized. Approximately half of the Asian population in Kenya is concentrated in Nairobi; the second half lives in Mombasa, Nakuru and Kisumu. This concentration in the towns facilitated the development of community associations and services. Each major community established its own places of worship and its own schools; even the smallest communities had their own modest halls or centers, providing focal points for their communal lives (Salvadori, 1989). The communities enabled them to establish ties and networks of all kinds, to arrange saving schemes, to build recreational and social centers, to organize South Asian cultural events, to promote links with South Asia, and to liaise with non-South Asian organizations (Clarke *et al*, 1990a). The colonial policy of racial segregation and the dominant Asian influence on the national economy led to (and still creates) stereotypes, which have resulted in persisting social boundaries. However, social boundaries are not only found between but also within the different ethnic groups (Herzig, 2006:2).

The real significance of their role in East Africa, apart from the construction of the railway itself, lies in the impetus that their officially sponsored immigration and the Indian presence

²⁰ KNA, DC/NN/1/1, 1917

²¹ KNA, AK/2/27

in the interior initiated, and thus led to the future Indian immigration into East Africa (Mangat, 1969). While discouraging the permanent settlement of indentured laborers, the British realized that Indian merchants would be helpful in exploiting the resources of the new country (Seidenberg, 1983). The majority of Asians therefore, were those who came on their own initiative, those who wanted to find their luck in the 'America of Hindu' (Mangat, 1969:63). According to Kiem (1993), these Asians are so-called 'passenger migrants.'

Meanwhile, however, the officially sponsored immigration of the 1890s had introduced East Africa to people from certain parts of India, notably Punjab and central Gujerat, who, unlike the old established traders, had no previous contact with that region. Moreover, their role as artisans, administrative employees, and traders at a time when no other equally competitive local agency was available to perform these functions, laid the foundations upon which new Indian immigration could build. Indeed the distinguishing characteristic of much of the subsequent Indian immigration into East Africa by contrast with the indentured immigration that largely accounts for the present day Asian populations of Kenya, South Africa, the West Indies, and Mauritius for example was that it was overwhelmingly voluntary. And the 'free' or 'passenger' immigrants, as they were called, who came to East Africa took to employment largely on the middle rung of the economic ladder-as artisans, skilled and semi-skilled staff, and as traders. A majority of them, aided by the old established commercial connections between East Africa and the west coast of India, sought to explore the more familiar avenues of commercial enterprise; but, both the administrations and the railway continued to depend heavily on Indian administrative staff. As Sir Percy Girouard pointed out in his report of 1909: 'His (the Indian's) presence, in our existing financial conditions, makes government possible in that he provides the subordinate staff of nearly every department' (Mangat, 1976:473).

Indian commercial penetration of the interior coincided largely with the extension of European rule, although a few of the old established coastal traders had preceded 'the flag' in some areas. A series of reports indicate how petty Indian merchants established stores or *dukas*, along the advancing railways, at the newly established administrative posts and sometimes in the 'outback' and helped to create 'first in a small way and then in a large way in areas where they had previously existed'. In East Africa protectorate, important Indian trading centers in the interior had been established at Voi, Mumias, Bungoma and Webuye in Western Kenya, Machakos and Nairobi along the Kenya Uganda railway (see Magana, 2006).

Asians were also distributed in other trading centers within Nyanza and Western provinces in areas such as Kendu Bay, Yala, Asembo Bay, Ndere, Kisumu, Kakamega, Vihiga, Malakisi, Bungoma and Webuye. In all these areas, they majorly concentrated in doing business especially in the *dukas* before diversifying into wholesale and manufacturing industry especially in textile and sugar industries. Jamal²² avers that this idea of *dukas* was brought about by Indians in the reserves and Africans enjoyed buying merchandise from them.

Figure 4: An Indian woman and man selling merchandise in a duka/shop



Source: ismailmail.files.wordpress

²² Jamal O.I, 2012

Figure 4b Africans gathering around an old Indian duka on a market day in Kisumu



Source: ismailmail.files.wordpress

Figure 5: An African woman buying items from an Indian shop



Source: ismailmail.files.wordpress

We can follow the history of *duka* through biographies. For example, Allidina Visram,²³ an Indian Ismaili also opened up *dukas* (shops) in Kisumu and other posts well before the Uganda Railway was completed. The pattern of commerce adopted in the interior by Visram and the other Asian traders revolved largely around the exchange of an increasing variety of imported goods such as cloth, wire, glassware and lamps for local produce of every description (Mangat, 1976:475). Meanwhile, Allidina had also diversified his business interests to include oil mills at Kisumu obtaining oil from sesame and copra (Mangat, 1976:477). The distribution of Asians in Nyanza and Western provinces therefore followed a pattern, which involved identifying potential markets for their products thereby opening up the interior parts of the postcolony to the Western capital economy.

Figure 6: A picture of Allidina Vishram



Source: ismailmail.files.wordpress

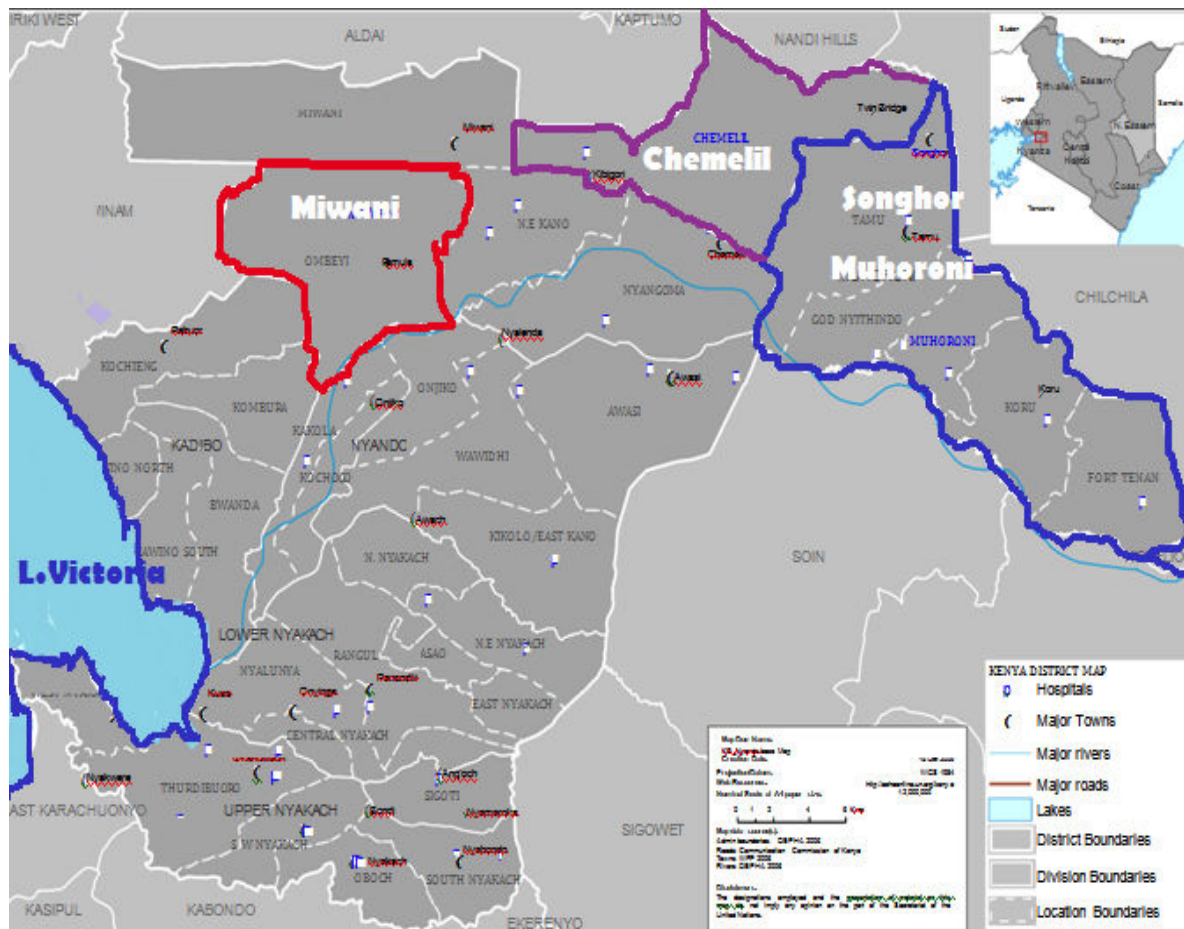
²³ Allidina Visram was reputed for his kindness and generosity. He opened his first ginnery at Entebbe in 1910 for exporting ginned cotton to India, via dhows and steamer to Kisumu and then by rail to Mombasa. To facilitate the transport he himself owned the sailing crafts on Lake Victoria. At Kisumu he had his transportation hub for the connection to the coast and also opened up *dukas* in Kisumu. He sponsored many new immigrant Ismailis to first as his employees and then as his agents who later spread out to Homa Bay, Mumias, and Sio Port in both Western and Nyanza regions.

2.6 Comparative Analysis of Afro-Asian Migration and Settlement in Nyanza and Western Province

It is evident from the discussion above that Asian migration into Kenya and subsequently to the Western and Nyanza provinces of Kenya was done in phases. Two main phases of emigration of Indians can be distinguished. For analytical convenience, these could be termed the colonial and the postcolonial phases of Indian diaspora (Jain, 1993). It is no doubt, possible to identify overlaps between these two phases: the emigration of Indians that began in the second quarter of the nineteenth century continued into the early decades of the twentieth century. Although the Asian presence in the East Coast of Kenya predates the colonial period, however, colonialism laid the foundation for their migration and later settlement in Kenya. The common feature about Asian settlement in Nyanza and Western provinces of Kenya is that through the construction of the Kenya-Uganda Railway, a number of Asians managed to settle in some of the small trading centers along the railways. Some of these trading centers were referred to as Indian trading centers like Malakisi, Broderick Falls (Webuye) and Bungoma.

Comparatively to Western Province, the Asian settlement in Nyanza was more organized, with the first formal Asian settlement being established by the British Protectorate at Kibos in 1903. Unlike Asian settlement in Western Kenya which was commercial in nature, Asian settlement in Kibos near Kisumu was agricultural. This was a settlement of Indian agriculturist and it was the first authorized Indian settlement in Kenya, a very big contrast to the Indian traders who settled in Kakamega, Mumias and Bungoma since most of them were traders. Unlike Asian settlement in Western Kenya, Asian settlement in Nyanza province was a contestation of the political and economic spaces between Asians and Europeans within that postcolonial space. First, the Kibos settlement was to restrict Asians from moving close to the so-called White highlands. Similarly, the Asians were to act as a reserve army in case of any African uprising, an indication of the ambivalence on the attitude of the colonial government. Asians were to provide a military buffer between the Luo of Kajulu Location who were in conflict with the Nandi community. This was to serve the purpose of maintaining order within the capitalist colonial state. Other pieces of land such as the Muhoroni, Chemilil, and Songhor regions, were further alienated for Asians and this region would later form the Nyanza sugar belt region (see, Shillaro, 2000: 123). Such alienation of land for Asians for the purposes of agricultural production never happened in Western Kenya.

Figure 7: Map Showing Areas of Asian Settlement in Chemelil, Muhoroni and Songhor in Nyanza Province



Source: Kenya Administrative Boundaries: Survey Of Kenya 1998

Settlement of Asians in Western province of Kenya, although partly influenced by the colonial governments desire to extend its capitalism to the interior parts of Kenya, it was also seen as an own initiative of the Asian who opened up a number of trading centers there. This was accelerated by the fact that these Asians could not get title deeds. Since they lacked land tenure, they built makeshift structures within the trading centers which laid the foundation of their housing and settlement in Western province. This was a major contrast with their formalized settlement in Nyanza province.

Conclusion

An effort has been made to discuss the migration and settlement of Asians within Nyanza and Western Kenya regions. The total number of Asians who came into Kenya were 32000 with

about 6700 remaining at the end of the construction of the Kenya-Uganda railway. It has been demonstrated that the Asian diaspora was transnationally engaged and dispersed group maintaining links with a real or perceived homeland (see Turner & Kleist, 2013:194). It is further demonstrated that Indian settlement in Kenya generally and in Western and Nyanza provinces was a colonial venture to entrench colonial administration and capitalism into the interior parts of Nyanza and Western provinces. This was achieved, first by the construction of the Kenya- Uganda railway, which was completed in 1901. In Nyanza province, Asian settlement followed a pattern of a settlement scheme, which was sanctioned by the colonial government which saw the establishment of the first authorized and formal Asian settlement scheme in Kibos and later on in the Nyando valley. In essence, land was alienated in places like Kibos, Muhoroni, Chemelil and Songhor to settle the Asians as agriculturist. This was in sharp contrast to the Asian settlement in Western Kenya where Indians settled as commercial traders along the railway line and also in the trading centers which emerged. Although Asian settlement in Nyanza was to serve two conflicting and ambivalent purposes, their settlement in Western province was basically to open up the region to commercial activities and European administration. Demographically, the population of Asians (1,977) in Nyanza was more compared to their population in Western Kenya (265) this explains why a settlement scheme was vital in Nyanza as compared to Western province. In the next chapter, the early forms of Afro-Asian economic and social engagements in Western and Nyanza provinces of Kenya is examined and a comparison between the regions undertaken.

CHAPTER THREE

THE AFRO-ASIAN SOCIO-ECONOMIC RELATIONS IN WESTERN AND NYANZA PROVINCES OF KENYA 1900-1918

Abstract

In the last chapter, the trajectories of Indian immigration and settlement in Nyanza and Western parts of Kenya were mapped out. It was observed that the settlement patterns differed in that in Nyanza, the settlement was spearheaded by the colonial government with the official settlement of Indian agriculturist at Kibos while in Western province, the settlement of Indians was along the railway line and in some small trading centers.

In this chapter, the emergence of Afro-Asian economic and social interactions within the various towns and trading centers of the Central and North *Kavirondo* from 1900 up to 1918 are examined. It is demonstrated in this chapter that until this time, there was no western province. All the areas within the current Western province were referred to as North Kavirondo within the wider Nyanza Province. This demonstrates that being in the same administrative zone, a number of economic issues were similar in regard to trade and agriculture. It is concluded that although Asian presence was noted both in Central and North Kavirondo, their economic activities and contribution was highly felt in Central Kavirondo than in North Kavirondo especially after the colonial headquarters was moved from Mumias to Kisumu in 1901, a geopolitical change from Wanga Kingdom to a regional town.

3.1 Foundations of the Afro-Asian Economic Interaction in Nyanza and Western Provinces of Kenya during the Early Colonial Period 1900-1918

The extension of the commercial enterprise of the Asians in the interior, coupled as it was with the growth of their role as skilled and semi-skilled staff, contributed to a steady expansion of the Asians population in East Africa. This increase in population trickled down to the postcolonial spaces of Nyanza and Western provinces of Kenya. The steady increase in their population was as a result of a free flow of immigrants and also through natural means until restrictions were placed on Indian immigration in 1944 (Mangat, 1976:483). With the arrival of the Asians during this time, a plural colonial space with competing interests and cultures had already been established, and the entire region had a collection of African ethnicities, Europeans and the Asians. This condition would later form the basis and space upon which the Afro-Asian economic relations were to be contested and negotiated. As

artisans, the Asians were to help in building the colonial administration structures. They were also useful as traders because their economic activities were important aspects of colonialism (Omenya, 2010). As the British historian, Robert Gregory (1993:11) commented, Indians quickly understood that by replacing the system of barter currency, Africans represented a vast market that was totally neglected by the European settlers. Later, this market was expanded to Europeans, then to Indians themselves. Commerce, qualified handicraft and technical maintenance (in which Indians had remarkable abilities) were therefore the activities on which new arrivals concentrated. The Asian *dukawalla* provided the outlet for the products of the rural peasants; in return, he gave them the money with which to buy the much-desired items stacked up on his shelves. At first in a system of exchanging goods for goods (barter trade), prices and quantities were bargained. The practice of bargaining continued after the introduction of a money exchange, where prices and quantities varied in each transaction. Sometimes the African was pleased with the bargain, but most of the times he complained that he was underpaid for his products or overcharged for what he bought (Melady & Melady, 1976:68).

Joining the march into the interior parts of the territory (such as Kendu bay, Kakamega and Luanda) were not only Indians who had been associated with the railway, and civil servants crossing over into private enterprise after completing their contracts, but also new immigrant traders (not associated with the colonial government but coming on their individual capacities) from India (Himbara, 1994:38). These new immigrants established themselves in almost every inland township. By the time Commissioner Sir Charles Eliot's administration opted for white settlement, the leading role of the Indian community in almost all key commercial activities was firmly established. From import and export trade and banking to the general provision of local produce, and from construction and transport to the manufacturing sector, Indians were entrenched. The capacity already achieved by them is demonstrated by the legacy of such pioneers as Allidina Visram. The following official description of Visrams' enterprises indicates the commanding position at least one member of the Indian community had already attained

A firm which employs more than 500 Indian clerks, besides carpenters, masons, and natives in great numbers deserves more than a passing mention...Allidina Visram first opened his business at Bagamoyo in 1877 and later on started branches at Sadani, Dar-es-salaam, Kalima, Tinde and Ujiji....At Mombasa is their Visram Ginning and Oil Factory... the firm are agents for Zanzibar

Government's steamers, the British Dominions marine Insurance Co. Ltd....and are proprietors of the Victoria Nyanza Service between Kampala, Jinja and Kisumu (Himbara, 1994:39).

In short, hardly any commercial transaction in imports and local produce was carried out in East Africa without a local Indian agency throughout the colonial period, much as in the period of the commercial island-enclaves at the coast. Almost all goods from overseas still passed through the agency of large Indian firms to Indian retailers in the interior parts of the colony. European domination of politics and agriculture did not alter the strategic position that Indian traders occupied in relation to the internal market. MacGregor-Ross noted that: 'It has been, and still is, the Indian who delivers goods and pushes trade into the interior of Kenya'. Almost twenty years later, the East African Royal Commission came to the same conclusion: 'Indeed the remarkable tenacity and courage of the Indian trader has been mainly responsible for stimulating the wants of the indigenous peoples, even in the remotest areas, by opening to them a shop-window on the world (MacGregor-Ross, 1968: 415-16).

The white settlers, noted Huxley, deplored the fact that all trade with natives had fallen into Indian hands'. The historian Sorrenson concluded that the Indians 'were just as essential as European settlers if the protectorate was to be developed, and the railway was to pay' (Sorrenson: 1968:23). However, Himbara (1994:40) continues to argue that this may be an understatement, for white settlers actually came to depend on Indians for almost all services. As far back as 1907 Winston Churchill later Sir Winston had remarked

It is the Indian trader who, penetrating and maintaining himself in all sorts of places to which no white man could go or in which he could make a living has more than anyone else developed the early beginnings of trade and opened up the first slender means of communication... it is the Indian banker who supplies perhaps the larger part of the capital yet available for business and enterprise and to whom the white settlers have not hesitated to refer for financial aid (As Quoted in Chandaria 1963:33).

Hollingsworth did point out that white settlers came to depend on Indian merchants and financiers (wealthy Indians who gave out money on credit to the White settlers). In effect, 'the entire country had grown up on the Indian trader' he wrote 'without him the whole economy would have collapsed like a burst balloon (Hollingsworth, 1960:52). Similarly, Mangat (1969:96) concurred that Indian merchants planted the first seeds of economic progress.

Afro-Asian economic interaction intensified with the colonial urbanization effort in Kenya. It was during the colonial period that the spatial organization of the central places in Kenya was developed and consolidated both in time and space. With the transfer of Imperial British East Africa Company activities to the Colonial office, some caravan towns were developed as administrative centers where “pacification” and the colonization process could be consolidated. These centers acted as supply and resting points, and as the political as well as the socio-cultural centers for their respective regions. In order to improve communication between the coast and interior parts of the new territory, railways, roads, and other associated infrastructures were built between 1895 and 1902 (Obudho 1983:35). These communication patterns signaled a growth stage in which the ‘development of a penetration line [set] in motion a series of spatial processes and readjustments as the comparative locational advantages of all centers [shifted]. The new communication patterns helped in the growth of new administrative bomas. These colonial bomas were designed primarily to administer or facilitate export of raw materials and the import and sale of manufactured goods [Taafe, 1963:506].

As the Uganda Railways steadily approached Lake Victoria, C.W Hobley, a British administrator (locally nicknamed *Obilo* by the Luos), was ordered to move from Mumias to establish the new headquarters for Nyanza Province. In 1900, he appointed Odera Ulalo, chief of several *Luo pinje* (multilineal territories) including Asembo, Sakwa, Uyoma, Yimbo, Gem, Seme and Kisumu (Ogot, 2003:6). The appointment of Odera Ulalo as a chief witnessed the introduction of some forms of Western knowledge, which informed the administration of Nyanza province. Together with Hobley, they established a new administrative station, which later developed into present day Kisumu town (Ogot, 2003:6). Kisumu, the terminus of the Uganda Railway on the Kavirondo Gulf-600 miles from the coast thus became the provincial headquarters of the Nyanza Province and the administrative center of the Districts of Central Kavirondo and Kisumu-Londiani (Wagner, 1970:7/8).

Among the people selected by Odera Ulalo to assist him in general administration were two personalities from Alara namely Odera Akang’o and Mudhune Agina. Change was coming over the face of Nyanza region, especially the area between Kisumu and Uganda. Tremendous impetus was given to trade and there was an influx of all shapes and forms of people due to better communications, the electric telegraph, the steamer service and Uganda Railways itself. The roads were full of traffic-Ox-carts and men bearing on the head huge

burdens of hides and skins, chilies, plates, cups, saucers, watches, clocks, shirts, jackets and *Kanzus*. A money economy had arrived with business conducted using Indian rupee as a medium of exchange (Ogot, 2003:6), which replaced the African barter system, a symbol of how capitalism as a western form of knowledge slowly crept into the economic structures of Africans.

A typical Odera Ulalo's *safari* (journey) was an important event involving sometimes as many as one hundred to two hundred people; soldiers, porters and deputies such as Mudhune Agina and Odera Akang'o. At the end of it, they normally went to "Dagamoyo²⁴" as indicated earlier, the present Kibos near Kisumu where Indian traders had established a market center. The porters, soldiers and leaders who had been on *safari* were paid in kind with goods provided by these Indian traders. These goods included different types of cloth, for instance *calico* from India and others (known then as *Japan*, because they were imported from Japan and later they provided *Amerikani* cloth imported from America via zanzibar), ready-made clothes, beads and soap (Ogot 2003:7).

The presence of Asian traders was also felt in Vihiga in Western region. Vihiga area of Kakamega District was relatively close to Kisumu, the terminus of the Uganda Railway from 1901 and the major center from which colonial capitalism penetrated western Kenya. Men from Vihiga were drawn to work in railway construction as the line reached Kisumu. That Vihiga quickly came to form a part of Kisumu's economic sphere as illustrated by the fact that until 1920, the region was administered from Kisumu (rather than Mumias) as part of the Central Kavirondo. Here, as elsewhere, productive forms were restructured as a result of a variety of initiatives and influences. Asian traders took residence in Kisumu in increasing numbers after 1901. Vihiga was one of the first areas to attract itinerant Indian merchants as they purchased livestock from Africans at first and later sorghum. With encouragement and protection from colonial state, Asian traders took up residence at trading centers in Vihiga. The largest and most significant of these was Luanda in Bunyore in Western province of Kenya, a site of a pre-colonial market. Indian traders were also encouraged to accompany administrators on tax-collecting *safaris* so as to push an export trade in grains (Maxon, 2003:36). Viewed from a postcolonial perspective, this move by the colonial government

²⁴ Dagamoyo was a trade centre where Asian traders not only exchanged goods with Africans but also rested after making several journeys involving collection and exchange of goods

marked and characterized the penetration of capitalist market forces into areas such as Vihiga, Luanda, Kisumu and Kakamega.

As early as 1902, Jamal Hasham,²⁵ whose portrait is captured in figure 8 was an Asian trader stationed in Kisumu who dealt in *Amerikani* (American) cotton, importing his own brand-on which at every yard, his picture was printed. His relationship with the local people in Kisumu was so good and he was well-known for his fair dealing that he acquired the nickname '*Bwana mzuri*' (Good man) (Salvadori, 1996:149). This means that in this hybrid arrangement and plural space not everything was conflictual given that both Africans and Asians had internalized certain things from each other. Hence postcolony was not just about conflicts. According to Atieno Odhiambo (1981) it was as the trader that the Indian presence was to have its initial and even long term impact among the interior Africans. The Indian known by most African was the *dukawalla*, or the shopkeeper in the bush. But the shopkeeper was only an appendage of the Indians in the three main centers: Nairobi, Kisumu and Mombasa. The Western building materials such as the popular *mabati* (corrugated iron sheet), which the Asians sold to the Africans, would gradually replace the thatch for roofing mud walled African homes. The popular highly coloured cotton textiles known as *kitenge* and *kanga* (fabrics), originally imported from Holland, and noted for their appealing Indonesian influential prints became a popular wear for the great majority of African women. The importation and distribution of the fabrics were also to be the work of Asian traders (Seidenberg, 1996:47; see also Omenya, 2010).

²⁵ Jamal Hasham: Was one of the pioneer traders and residents in Kisumu. He initially worked as an agent for Allidina Vishhram selling merchandise in Kisumu and its environs (see Omenya, G. 2010. The Relations Between Asians and African Communities of Kenya's Nyanza Province, M.A Thesis, Kenyatta University)

Figure 8: A Portrait of Hasham Jamal



Source: www.ismaili.net

At first, Africans were suspicious of exotic ware, but they soon found that the clothes and blankets were warmer and less cumbersome than their traditional wares. Besides clothes and blankets, other merchandise like oil, salt, sugar, tea, basins, lamps among others were introduced to the people of Nyanza for the first time. The Asians also bought certain amounts of skins, cattle, cotton, sisal and all these products were sold to Asians by Africans who in turn distributed them in the country (Ochieng': 1974:86). What the Asian merchants brought changed the consuming habits of the local inhabitants forever. Their dressing habits began to change as they moved from the wearing of hides and skins to a Dutch-manufactured *kanga* with deep Indonesian influence. Initially, the Nyanza people's reception of these foreign cultures and forms of knowledge seemed ambivalent but later, they embraced them. Nevertheless, in Bhabha's (1994) argument, cultural production is most productive when it is also most ambivalent, and indeed, the Africans fully embraced exotic wares brought by the Asians at the expense of their traditional wares. Postcolonial thinking is thus not to go back to the past and discard everything European or Asian but to dismantle those values and

institutions that perpetuate our marginalization. Indeed some values and institutions were positive.

Those Asians in the rural settler areas also set up general stores with two types of merchandise, one for local settlers and the other for African laborers. As in the urban areas, goods were sold for rupees to both peoples but some of the rural Asians became involved in the marketing of settler agricultural products. In the African areas, the items and form of trade were considerably different (Gregory, 1993:48). The general stores was universal, and it was stocked mainly with blankets and *merekani* cloth; beads and bangles, pots, pans, and other cooking utensils, wire, rope and twine; hoes and pangas (two foot heavy knives used mainly as agricultural tools); umbrellas, looking glasses, cooking oil, sweets, salt, pepper, and other spices. With the growth of African demand for more western goods, items such as bicycles, paraffin (kerosene) lamp and cooking stoves, corrugated iron sheets, hammers, saws, nails, shoes and readymade clothing were added. The typical rural shopkeeper soon acquired a sewing machine to cater to the local demand. He exchanged both goods and services for ivory, rhinoceros horn, wild rubber, hides and skins, and the surplus of subsistence maize, dried lentils and sesame seed that could endure the long haul to town. If distance and transportation permitted, the trader would also market more perishable produce, such as cotton, tobacco, wattle bark, sesame wheat and where permitted, coffee were added to the traditional produce (Gregory, 1993:48).

By the end of 1902 the British government was still committed to the policy of non-African settlement in Kenya; a move that increased the process of unbalanced urbanization in the country. The Asians also played a role in the urban development by carrying out commerce. Their contribution was attributed to the fact that

As willing purchasers of [African] products, they created and continuously widened those markets upon which development was fundamentally dependent. As sellers of trade goods, they both satisfied existing needs and created new incentives for further production and their transaction injected a stream of cash crops into the economy (Obudho, 1983:36).

The majority of the Asians operated the *dukas* (shops) which played a strong part in modernization at the local level. According to Charles Good,

Dukas are most numerous places for regular trade.... [There are] hundreds of these small rectangular pole-frame structures with mud

and plaster walls supporting a corrugated iron roof.... The typical duka deals mainly in very small quantities of basic provision such as sugar, paraffin, salt, matches and soap. Most carry a variety of sundries ranging from soft drinks, biscuits, aluminium and enamelware and cigarettes to patient medicine, tinned milk, tea and plastic jewelry. The more prosperous shopkeepers may add any foodstuff, textiles and clothing to their general lines of trade, so that their shop becomes a general store in addition to a center for meeting friends and dissemination news. Many shops will employ a tailor to operate a sewing machine on the premises, so that a customer who purchases shirt, pair of shorts or a dress made to order (as quoted in Obudho, 1983:36).

Okwanda²⁶ (O.I 2013) affirms that his parents bought for them school uniforms from the Indian tailors in Lunyerere market within Kakamega district. These Indians would take the measurements and sew a uniform depending on the age and body size of the Africans (Munawar, O.I 2013). By 1903, the Asians were generally concentrated in doing business in their *Dukas*, which functioned as retail stores, depots and living quarters. The postcolonial subjects therefore, had to learn to bargain in this market place. The Asian traders brought exotic goods into the indigenous market. These were bicycles, blankets and clothes, which they sold from their shops in Ndere, Luanda, Mumias, Butere, Kadimo, and Yala to the Africans (Ochieng 1974:86).

With this kind of trade, the traditional barter system was gradually replaced by the money economy in which the Indian rupee was the medium of exchange. In this Afro-Asian interaction, rupee acquired a new local name. The term rupee linguistically became known locally as *rupia*. *Rupia* was neither an Indian nor an African term but a hybrid of both. However, when mentioned, it referred to the same thing for both the Asian and the Africans who were engaged in trade. Later, *rupia* applied to every form of money including the British shillings (Omenya, 2010). In Western Kenya, it was referred to as *irupia* (singular) and *tsirupia* (plural).²⁷

Thus, the Africans in Nyanza began to grow surplus food like sweet potatoes, bananas and vegetables, which they sold to the Asians in order to meet their taxes. The administration

²⁶ This information is confirmed by Okwanda, J. an oral informant residing in Lunyerere market in Kakamega. Okwanda witnessed the emergence of Indian shops in Lunyerere, a trading center near Kakamega. He would later become a trade unionist who championed for the rights of the workers.

²⁷ Anangwe, O.I 2014 was born in Mumias in Western region of Kenya. He is a freelance researcher. He speaks Luyia dialect

encouraged peasant production in Nyanza simply to generate cash income for Africans from which they could pay their taxes ²⁸(Zezeza, 1989: 46). Grains, beans and eggs would be sold to Asian traders in exchange for imported manufactures (Ndege 1992:210). With this kind of trade going on, roads were built to connect Port Florence (Kisumu), Port Victoria, Kendu Bay, Karungu, Mumias and Homa Bay (Omenya, 2010:80).

Through this Afro-Asian interaction, African trading skills were improved. This is because both Asians and Africans got involved in trade activities, which initially were not African or Asian. For instance, the Asians ventured in trading in dry fish, which was exclusively African. On the other hand, some Asians gave Africans exotic wares such as blankets or clothes to sell on their behalf to fellow Africans sometimes-on credit. The nature of relationship was, therefore, not primarily that of resistance or of collaboration but could best be characterized as convivial, a relationship fraught by the fact that the colonial subjects, Asians and Africans had to share the same living space (Mbembe, 2001:104). The trade was however unequal since some of these wares were sometimes sold to Africans expensively. The Asians also engaged themselves in fishing using dhows. On these dhows, they employed the local Africans mostly the Luo²⁹. Before the Indian *Badalas* (workers of the railway steamers) came, the Africans had small boats. It was the Indian *Badalas* who taught them how to make and sail dhows (Salvadori, 1996:151). This interaction led to a mutually beneficial relationship between the Asians and Africans.

It is important to note that during 1903, there was neither mechanical (car) transport nor road systems but in spite of this, Indian traders were engaged in trading in even the remotest parts of Nyanza Province especially in Ndere, Luanda, Mumia, Butere, Webuye and Kendu Bay. African porters and Indian traders travelling on hammocks or on mule backs transported the goods. Later on, they (Asians) introduced ox-cart transport between Kisumu and Yala (Opondo, 1989:43). The Asians also used dhows to sail to lake ports where they had businesses in such areas as Asembo, Homa Bay, or Kendu Bay and Kisumu. One of the other major roads was the one from Yala to the border with Mumias. It soon became a major trade

²⁸ Opondo, O.I, 2013, Kabong, O.I., 2006, Kabong and Opondo James, are old men living around Yala trading centers. Opondo is a tailor while Kabong is a cobbler

²⁹ Farjala, O.I 2012, is a fisherman living in Kendu bay he has a wealth of knowledge on the settlement of Asian in Kendu Bay. His accounts affirm the fact that Nasoor, one of the first Asians in Kendu bay docked at Miti Mbili. It is from this Asian name (Nassor) that Kendu bay is sometimes referred to as Kanyasooro (A place of Nasoor)- A corruption of the name Nasoor by the Luo of Nyanza province.

route that was used by Indian traders to transport their wares such as blankets, hides and skin from Uganda in Ox drawn carts. The Indian traders only abandoned the use of these ox-carts when the Kisumu-Yala Butere railway branch was opened later on in November 1930 (Ogot, 2003:8). In these expeditions they encountered Africans and this helped in improving their relationship and confidence building among their African customers.

Figure 9: Showing A Dhow Used As A Mode of Transportation In Lake Victoria



Source: [www.hat.net/album East Africa, Lake Victoria](http://www.hat.net/album%20East%20Africa,%20Lake%20Victoria)

Figure 10: A Picture Of An Ox Drawn Cart



Source: [www. Old Indian photos](http://www.OldIndianphotos)

3.2 Trade, Urbanization, Food Shortage and the Mediation of Asians

In 1906, the Acting Nyanza Provincial Commissioner (PC) H.B. Partington reported that there was scarcity of food due to failure of the November rains.³⁰ By the time Partington was writing his annual report, the whole of the immediate Lakeland was already in the grip of a terrible famine known locally as *Nyangori*. Africans travelled extensively from Kisumu District to Mumias to purchase food. The Nyanza Indian traders took advantage of the famine and bought all the food they could lay their hands on and sold it expensively to the Africans living in Kisumu and other parts of Nyanza (Cokumu, 2000:85). Most of the food was sourced from Africans in North Kavirondo. There were also other African traders who bought soap and salt from Indians and sold these items to the people at local market places like Yala, Lwanda (Kamang'ongo) Kamito and Siaya (Ndeda, 1991:129).

With the food shortage persisting into 1907, Africans found it necessary to sell their cattle to Indian traders in order to raise money to pay tax. In most cases, Africans in Kakamega area sold a lot of their livestock to Asians in order to meet their tax obligation (Maxon, 2003: 36). This economic interaction was characterized by unequal exchange of goods between Asians and Africans because Asians bought cattle from Africans cheaply³¹. This is how the socio-economic spaces of Nyanza and Western Provinces were initially conceived. Some people benefited by exploiting others. Indeed that is why the theoretical basis of post-colonialism is to disaggregate this exploitation not only on the cultural terrain but also on the political and economic fronts.

At the end of the famine experiences, shops were opened in various parts of Nyanza and Western Provinces. In South Kavirondo (formerly Ugaya District), towards the end of 1908 and early 1909 a number of urban centers were established as more non indigenous settlers migrated to the district carrying out petty trade with the local inhabitants. The remainder of 1909 saw rapid urban development due to a newly adopted policy, which empowered the Provincial Commissioner (PC) to establish trading centers and urban centers at suitable points to foster trade. While the ivory trade was closed at Mumias urban center by 1907, a flourishing periodic market was gazetted; the first of its kind in that area. Anangwe (O.I, 2014) states that the traditional name for Mumias is 'Elureko'- Elureko is derived from the verb '*reka*' which means to set up a trap. The locals called the place *elureko* because it was a place where one

³⁰ KNA,PC/NZA/AR 1906-7

³¹ KNA, PC/NZA/1/3 1907/8

sets a trap by way of availing something for sale (a place for trapping buyers). Perhaps the first step towards the creation of African markets came with the establishment of Asian trading centers throughout the province between 1903 and 1909. These included Mumias, Yala, Mrama, Malakisi and Kakamega. By 1903, there were 65 Indian traders in Mumias and carried out trade in a variety of goods including, for instance 3000lb (1360 kilograms) of ivory from Bukusuland, and Mbale in Vihiga district of Western Kenya (Ogutu, 1979:218). *Dukas* were also opened at Yala, Marama, Malakisi and Kakamega in North Kavirondo (now western Kenya) (Obudho, 2002:198).

The rapid growth and development of markets in the Western Province might be attributed, in the first instance, to the establishment of British rule with its tax requirement; the spread of Indian traders; the introduction of money and the demand for luxury manufactured goods. The idea of markets as a center for exchange of goods was not, however, new to the African scene. Studying the traditional systems of exchange among the Maragoli in Western Kenya, Wagner (1970) postulates that individual Africans, on their own initiative and enterprise organized 'intertribal trade at a time when the British administration of the District had not yet been firmly established'. There were also markets among the Luo of Nyanza Province controlled by the elders who extracted dues; this traditional system of exchange, as Wagner calls it, was based on barter (Ogutu, 1979:216).

The high agricultural productive capacity of Western region was first predicted by Sir Gerald Portal, while on his mission to Uganda to investigate whether or not the British government should retain Uganda, then under the Imperial British East Africa Company. Hence, to complete the Uganda Railway Gerald Portal observed that as 'we advanced further into Kavirondo, every side of our immediate vicinity were fields of Indian corn, millet, beans of all kinds and sweet potatoes'. From this abundance and cheap food supply, he concluded that, 'the people were evidently industrial and skillful agriculturalists' but then 'with peace and rapid transit to the coast' he added 'this area could undoubtedly be converted into a granary capable of supplying vast quantities of every sort of grain at merely nominal rate' (Ogutu, 1979:217).

Against such a backdrop of an intricate indigenous economic structure, it was least surprising that western Kenya earned the reputation of being an area characterized by food abundance. The consequent vibrancy of the indigenous economy and the intensity of cultivation in western Kenya did not fail to attract the attention of late nineteenth and early twentieth

century European travelers, administrators and adventurers who traversed the region. Writing in 1902, for instance, administrator C.W. Hobley identified the plants cultivated by the Bantu Kavirondo as *mtama*, *wimbi*, a little Indian corn, sweet potatoes, beans of various kinds, a little pulse (*pojo* or *chiroko*), semsem, bananas and pumpkins (Makana, 2006: 47). The Indian corn demonstrates some of the Indian cultural values that Africans picked from Indians from their initial contacts.

Even before Portal, F.D Lugard had come to the same general conclusion about the region: ‘the enormous quantities of flour brought in for sale and the cheap rate at which it was obtained proved that the country produced a very large surplus of food beyond the wants of its population, and being well-watered, and with rich soil, it was capable of producing much more since there were large areas as yet unclaimed. It is apparent that these European pioneers must have bartered for this food from the Wanga. About the same time, a series of Swahili and Arab caravans were converging on Mumias for ivory trade. By 1909, Mumias was a flourishing native market. The conditions in Mumias had changed greatly since 1895, when the Slate Road built for ox-carts reached it from the east in 1896. The imposition of taxes in 1899, the completion of Uganda Railway when it reached Kisumu in 1901 and the construction of a new road to Yala in 1904 all led to changes in the economic conditions (Ogutu, 1979:217).

On the whole, colonial administrators were more concerned that Indian traders, as agents of development, left a great deal to be desired. On numerous occasions traders were criticized for encouraging Africans to barter, rather than to trade for money. The common view was that barter was encouraged by traders because it allowed them to make profits on two transactions instead of one. Colonial administrators were concerned that the continuance of a barter system would delay the spread of money and hinder the economic advancement of Africans, which would occur only when they came into close contact with a money economy. Spencer (1981:331) argues that this appeared to have been a fairly widespread practice in the economically less advanced reserves, even at the end of the period. In Nyanza Province, it had largely died out by 1910. During barter trade the buyer and the seller bargained until they agreed on a price in rupees for the produce, and then bargained again to arrive at a price for the goods the Africans wished to purchase. If there was a balance in favour of the African, he either took the cash or entrusted the balance to the Indian trader, who kept it until tax collection time (Spencer, 1981:331). It is therefore evident that initial spheres of Afro-Asian

interaction revolved around trade where the local African economy was slowly being integrated into the world's capitalist economy by the Asians.

Right from the start of the Asian immigration into Kenya, the colonial administration was determined to keep them from any political engagement and from any respectable income-generating activities. By limiting them to trade in the colonial administration, the Asians were destined to the towns and trading centers where they met Africans in the context of formal interaction as merchant/customer and as junior officers in the colonial administration setup (Finance, 1997:9). Restricted from playing a major role in agriculture, the Asians became concentrated in the towns and trading centers, filling an economic vacuum between the Europeans farmers and administrators and the African masses. It is difficult to measure the importance of the Asian trader-merchant as a modernizing agent, but in many areas of Nyanza and Western Provinces, one of the few contacts the African had with un-African culture was through the Indian *duka* or shop. In Kendu bay, Mumias and Bungoma Asians monopolized retail trade and the pronounced economic gap between the African and European population thus became rapidly filled by the Asians (Soja, 1968: 23). This is the hybrid position that Homi Bhabha (1994) referred to as an in-between and neither this nor that.

Asian involvement in trade, in contrast to African participation, was supported by the colonial state from the word go. They were encouraged to follow British military expeditions into the interior, and permitted to build shops at the military garrisons which later became administrative headquarters and also near the railhead as the railway advanced from Mombasa to Kisumu (Fearn, 1961: 108). And so Africans saw Asians as extensions of Western discourses and narratives about Africa. These narratives so much captured in Western literature and values presented Africans as inferior beings. Thus from the beginning Africans viewed Asians with a lot of suspicion.

Although the colonial government was ambivalent in its dealings with Asians, they were encouraged by the colonial state as a means of stimulating commerce and the monetarization of exchange relations with Africans in the rural areas. Asian traders thus became a major vehicle for the marketing of peasant produce majorly in areas like Bungoma, Vihiga and Kakamega, Kendu bay and Kisumu. Not only were Indians heavily involved in produce buying from Africans but also set themselves up in general retail and wholesale trade as well where they sold certain goods to the Africans. At first, many engaged in itinerant trade, but by

the end of the first decade of the 20th century, most had settled in the country's townships or urban areas (Maxon, 1992:69; Kenyanchui, 1992:112).

With the Township Ordinance of 1903, a myriad of townships and trading centers such as Kendu Bay and Kibos were established all over Western Kenya (Memon 1976:133, Obudho, 1976:13). These towns, therefore, marked the systematic installation of Western modernity and the eventual displacement of African institutions. According to Memon (1976:133), the chief reasons behind the establishment of these towns were: to be centers of colonial authority and rule, from which the colonial administrators could bring under effective control the surrounding people. The establishment and growth of trading centers in Kenya was closely tied up with the then prevailing colonial policy for stimulating production of saleable crops in African reserves through development of trade. This, according to Memon, had the twin objectives of integrating the African subsistence economy into the colonial mercantile system and deriving increased government revenue through the institution of the hut tax to support the expanding colonial establishment (Omenya 2010: 77).

Mumias Township was gazetted on 30th October 1909, with the total population of Indian traders standing at 23, the number of Asiatic shops in Mumias then were 14³². Malakisi was gazetted from October 21st 1910 with only 2 British Indian traders³³, while Kakamega Township was gazetted on the 27th September 1920 with the population of Goan and Indian traders standing at 10. The major source of wealth of these Asian traders was found in the sale of African produce for tax money. Major crops grown there were groundnuts, simsim, maize, and cotton. But with improved agricultural production, the introduction of money and the creation of transport facilities, the need for public markets nearer home became necessary (Ogutu, 1979:218).

The establishment and the growth of markets and trading centers in Kenya in general and Western province in particular was, therefore, closely related to the development of African agriculture. The colonial policy for stimulating the economic development of Africans was designed to increase the agricultural production. The more crops the peasants produced, the more trade it would stimulate, and, therefore, the more taxable income as well as the increase in export-import trade. The most significant market in the province started with that of Mumias, this market was owned by Mumia himself. Mumia brothers took his example and

³²KNA, DC/NN/1/4

³³ KNA, DC/NN/1/5, KNA, DC/NN/1/4

created other markets in adjacent locations where they served as British agents; Mulama started one at Butere, Murunga at Kabula, Osundwa at Koyonzo, Ogalo at Ogalo's and so on. These chiefs therefore started some of the first markets. They collected *hongo* (tax) first in kind and later on both in kind and cash (Ogutu, 1979:218).

As early as 1919, the population of Asiatics in North Kavirondo District was 265 against the Africans who were 576,800 people³⁴. Overall, the estimated population of Indians in Nyanza (North and South Kavirondo) was 1,875 against the total number of natives at 1,073, 947 accounting for about 0.1 % of Asians (Colonial Annual Report 1918). The analysis here is that when the population of the immigrants is small there is high level of interaction. But when the population of the immigrant is big there is a tendency of keeping to themselves. This isolationist tendency was a source of resentment and conflict between the Asians and Africans.

The significant features of the cash economy during this period were the Asian commercial initiatives and the limited consumer needs of the Africans. In Central Kavirondo too, the government allowed the chiefs to open up their own markets. Here, they became middlemen for the Asian traders. In this process, the chiefs also secured positions in the trading line for their own kinsmen as hoteliers and hawkers. This position and cooperation by the chiefs such as Odindo in Asembo, Muganda in Ugenya, Amoth in Alego, and Odera Akang'o in Gem Yala facilitated Asian entry into Nyanza (Atieno-Odhiambo, 1976:226). The chiefs were therefore used by the colonial government to consolidate their control over Africans as well as negotiating with the Asian traders for their economic wellbeing.

However, the rapid multiplication of trading centers and the African periodic markets was not received well by Indian traders as it meant competition, which consequently shortened their area of influence and therefore reduced the frequency and capacity of Afro-Asian economic relations (Obudho 1976:13). The competitiveness of many trading centers was indicated by the traders' practice of inducing Africans to trade with them by offering gifts of magadi, salt or sugar to those who entered their shop (Spencer, 1981:330). Baraza³⁵ of Luanda trading center says that 'we were used to these *bakshishi* (gifts/presents from Indian shops) and could not go to any other shop apart from the one where you expected to get something extra on top

³⁴ KNA, DC/NN/1/3

³⁵ Baraza, O.I 2012, is a resident of Luanda and a former teacher at Ebusakami Secondary school in Luanda

of what you bought. Something like sugar, if given free of charge, would save you some money that you could use to buy cooking oil'. Mishra³⁶ affirms this by saying that 'you had to create and maintain your own customers.' Generally, the development of African markets on large scale in Nyanza and Western provinces affected the business of the Asian traders in the Trading centers. This was more evident in Yala trading center in Nyanza region where Africans ate into the Asian markets by trading in various merchandise as well as crop products.³⁷

The colonial administration's attempt to encourage the growth of 'economic' crops by Africans would begin haphazardly in a particular area, almost from the moment the infrastructure of an administration was set up there. Initially almost everything was tried, including industrial crops such as sesame, improved varieties of food crops such as maize, beans and peas and crops with both industrial and domestic uses such as groundnuts and wattle. The initial motivation for the introduction of new crops was simply to generate a cash income for the African from which he might pay his tax (Kitching, 1980:25). Fearn (1961:79) observes that there was a marked expansion in the production of maize, beans and sesame just before and during the First World War. The initial expansion of the cultivated area in the period 1909 to 1918 in Nyanza owed something to improvements in the cultivating technology available. Thus Hay (1971:149) notes that while a wooden form of hoe was still in use in Kowe in 1900, by the early 1900s', a hoe with an iron blade (called *Nyartle* or *kasiri*) had been introduced and by 1918 somewhat stronger iron-bladed hoes (known as *opanga*) were obtainable from Indian traders. For instance, '30,000 English hoes were sold in Kisumu (Kitching, 1980:28). Africans in Western Kenya also bought these hoes from an Indian ironsmith who made them in Kisumu and was supported by young African boys who also learnt the job through apprenticeship.

It was not only thrift but industry and a shrewd business practice that determined the Asian's success. The typical shopkeeper rose before dawn to perform his ablutions and prayers, sweep the floors and lay out his wares for the shop's opening at 7:00A.M. For seven days a week he remained at his business until dusk and often 9:00 PM or 10:00 PM. Even after closing, during the middle of the night, the shopkeeper would answer a knock on his door to sell an item to someone in need. As a matter of principle, the customer's needs always received

³⁶ Mishra Ramji (O.I, 2013) An Old Indian whose parents were from Gujerat. He is a wholesale dealer in foodstuff at the Lwanda trading center

³⁷ KNA/AE/22/467

priority, and a sale was all-important. Omondi³⁸ of Kisumu states that when a requested item was not in stock, a shopkeeper would delay his customer in conversation or by serving tea until an employee could run next door to purchase the item from a business rival. Whether the item had to be sold at cost or occasionally even below cost was not so important as retaining a satisfied customer (Gregory, 1993:49). However, none of the African and Asian communities was independent of the other as both went beyond racial issues to engage in trade together. The consequent growth of the Nyanza economy sustained the colonial government's activities in the province.

The Asian prices of goods were not controlled and in spite of this, they were protected by the British government³⁹. The post-colony was, therefore, commercially chaotic and it was hard to fix acceptable prices. In Lord Cranworth's words, the Indians were draining the resources of the country and there was hardly a crime among Africans, which was not directly traceable to the Indians. He included economic exploitation and cheating among those evils committed by the Asian community (Finance 1997:14). As early as 1914, cases of Asian exploitation and cheating had already emerged.

The Asians' success in retailing resulted eventually in a network of commerce developed through successive stages of expansion. A new arrival in East Africa, often a youth with little education, few skills, no business background, and more often in debt than having savings, would begin work as a menial employee in the store of some distant relative or acquaintance in a principal African town. After a few years, having learned the rudiments of the business and acquired a spoken knowledge of English or Swahili, he would be sent by his employer to open a similar shop in another urban center or some rural area. Odanga⁴⁰ corroborates this by stating that 'these Indians in Bungoma just started with small shops here and now they are operating wholesales, hardwares and supermarkets. I don't know what Africans were doing when they were establishing these businesses'. The more enterprising young Asian would leave to start a new venture of his own, and he would purchase his merchandise wholesale either from the firm he left or directly from the importers who had supplied it. As his business

³⁸Omondi (O.I 2013) Omondi is a retired employee of the Ministry of Public Works and stays in Kondele area of Kisumu. Before Joining the Ministry of Public Works he served as a shop attendant in one of the Indian shops in Kisumu

³⁹ Ochoko, (O.I., 2006) Ochoko is a retired teacher and lives in Kendu Bay, Nyanza region Kanyasooro where a number of Asians carried out business both retail and wholesale

⁴⁰ Odanga (O.I, 2012) Odanga is a taxi operator in Bungoma town. He comes from Kanduyi within Bungoma District of Western Kenya region

expanded, he would send for relatives and friends in India to assist in the establishment of subsidiary stores over a large area. Many eventually took the additional step of bypassing wholesalers and exporters by setting up their own importing, marketing and exporting facilities. As the expansion proceeded, usually as family enterprises or as partnerships of families within a single religious community, the Asians tried to retain friendly relations with their associates. Their enterprise was based on mutual service (Gregory, 1993:49).

The traders were therefore instrumental in introducing manufactured commodities, mainly imports from overseas. To Africans in both urban and rural areas of Kisumu, Kakamega and Mumias, and through purchase and sale of, chiefly through export, of African surplus foods, they stimulated the development of African cash crops. In encouraging cash crops, the traders provided the Africans a viable alternative to contract labor in obtaining money for payment of taxes. It is evident, however, that the Asians contributed in additional ways. By distributing food through the provinces, they alleviated the periodic famines but also used the famine situation to accumulate money for themselves. By providing many of the commodities needed by European settlers and their African workers, they supported the development of estate agriculture. They formed a network of trading associations from the retail shops of Africa to the importing and exporting organizations, and they built most of the structures, from *dukas* to processing factories and warehouses, that were vital to commerce. They were the mainstay of all the urban, townships and trading areas. It is obvious, too, that through employment of Africans in their commercial transactions, they contributed significantly to the rise of African businessmen (Gregory 1993:87, Kitching, 1980).

In North Kavirondo District, the only existing urban center was Mumias, which had a small government administrative office, an Indian bazaar and several African locations in the peri-urban area. Mostly Nubians, Indians and Swahili traders populated the urban and trading centers. They lived precariously by itinerant trading in livestock skin and by acting as agents to business firms in other urban centers of East Africa. The presence of Indians and Goans in an urban and trading center therefore, indicated the beginning of the urbanization process in the region (Obudho, 2002: 200).

3.3 Asians During the World War I Period

The outbreak of World War I in 1914 upset and restricted Afro-Asian trade. But trade recovered the following year. During the World War 1, there were new demands for African

produce and prices went up. As the trading sector became more attractive, more women income seekers moved into trade. Many of the new traders were women whose husbands were recruited into war, forcing them to assume the roles of family heads (Ngesa, 1996:45). This role would later put more women in direct contact and interaction with the Asians in all the areas of Kisumu, Kakamega, Bungoma, Kendu bay and Mumias. Business in produce was strong in response to military demands, and prices also rose sharply during the war by as much as 100 percent (Zezeza, 1989:57). Over 200 Indian artisans and other Asians left Kisumu town for war service. During this time, the Asians increased prices of the commodities they sold to the Africans and made handsome profits⁴¹. The issue of labor requirements during the war which made Africans to fight alongside the British in the World War 1 also remodeled Afro-Asian relations while on the other hand, some Asian businesses were also temporarily closed. This made the frequency of interaction between the Asians who remained in Kisumu, Bungoma, Kakamega and other parts of Western and Nyanza Provinces to be less⁴².

Spencer (1981:329) observes that the rapid rise in prices of imported goods during World War One, the rise and then sudden fall of prices for African produce in the two years immediately following the war and the annual variations in grain prices, depending on the nature of the weather across the grain producing areas of the country, could not be easily understood by most African cultivators, who could have had little or no conception of operation of the forces of supply and demand in a national or an international market. These considerations, however, do not exonerate Indians from blame. Indeed, it would be surprising if the Indians had not taken advantage of their situation. They were dealing with commercially inexperienced Africans in conditions, which there was little effective regulation or inspection of their activities. Spencer further argues that it would have been harsh to expect of Indian traders in the reserves the same level of conduct attained by merchants in an industrialized western society dealing with consumers safeguarded by extensive legislation enforced and supervised by bodies of official inspectors.

World War One notwithstanding, other development that would spur Afro-Asian relations continued unabated. In his annual report for 1917, the District Commissioner for North Kavirondo observed, for instance, that Malakisi had a total of nine shops with an Indian

⁴¹ KNA, PC/NZA/1/2 Annual report 1917

⁴² Ogada, Peter O.I 2006: Ogada is a trader at Kibuye market in Kisumu and lives in Shaurimoyo Estate a middle class estate neighbouring Kibuye area where a few Indians stay

population of twenty-three⁴³. Although Indian population against Africans was minimal especially in North Kavirondo, Africans felt the impact of their trade in the merchandise that they were selling to them. Wandera⁴⁴ observes that Africans were able to get bicycle tyres and spare parts from the Indian traders in Malakisi. Bicycle was one of the main modes of transportation during these early colonial periods for Africans and therefore it revolutionized transportation within the African villages. Broderick Falls (Webuye) would on the other hand develop as a major maize bulking depot in the wake of more sustained efforts by the colonial state to stimulate commodity production later on in the 1930s⁴⁵. In this formative period, in the process of extending the market, Indian traders relied heavily on African itinerant traders for the collection and bulking up of produce prior to its delivery at centrally located Indian shops. Evidently, the relationship that existed between Asians and Africans during these early colonial times was mutually beneficial and was also driven by the sheer need of necessity.

There was a close interconnection between trade and the efforts by the colonial state to promote commodity production in western Kenya. Consequently, the push by colonial authorities for the stocking of English-made hoes and ploughs by traders was meant to achieve the latter objective⁴⁶. The trade returns furnished by Indian traders indicated that households in western Kenya were already responding most favorably to the extension of the market as early as 1917. Notable exports from western Kenya included simsim, cotton, maize, *mtama*, *wimbi*, cattle hides and beans⁴⁷. Furthermore, the intimate affinity between trade and agricultural production was evidenced by the fact that a dismal performance of the agrarian sector directly impacted on trade by occasioning a slump in sales.

The Nyanza districts experienced a post-war pattern of events. Widespread drought in 1918-19 produced a marked increase in prices for the reduced food surplus available. Once again, however, both Kisumu district and in South Kavirondo, the impact of the drought seems to have been sufficiently localized for less-affected areas to have profited. Thus, the District Officer in Kisumu reported that the ‘famine’ of 1918 had been particularly bad in the Luo locations of Nyakatch, Kadimu and Uyoma and that the people of those locations have had to sell a lot of their stock to purchase food in other locations. These ‘other locations’ were in fact

⁴³ KNA, DC/NN/1/1

⁴⁴ Wandera, George (O.I, 2013) Is a Luyia from Busia County in Western region and operates a shop in Malakisi in Western region

⁴⁵ KNA, AK/2/27

⁴⁶ KNA, DC/NN/1/2

⁴⁷ KNA, DC/NN/1/1

the 'Bantu' (or Abaluhya) locations further north, away from the rain shadow area of Lake Victoria⁴⁸ (Maxon 1980: 266).

Besides, the more severe the famine, the wider people looked for food for sustenance and the more they looked for these foodstuff beyond their extended families. It was during these times that the market place system expanded to include a number of famine markets operating only during these periods. These market places in both normal and famine times not only fulfilled the 'economic' function of providing for the needs of the household but also provided a forum for social contacts between normally antagonistic Afro-Asian groups (Shiller, 1982:62). But the famine also increased economic interactions between the Luos of Central Kavirondo and the Luhyas of North Kavirondo districts. There was therefore an elaborate intra-ethnic vis a vis interracial relations within these urban and economic spaces of Nyanza and Western Kenya. However, this brief localized price boom did not last long and by 1920, the post-war depression was being felt. After the war, increasing numbers of Indian traders reduced their engagement in produce buying and concentrated primarily on retail trade. It was during these years that large Indian wholesalers began making their impact felt in the import-export trade (Zezeza, 1989:57).

Agriculture and commerce characterized the Nyanza and Western post-colony, as these were the main economic activities that could ensure the survival of the colonial administration. Towards the end of the World war One, the colonial government enhanced cotton production as a western form of knowledge into the lifestyle of Africans. Cotton production both in Nyanza and Western Provinces would later provide a platform for Afro-Asian interactions in Malakisi, Samia, Kendu Bay, Kisumu and Ndere areas⁴⁹. Earlier on, a ginnery had been opened in Kisumu by the British East African Company. Attempts to introduce the crop in Kano, Seme and Nyakach locations in Central Nyanza did not seem to have been very successful and until 1922 repeated experiments in the introduction of cotton were reported failures. Fearn (1961) attributed this to the low prices offered in these years.

The traders were therefore instrumental in introducing manufactured commodities, mainly imports from overseas. To Africans in both urban and rural areas of Kisumu, Kakamega and

⁴⁸ Kisumu District Annual Report, 1919

⁴⁹ Otiato, (O.I 2012) is a retired police officer whose father was a cotton farmer during the colonial period in Malakisi area of Western region. Malakisi was also a cotton collection center for the Indians

Mumias, and through purchase and sale of, chiefly through export, African surplus foods, they stimulated the development of African cash crops. In encouraging cash crops, the traders provided the Africans a viable alternative to contract labor in obtaining money for payment of taxes. It is evident, however, that the Asians contributed in additional ways. By distributing food through the provinces, they alleviated the periodic famines. By providing many of the commodities needed by European settlers and their African workers, they supported the development of estate agriculture. They formed a network of trading associations from the retail shops of Africa to the importing and exporting organizations, and they built most of the structures, from *dukas* to processing factories and warehouses, that were vital to commerce. They were the mainstay of all the urban, townships and trading areas. It is obvious, too, that through employment of Africans in their commercial transactions, they contributed significantly to the rise of African businessmen (Gregory 1993:87).

In addition to the establishment of markets and development of transportation links with Kisumu, the colonial state adopted other means to encourage commodity production. Taxation was a major way in which this was accomplished. Coercion was also applied as colonial chiefs were 'instructed' to encourage commodity production and the state followed a policy of seed distribution through the chiefs as a way of stimulating production (Maxon, 2003:39). The colonial state also directly intervened in the production process by pushing for the adoption of new cash crops notably cotton, in Bungoma within North Kavirondo District (Makana, 2006:57). Since the early days of colonialism, just like in areas of Kisumu, Kendu Bay and Ndere of Central Nyanza, cotton was perceived as one of the crops whose promotion would enable the colony to be put on a viable economic footing because of existing high demand for cotton from British industry (Fearn, 1961:67). As early as 1905, the Commissioner of the East Africa Protectorate, Sir Donald Stewart, sought the assistance of members of the British Cotton Growing Association (BCGA) to promote the cotton industry along the coast (Reed, 1975:23). This marked the beginning of a lobbying campaign by the president of the BCGA, Joseph Foulkes that saw the association secure a monopoly for planning the cotton industry in the East Africa Protectorate (Reed, 1975:24).

In the lake regions of Kenya and in North Kavirondo, efforts to popularize cotton as a commercial crop were witnessed particularly from 1912 due to the keen interest that John Ainsworth had shown in African agriculture since 1907. It also owed to the efforts of H.H. Holder, a Trinidadian specialist in tropical agriculture who had been assigned duties in the lake

region as an agricultural instructor in 1907 (Seitz, 1978:143; Makana, 2006:58) But during the years 1914 to 1922, cotton cultivation in Nyanza proved to be a fiasco despite relentless efforts by the administration to introduce it (Fearn, 1961:74).

Ainsworth emphasized, and put, the weight of administration behind the production of commodities for export by African households, particularly in the region around Kisumu which also included Vihiga. Among crops targeted by Ainsworth were simsim (sesame), linseed, maize and cotton. By the start of the World War, this policy had borne fruit to the extent that Nyanza was the leading producer of exports for the East African Protectorate. A peak was reached for export quantity during the War years with the export nearly, 24,380 tons of produce out of Nyanza in 1916-17 (Maxon, 2003:39).

The problems that beset the cotton industry elsewhere in Western Kenya were also largely manifested in Bungoma district. These included the scarcity of trained personnel to provide proper guidance to farmers, low returns per unit of land devoted to cotton, the paternalism of the colonial state, and most significantly, competition from other cash crops, especially maize, sorghum and simsim, which doubled as food crops, thereby rendering them easily adaptable to the daily diets and economic routines of households in Bungoma. Furthermore, cotton growing was pushed in the southwestern areas of Bungoma district that are relatively marginal in potential. As a result of these setbacks, cotton, unlike maize, did not rise to prominence as a cash earner among households in Bungoma (Makana, 2006:58).

3.4 Afro-Asian Social Relations in Western and Nyanza Provinces in the Early Colonial Period to 1918: Some Reflections on the housing and education sectors

Herzig (2006: 126) observes that apart from the social network of one's own community, the interethnic relations are very important factors for migrants to orientate themselves in the new environment. Of course, and therefore, relations deal with the relationship of two (the host society and the migrant group) or the three actors (in case of a colonial society) who have to negotiate how to live together. These negotiations are influenced by several boundaries, which are based on power relations. These boundaries never remain fixed; they are a product of the bargaining process of the involved actors.

To have a fair idea of the Afro-Asian social relations during the early colonial period, it is essential to have a fairly clear perspective of the socio-economic system within which the economy operated during its colonial past, the pressures and pulls to which the Kenyan

people were subjected to, as also some of the variables and stimuli to which the economy was exposed. In short it is necessary to develop insight into the pattern and processes of growth in the historical context. Before the Western colonization, money economy was largely unknown in the interior region. The early Arab and Indian contact whether with the Eastern coastal region or with West African territories through the Saharan routes had made only peripheral impact in this respect (Desai, 1979:45).

In a nutshell, the production system, and in its wake the entire social fabric was structured following broad racial lines in which, the Africans were reduced to an insignificant entity in the territory. On the other hand, the Asians had emerged as a middle class in someone else's territory, while the rules of the game were laid down and dictated by the British colonial masters in collusion with the white settlers. The dictates of colonial administration were enforced not only through force and regulation, but also by emphasizing and exploiting tribal, racial and ethnic differences, in accordance with the well known British imperial policy of 'divide and rule'. In the absence of an opportunity to demonstrate their talent and economic vigor, and condemned to the lowest rung of the economic ladder, the African attitudes and aspiration were molded in the image of the colonial masters. After all, not only the production system was oriented to serve the metropolitan interests, but even the consumption and living patterns were modeled on the western life style for the people with comparable incomes. The economy had developed as a totally dependent character, heavily oriented towards Britain. For its exports, it depended on a few primary commodities for exports, while its demand for consumer requirements and capital goods was met with by imports from imperial order. Thus the racial factor became one of the most important characteristic of the Kenya's socio-economic structure (Desai, 1979:49).

Truly, the Indians of Kenya were culturally heterogeneous, but they tended to share a number of notions about self and others that effectively set them apart from Africans. These notions were embedded in cultural stereotypes, within the Kenya culture and can be invoked whenever deemed necessary and ignored or underplayed if need be. The Indian standard view of the black is, according to stereotypical perceptions, that he is lazy, sexually immoral, disorganized and essentially stupid. The blacks on their part tend to regard the Indians as being too thrifty, sly and cunning, dishonest and boring to the extent that they are unable to enjoy good things in life. Stereotypes of this kind, which do lead to a great deal of tension and uneasiness in interracial encounters, nevertheless served to fix racial relationships in social

space, at least at the level of representations or ideology, and they thereby created a subjective sense of security and stability as regards cultural identity. They also helped to reproduce ethnic boundaries in an environment where spatial boundaries were impossible- where blacks and Indians may live in the same neighborhoods (Eriksen, 1992:6), engage in joking relationships, so containing the underlying tension.

All the Indians; Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Christians have always lived encased in their own caste groups wherever they have gone. The protective walls surrounding them are tall and impregnable in Africa too. The Gujarat Brahmin, for instance did not mix freely even with a Lohana or a patiyadar from Gujarat, let alone try to climb over the walls that surrounded the Luhya, Luo, Wakamba, Maasai, Baganda or Wachaga. They met and interacted with each other only to do business. Their motivations were very limited, their horizons narrow. The Africans did naturally learn the tricks of the trade (often dirty ones too!) from the Indians. The Africans and their leaders realized the great usefulness of the Indian traders to them but were resentful of their aloofness and their inability to mix with them emotionally or intellectually (Gregory, 1993: viii-ix).

Few punjabs (mostly muslim), at least from rural backgrounds had great expectations of establishing close social relationships with the indigenous population, and many felt that those friendly overtures which they did make were rebuffed. They were often not sure whether this was because of misunderstanding or racial hostility. Nevertheless, some friendship were established across the ethnic boundary, especially at work, but these often took the form of elaborate joking relationships, so containing the underlying tension (Ballard and Ballard, 1977:43).

The concentrations of Indians in towns and settlements and in trade and industry had important consequences in their relations with Africans. Most Indians were richer than most Africans and because the Indians lived together in crowded settlements and were a specialized trading group, they were highly conspicuous and a potential source of envy and dislike to the African, who met them mainly as buyers of produce, shopkeepers and givers of credit especially in areas like Luanda, Kisumu and Mumias (Furedi, 1974:349). Afro-Asian relations was manifested both in housing and education sector. In these areas, racial segregation played a center stage whether in Nyanza or Western province.

3.5 Afro-Asian Social Relations in the Education Sector: The Dynamics of Afro-Asian interactions within Households

Education was one of the most important ideological apparatus through which colonial governments maintained their control (Rodney, 1989:264). Colonial education had the double task of incorporating the colonized people into the Western capitalist system and reproducing the emerging capitalist relations of production in each colony. Kinyanjui (1979) avers that at the time the colonial economic system was being imposed, colonial schools were vehicles for the transmission of metropolitan cultural capital, a view which is also supported by Rodney.

For Rodney, colonial education had an economic function in the colonial division of labor. It was a vehicle for implanting and encouraging capitalist individualism, and an instrument of cultural imperialism. ‘Colonial schooling’, he argued, ‘was education for subordination, exploitation, the creation of mental confusion and the development of underdevelopment’ (Rodney, 1989:264, Zeleza, 1989:60).

In Kenya, three parties controlled African education namely, the mission, the government and the settlers. Almost unanimously, the three parties agreed that vocational, industrial, and religious instructions, all forms of Western knowledge, should constitute the African curriculum. Imbued with racial feelings of superiority, most whites considered spiritual, vocational and industrial education as best suited for Africans (Berman 1975a).

At the mission schools in Nyanza, pupils learnt religious knowledge, reading, writing, arithmetic, hygiene, gardening and drill. It should be noted that apart from gardening, more emphasis was placed on literary subjects, which were all taught in Dholuo (Ogot, 2003:22). To be able to meet its obligation of preparing the Africans to fit into European civilization, the Church Missionary Society (CMS) submitted that all education was to be based on spiritual foundations (Odwako, 1973:50). In Western Kenya, The Friends African Mission (FAM) was the first Christian mission to establish a station at Kaimosi, in 1902, among the Tiriki. Indeed, FAM was one of the missionary bodies that followed the railway to the interior; the pioneer FAM Missionaries in Kenya, Willis Hotchkiss, Arthur Chilson and Elisha Blackburn, used the newly constructed railroad and arrived at Kisumu in July 1902 (Amatsimba & Kiai, 2013:1). They were warmly received by the railway officials and C.W. Hobleby the District Commissioner, who assisted the missionaries by planning a tour through North Kavirondo. By 1918, FAM had established stations at Vihiga among the Maragoli, Lirhanda among the Isukha and Idakho, Lugulu among the Bukusu and Tachoni and Malava,

among the Kabras in the Western region (Amatsimbi, 2009:68). It was from these five stations that the FAM missionaries hoped to transform Luhya culture, and make converts for Christ.

However, the pioneer FAM missionaries quickly realized that the entire pattern of African society first had to be altered before Africans would accept Christianity. It was this realization that influenced the pioneer FAM missionaries to think of establishing an industrial mission (a secular non religious effort). The industrial mission, as envisaged by the pioneer FAM missionaries, had two aspects. The first was the recognition that the religious goal of conversion must be accompanied by secular efforts to “improve” African standards of living. In other words, the FAM missionaries believed that a secular policy would complement spiritual work (Amatsimbi & Kiai, 2013:11). Consequently, the FAM missionaries established four secular departments as an enticement to conversion. These departments included education, medical, industrial and agricultural departments. To the FAM missionaries, religious evangelization represented the fundamental method to transform western Kenya. Education, medical services, industrial and agricultural development were only alternative approaches used by the FAM to reinforce evangelization and win converts. It was thought that Christianity would not take root until people learned new methods of education, industrial skills, medical care, trade and agriculture. The presupposition underlying this view was that, if Africans were trained in the above attributes, they would find it easier to accept the gospel, having “experienced the alleviation of some of their major material handicaps” (EAYM, Friends African Industrial Report, 1904:3).

In 1909, (Professor) J.Nelson Frazer, an education adviser to the British East Africa Protectorate produced a report for consideration by the authorities in which he suggested the establishment of three educational systems to cater for the three major racial groups in the country: Europeans, Asians and Africans (Osogo, 1969). Frazer also advised the colonial authorities: “...not (to) put forward plans for literary education for Negroes but to consider the possibilities of developing industries among them” (Osogo, 1969:104). This was reminiscent of what the Friends Church was conceptualizing in Western Kenya.

In the spirit of the Frazer recommendations, Africans were denied literary education because it was considered too superior for the black intellect. Accordingly, the British authorities embarked on aggressive projects to train Africans in basic skills with regard to smelting, carpentry, agriculture, tailoring, and typing (Kisiang’ani 2003:94). Apart from being designed

to prove Blackmans' inferiority, colonial education aimed at training individuals for the service of the colonial society (Nyerere, 1968:268). This recommendation, therefore gave the missionaries a firm grip on the fate of African children whom they taught. It also meant that the Department of Education had to define its relationship with different missionary organizations (Ogutu, 1981:127). This situation therefore affected Afro-Asian interaction and relations within the school system in Nyanza province.

Traditional African education emphasized human relations and behaviour. It also stressed the importance of communal activities. While traditional education taught individuals to be members of a cohesive society, Western education was based on individualism and had little relation to society (Kenyatta, 1968:12). These were forms of knowledge authored and authorized by the West which Africans resisted and formed the basis of African nationalism. Generally, colonial education was used to reshape the post-colony by not only giving inferior instructions to Africans but by dismantling African values and education institutions and replacing them with those authored and authorized by the West. This created a new African person who felt inferior and incapable of participating in progressive endeavours. Segregate education meant that Africans were different from either Asians or Europeans. This psychological arrangement defined the relation between Asians and Africans in all aspects of their interaction.

In this context, Asian schooling improved; the Asians of the Ismailia sect in Kendu Bay started their school at Sanatan, their place of worship within the compound of a mosque known locally as Khoja Ismailia. Next to the Sanatan was the Aga Khan School. Only the Ismaili children and the Punjabi Muslim children schooled there and after standard four, they proceeded to Kisumu to continue with their education. The Ismaili also employed various Gujarati Hindus to teach secular subjects (Salvadori, 1996:173; Omenya, 2010). Emphasis on teaching in Gujarati showed confidence in Indian cultural values, which, the Asians felt were superior to African cultural values. Therefore, their children were to be introduced to these values at a very early stage.

In Ndere, the Asian children were also taught separately from the Africans, near the Ndere old trading center in a small block building, which was later to become the site for Oseno Primary

School (see fig 11 below)⁵⁰. The Indians of Yala also built a school in Yala. This was a one-roomed building all made of corrugated iron sheets. The colonial government encouraged such schools and catered for the teachers' salaries. The Asian school in Yala was known as Yala Government Aided Indian School⁵¹. In these schools, the syllabus was Indian and there was no way the African children could attend such schools and benefit⁵².

Figure 11: A Picture of a class formerly used by Indian Pupils at Ndere, Oseno Komolo Primary School



Source: Picture Taken by Gordon Omenya (author), 2012

In Western Kenya, there was the Butere Indian School to cater for the interest of Indian children with a number of African servants⁵³. Other schools included Indian School Luanda, which was later aided by the colonial government, through the Grant in Aid program. The Indian schools were inspected by the Inspector of Indian Schools. This is evidence of how

⁵⁰ A picture of an improved version of what used to be a class for Indian pupils in Ndere before the Kenya government took over. In 1978 a foundation stone was laid by the provincial director of Education Nyanza to improve/change and expand the building to the rising demand of education in the area

⁵¹ Shah, Preben (O.I, 2006)

⁵² Mzungu, (O.I, 2012) Mboya, (O.I., 2012) both are residents of Ndere but doing business in Siaya Town

⁵³ KNA, DC/KMG/2/13/28

racial segregation defined social boundaries within the Western and Nyanza postcolony⁵⁴. Other schools, for Indians included the Indian school Luanda, Indian school Maragoli, Indian school Broderick falls and Indian school Kakamega. Although these schools were started to serve the education needs of the different Asian community's immediately after the Frazer recommendation of 1909 based on racial differentiation, it was in the 1920s, when the colonial authorities, having eventually recognized the need for the schools, began providing some funding for Indian communities to set up more schools.

The issue of segregation was also more prominent in the urban parts of Nyanza with Kisumu being more affected than Ndere, Luanda, Yala and Kendu Bay as far as socialization was concerned. In Kisumu, as would be seen later, both Asians and Africans attended separate schools. During the first decades of colonialism 1901-1918, Afro-Asian relations in schools were non-existent because of the strong segregation policy, which rendered Afro-Asian interaction and mixing impossible (Omenya, 2010). This segregation could not, however, be entirely blamed on the Europeans but also on the Asian cultural practices which thrived on caste system⁵⁵ where members of a certain caste were superior to the other. Their sects also encouraged each community to run their schools separately. But also the management of African education by the missionaries also ensured that Africans and Asians attended different schools thereby affecting their interactions in schools. Although the population of Asians attending schools was small, which could have ensured effective Afro-Asian interaction and integration; this was not possible due to the racial pattern that education took in the early colonial period since Asians attended purely Asian schools while Africans attended mission schools.

3.6 Afro-Asian Social Relations in the Housing Sector

For many years, except coastal Swahili towns, Africans were regarded as temporary inhabitants of the towns in which they worked as unskilled laborers. They lived in traditional huts either inside or outside the township boundaries, and when urban authorities found it

⁵⁴ KNA, PC/NZA/3/6/40

⁵⁵ Caste system: The caste system is a feature of the Indian society, which ranks society according to occupation with graded discrimination based on birth. There are 4 main castes and thousands of sub castes. People are classed upon birth and do not have the option to move to the other caste. Members of one caste are also restricted from marrying a member of a different caste (Griffith, Percival, *Modern India*. London: Ernest Benn, 1966).

necessary to provide them with accommodation, it was on the assumption that they would work in towns for short periods unaccompanied by their families, and would then return to their areas of origin. They were regarded socially and financially as liabilities for whose housing and welfare the urban authorities were responsible (Olumwullah, 1986:132). Therefore, Africans were generally given the identity of rural folks. These stereotypes define and stabilize relations on the postcolonial terrain as everybody is forced to accept their status defined by the dominant culture.

Housing patterns in Western and Nyanza provinces also took a racial line. Upon his arrival in Nyanza in 1907, John Ainsworth (a pioneer British administrator in Kenya) found that the bubonic plague was endemic in the site (Maxon, 1980:176). He made every effort to contain the situation specifically by the introduction of inoculations, rat killing, and the destruction of infected buildings. Ainsworth planned to alter the character of the township so as to protect railway, port installations and European residential areas better. His plan involved the establishment of a more rigid system of hygienic segregation than had previously existed. Ainsworth's plan would result in three distinct areas.

The first zone included the port, town, official residences and offices, and the European quarters and well to do Indians. Zone two contained petty Indian traders as well as Africans outside the township. Zone three was the uninhabited area around the township which would serve as a buffer. It was never possible to move all petty traders out of the township. Although Ainsworth was able to move African laborers out to the outskirts of the town, this was the origin of the strictly segregated residential pattern for Africans, Asians and Europeans that was to characterize Kisumu throughout colonial rule (Maxon, 1980:176).⁵⁶ The zoning system was also evident in Kakamega where Asians were zoned differently from the Africans. In places like Malakisi, the few Indians were housed in the shops, which also served as their residence.

While Indian indentured laborers were technically the responsibility of the railway administration, Murunga (2007:10) argues that the Chief Engineer George Whitehouse and Engineer Colonel Peterson "only took into consideration the European employees of the railway and the European and Asian traders who were expected to come" along with the railway and completely neglected the Asian laborers and Africans. This forced the neglected

⁵⁶ KNA, PC/NZA/1/4 KPAR 1908-09

groups to seek their own shelter, to build a symbiotic relationship with each other and with the Africans who supplied them with essential foodstuff. In other words, their choice of settlement and the social milieu that emanated from the settlement reflected their experience of neglect and adjustment to marginalization. This neglect had also to do with the Indian caste system, which was replicating itself in the Nyanza and Western postcolonial space. As neglected groups, the Asian laborers and Africans were led into engaging with each other by the sheer force of necessity.

In this racially segregated social space and due to the sheer force of necessity a number of social exchanges took place between Asian and Africans and as a result, the Africans managed to acquire certain terminologies that are in present use both in Nyanza and Western province. Chattopadhyaya (1970:362-3) asserts that the Indian shopkeepers and traders had trade relations with Africans and had to come into contact with them in connection with the supply of the articles of daily necessity and consumption to them. Indian traders' dealings with the African natives indirectly led to the growth of a bond of interest between the two communities, resulting in the percolation of some Indian words into the African vocabulary for instance.

Table 1: Hybridization of Luo and Indian Words

Indian Word	In English	Corresponding Luyia/Luo Word	Kiswahili,
Dastur	Duster	Dastur	
Kabat	Cupboard	Kabati/kabat	
Garhi	Car	Gari/gare	
Sinduk	Box	Sanduku/Sanduk	
Kalam	Pen	Kalamu/Kalam	
Baba	Father/Dad	Baba	
Mama	Mother/Mum	Mama	
Dokan	Shop	Duka	
Jel	Jail	Jela	
Karai	Basin	Karrai//Karaya	
School	School	Skul	
Dhoba	Drycleaner	Dobi	

Source : (Chattopadhyaya 1970:362-3, & Olingo, O.I 2013)

These words provided an evidence of beginning linguistic hybridity, which also characterized the post-colony. These words enhanced Afro-Asian social and economic relations since they were used in the day to day activities of both Asians and Africans (Chattopadhyaya, 1970:362-3).

Apart from the government and railway owned residential houses for the Asians in Nyanza, interaction between the Asians and Africans within the residential areas was also minimal. This is because the Asians stayed in isolated and well-fenced residences where Africans could not access. This fencing of Asian premises was probably a defence mechanism to protect themselves from perceived African attacks, a kind of African protest against their presence in some of these areas.

In Kendu Bay, for example, the Asians stayed in some houses made of iron sheets within the old Kendu town almost close to the current Kendu Muslim Secondary School. Each plot in Kendu Bay had a building with two or three shops in the front and some living quarters behind. In Ndere area, the Asians stayed in the living quarters at the back of the shops. This pattern of housing was also the same in Luanda, Butere, Webuye, Bungoma and Kendu Bay where the Asians stayed behind their shops within the Indian trading centers⁵⁷. In the Asian residential premises, African *Askaris* (watchmen) were under firm instructions from their employers not to allow in any ‘strangers’. Watchmen were instructed to tell those who wanted to see these Asians to meet them at their places of work. The African guards (*Askaris*) therefore bailed Asians out for fear of burglary and other related cases of theft. This segregation marked an uneasy relationship between Asians and Africans. Edwin Wekhomba⁵⁸ from Webuye states that socialization with Asians began and ended at their place(s) of economic engagement (See also Omenya, 2010).

Afro-Asian relations that existed within the residences were that of a master/servant relationship, whereby some Africans were employed as *boyi* (shamba boys/houseboys) and *ayahs/yaya* (house girls). The African servants referred to their Indian masters as *mzee*, *mama* (respected man or woman, respectively) or *madam*. Such colonial names as *ayahs* (house

⁵⁷ Odhiambo George, Khaemba, (O.I., 2012) George Odhiambo, an oral informant interviewed in Ndere, Nyanza region while Francis Khaembe is a charcoal dealer in Butere, Western region.

⁵⁸ Wekhomba Edwin (O.I, 2013) a former employee of the collapsed Pan paper Mills interviewed in Webuye, Western region

girls) and *boyi* (houseboys), often aimed at fixing rigid class categories between the Asians and Africans. Reverential status was conferred upon the Asians (ruling classes) by such words as *mzee*, *mem sahib* (respected man's wife) which the local Africans pronounced as *mamsap*. Some of these words were incorporated into Swahili language as well as English. However, the word *boyi* was transformed into *bayi* by Africans in Kisumu, Ndere, Kendu Bay and Yala. This word was neither Asian nor African; however, it became a common term which Africans used to refer to all the Asians regardless of their status in the course of their relationships (Omenya, 2010).

The idea of African *shamba* boys working for Asians in Western province was also common in Nyanza province of Kenya. Some of these African employees occupied servants quarters inside the Asian compounds, while other servants worked and went back to their respective homes in the evening. It should be noted that for an African to be employed by the Asians to work in their residential areas, he had to be well known by the Asians and trusted therefore played a key role in enhancing Afro-Asian relations in the African reserves and towns where Africans encountered Asians.

Once they trusted an individual, they maintained a favourable and cordial relationship and could even leave such person(s) in charge of their homesteads while they were away doing business.⁵⁹ Undertones of African protests and resistance to some forms of Asian domination and exploitation was reflected in Africans jokes and statements regarding the word *boyi* (boy). In cases where an individual was expected to do a lot of work in the African household, he could murmur statements such as *ok an boch muindi* (am not an Indian *slave*) to undertake that massive workload denoting that working for an Asian was actually exploitative. These linguistic coinages served various purposes in the postcolony (Omenya, 2010). *Boyi* assumed a derogatory meaning used to refer to any effort by fellow Africans to press them to do any job without their approval or what they did not want to do for free.

The housing situation both in Western Province and Nyanza and especially Kisumu and Kakamega during the early colonial period 1900-1918, was generally unfavourable given that

⁵⁹ Odhiambo, T.D (O.I., 2006), and Ogallo Erick, (O.I., 2012) are all from Alego Kadenge. Their accounts point to the fact that Asians progressively and steadily developed full trust with some of their African servants. This trust came with some benefits for the Africans

Asian residences were very crowded. The same condition applied to the Indian *landhies*⁶⁰ (residential plots where railway employees and their families lived).⁶¹ Afro-Asian interaction which took place in the residential areas was therefore between Africans employed by Asians in their houses and also those Africans who went to buy goods from Asian shops which served as their places of work and residence. Due to the colonial segregation policy, security of the Asians and the strong caste system which could not even allow Indians themselves to marry across their own caste, cases of Afro-Asian marriages and socialization were very minimal and unheard of in the early period of colonialism whether in Mumias, Kakamega, Bungoma, Kisumu, Ndere or Kendu bay.⁶² However, these cultural barriers were later on overcome leading to a hybridization of cultures. As bhabha (1994) puts it, it is the experience of cultural difference and of ‘temporal break’ up that weaves the global. It is evident therefore that the level of Afro-Asian interaction within the housing sector was kind of ambivalent too with close interaction between few Africans who were working for Asians in their houses as servants with less interaction with other unfamiliar Africans (non-residents in the racially segregated Asian residential areas).

3.7 Comparative Analysis of Afro-Asian Socio-Economic Relations in Western and Nyanza Provinces of Kenya

Afro-Asian socio-economic relations in Western and Nyanza provinces could be viewed within the prism of infrastructural developments within two regions. For economic interaction to take place, movement of both Asians and Africans was to be made easy. From the word go, the colonial government was determined to administer the colony through a series of tax which Africans had to pay. This, therefore, called for Africans to engage in trade and exchange of commodities. This was facilitated by establishment of trading centers both in Western and Nyanza provinces of Kenya. The establishment of these trading centers was similar in the two regions since the colonial government used the Outlying Ordinance of 1903.

⁶⁰ *Landhies* are residential plots where railway employees and their families lived. The word *landhies*, apparently derived from 'lands', is an Anglo-Indian term for 'quarters', specifically railway quarters. It also refers to high density housing-lines for workers (see, Ojwang', D (2013) Reading Migration and Culture: The Word of East African Indian Literature, London: Palgrave Macmillan.

⁶¹ KNA, PC/NZA/1/16, Annual Report 1920-21

⁶² Wafula, O.I 2013

Unlike Central Kavirondo, Asian population in North Kavirondos' distribution was low particularly in the trading centers where they settled. For instance, in Malakisi, there were only two Indian traders. Their numbers were equally low in Kakamaga, Butere and other areas in North Kavirondo. As early as 1919, the population of Asiatics in North Kavirondo District was 265 against the Africans who numbered 576,800 people⁶³. This could explain why Afro-Asian social relations in North Kavirondo were not so robust as compared to Central Nyanza which had an experimental farm specifically alienated for Indians. It is therefore evident that with the change of colonial administrative center from Mumias to Kisumu, economic focus shifted to Central Kavirondo. Maxon (2003:36) supports this when he observed that Asians operating in Vihiga, which was part of Kakamega, took residence in Kisumu in increasing numbers. That Vihiga quickly came to form a part of Kisumu's economic sphere is illustrated by the fact that until 1920, the region was administered from Kisumu (rather than Mumias) as part of the Central Kavirondo. Evidently, this arrangement posed a new geo-economical challenge to the colonial government.

In both areas, agriculture and commerce characterized the Nyanza and Western post-colony, as these were the main economic activities that could ensure the survival of the colonial administration. Commerce and agriculture were also the economic sites where Afro-Asian interactions were negotiated and contested. Although Asians engaged Africans more in agricultural produce in North Kavirondo, their engagement with Africans in Central Kavirondo during this period was based on retail trade with little engagement on agricultural produce. This explains why the Kibos Asian settlement was started as an experimental farm in order to experiment on crops which could perform well within the area. Nevertheless, Kisumu was important for Asians who used Port Florence for export and import of goods. Notable export from Western province included cotton, simsim, maize, mtama, wimbi cattle hides and beans.

The establishment and the growth of markets and trading centers in Kenya in general and Western province in particular was, therefore, closely related to the development of African agriculture. The colonial policy for stimulating the economic development of Africans was designed to increase the agricultural production. The more crops the peasants produced, the more trade it would stimulate, and therefore, the more taxable income as well as the increase in export-import trade. Unlike in Nyanza province where trading and market centers were

⁶³ KNA, DC/NN/1/3

started through ordinances, in Western Kenya the most significant periodic market in the province started with that of Mumias and this was owned by Mumia himself, of the Wanga Kingdom⁶⁴. Taking this example, other markets were started by Mumia's brothers who had been sent to adjacent locations as British agents; Mulama started one at Butere, Murunga at Kabula, Osundwa at Koyonzo, Ogalo at Ogalo's and so on. The chiefs therefore started the first markets (Ogutu, 1979:218).

Afro-Asian economic interactions in Central Nyanza was also different from that in North Kavirondo in that Asians engaged themselves in fishing and fish trade. In the course of this trade Indian *badalas*⁶⁵ imparted boat building skills to the Africans of Nyanza region. Although the Bantus of North Kavirondo were agriculturalist, they relied on iron hoes for farming whose source was an Asian iron-smith in Kisumu (see, Kitching, 1980). However, both regions experienced epidemics and drought and depression during the World War One, which affected the prices of commodities both in North and Central Kavirondo regions. The drought heightened the need for more food which also enhanced Afro-Asian economic interactions within the economic spaces of Nyanza and Western regions of Kenya.

Towards the end of the World War, the colonial government enhanced cotton production as a western form of knowledge into the lifestyle of Africans. Cotton production both in Nyanza and Western Provinces would later provide a platform for Afro-Asian interactions in Malakisi, Samia, Kendu Bay, Kisumu and Ndere areas⁶⁶. However, just like in Nyanza and Western province, cultivation of this crop turned out not to be successful in the early colonial period due to coercion by the colonial government through the office of the chief as well as low pricing which discouraged Africans to grow the crop.

Within the social sphere, racial segregations took a center stage both in Western and Nyanza province. As a result, the European missionaries championed and took care of Africa education. This education was tailored to meet certain social and economic objectives of the colonial government whose major aim was to 'civilize' Africans with the western cultures.

⁶⁴ Wanga Kingdom: The Wanga, (also known as AbaWanga), are the founders of the only historical kingdom in Kenya-The Wanga Kingdom, whose cultural monarch is known as Nabongo (Mostly referred to as King Nabongo Mumia). The Wanga mainly occupy Kakamega County, one of the most densely populated counties in Kenya- Although they distinguish themselves as a different tribe, ethnically, they are classified as Luhya.

⁶⁵ *Badala* is a regular tribe (Cutchi) from India whose only occupation is that of navigation and fishing.

⁶⁶ Otiato, J, O.I 2012

Similarly, Asians also underwent their own education system where their children were taught by Asian teachers in their local languages. Indian schools were started in Butere, Luanda and Broderick Falls, Bungoma, Kisumu, Kendu Bay and Ndere areas within the two regions of study. Although Christian missionaries took the lead in spearheading African education, different mission churches were involved in this undertaking. While the Christian Mission Society (CMS) dominated in Nyanza province, The Friends Church dominated in Western Province.

Racial segregation system was also similar within the two regions. This was perfected by the policy of racial segregation between Africans, Asians and Europeans. The Asian residential areas were however crowded especially in the bazaar areas where they resided and operated from.

Conclusion

It was the objective of this chapter to examine the emergence of Afro-Asian Socio-economic relations from 1900 up to 1918. It has been demonstrated that these relations were shaped by the infrastructural developments that came into being as Indian merchants and colonial administrators penetrated into the interior parts of Western and Nyanza post-colony. These relations were diverse and included such issues as trade and social relations which described the post-colony. It is concluded that these relations changed the African social and economic lifestyles since Africans were exposed to foreign merchandise like clothes. Their dressing habits began to change as they moved from wearing of hides and skin to a Dutch manufactured *Kanga*, with a deep Indonesian influence thereby introducing a class of people known as Jonanga (cloth wearers). Asians too borrowed some positive values from the Africans. It has also been demonstrated that some Asian terminologies were domesticated and formed part of African daily usage up to date within the chaotic commercial social plural spaces of Nyanza and Western regions.

Such linguistic hybridity was also a common feature which characterized Afro-Asian relations in Nyanza province. It has also been demonstrated that Afro-Asian relations and engagements were similar and sometimes different. Within the two regions, Kisumu which became the administrative center of the two regions played a key role as far as Afro-Asian economic relation was concerned. But also, the involvement of Asian traders opened up avenues for African business in the thwo regions In conclusion, therefore, education and

housing followed a racial pattern. But because of sheer force of necessity, the Asians were forced to hire and stay with Africans as domestic servants. In the next chapter we examine the Afro-Asian relations during the interwar period.

CHAPTER FOUR

AFRO-ASIAN SOCIO-ECONOMIC RELATIONS IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD 1919-1945

Abstract

In Chapter Three, the Afro-Asian socio-economic relations in the early colonial period in Western and Nyanza provinces were examined and compared. It was argued that Afro-Asian socio-economic relations resembled and differed in one way or another in Nyanza as compared to Western Kenya. These relations were shaped by infrastructural developments, which came into being as Indian merchants penetrated into the interior parts of Western and Nyanza provinces of Kenya. These relations also changed the lifestyles of Africans who came into contact with the Indians within their neighborhood. It is concluded that given the position of Kisumu as the colonial administrative center it played a crucial role regarding Afro-Asian socio-economic relations in the two regions. The relations were marked with borrowing of values and linguistic hybridity between the two communities. However, racial segregation was deeply entrenched in both residential and the education sectors. In this chapter, Afro-Asian socio-economic relations in the interwar and during the Second World War period in the two provinces are examined. The period was characterized by the consequences of the Great Depression, widespread drought in Nyanza and the rise of protest movements which characterized Nyanza.

This chapter focuses on the Afro-Asian economic and social relations that developed at the height of stiff economic competition between Asians and Africans and interrogates the political economy of the colonial state which informed and shaped the Afro-Asian economic relations during the entire period. The role of Asians in the sugar, transport and the diary industry and how their involvement in these industries as pioneers shaped their relations in Nyanza and Western provinces of Kenya is examined. It is argued that although Afro-Asian relations were ambivalent, the Asians played a critical role in the establishment of the sugar, transport and the diary industries. They also imparted valuable skills to Africans through apprenticeship. The postcolonial theory is used in this chapter to analyze the various contestations emerging within the plural space of Nyanza and western Kenya.

4.1 The Political Economy of Afro-Asian Relations in the Interwar Period: The Politics of Colonial Government's Policy and Asian Economic and Social Engagements

With the establishment of colonial rule and the settlement of Indians in Kenya, there arose the Indian question, which revolved around three key issues: political representation, racial segregation and ownership of land (Sana, 2011: 138). The Indian question would later on shape Afro-Asian relations not only at the national level but also at the local level. The critique of the empire that had emerged in India travelled across the Indian Ocean to Kenya as the Indians' quest for equality with the Europeans was abandoned and nascent anti-colonial articulations such as Desai's began to be heard. Significantly, the diasporic critique of colonial rule expressed itself in racial terms, emphatically rejecting the racial hierarchy of Kenya and demanding instead, the 'equality' of all colonial subjects irrespective of the colours of their skin and the place of their birth, or it must abandon its attempt to rule a mixture of peoples; an ambivalent position which was the characteristic of the colonial government. There can be no half way. This shift in the political imaginary of Indians opened up the way for their engagement with the anti-settler struggles of the other racially defined colonial subjects in Kenya; the Africans.

Ogot (1968:270) also observes that the major challenge that faced Kenya during this period was the future of its tri-racial population; European, Indian and African. After the World War One the policy of the paramountcy of European interests was intensified by Major-General Sir Edward Northey, the new Governor. The Europeans defended their segregationist policies on the ground that neither the Indian nor any other section of the community; since they were not members of the ruling race, 'have the same status or can claim the same right as British colonists in a British Colony such as Kenya (Ogot, 1968:270). The Indians opposed the colonial policies of residential and land segregation. It was this European-Indian struggle for the possession of Kenya that constituted the so-called 'Indian question'. This led to the declaration of the Devonshire White Paper of 1923, which gave paramountcy to the African interest. This solution to the Indian question had wider imperial implications, which also shaped Afro-Asian relations within the territory (Ogot, 1968:270).

The context in which the political economy was operating around the interwar period was the context of African and Asian resistance to colonialism as well as the colonial government's effort to advance African agriculture and to settle the Indian Question. There was a trend by the colonial government to come up with policies, which encouraged African merchant while

at the same time coming up with a plan to control immigration of unskilled Indians to Kenya (see Spencer, 1981). Progressively, the colonial government wanted to do away with the Indians because of their political and economic challenge to the colonial state to reduce competition and to ensure a smooth administration of the colony. These intrigues would later shape the Afro-Asian political relations.

The Indian question emerged in the 1920s when the spirit of nationalism was also rife in India (Indian nationalism). The Indians agitated against the preferential occupation of the fertile highlands, which was reserved for Europeans. The ambivalence here is that, the British colonial masters used the Indians during the establishment of the Imperial rule in Kenya but saw them as a risk later on due to the political and economic rivalry that they posed to the British especially in relation to the colonial market that the British wanted to safeguard and defend. This tension and conflict between Asians and the British informed the Afro-Asian political and economic relations which later emerged at the height of African nationalism in Kenya triggering down to regions such as Nyanza and Western province.

The universalizing aspirations of the demand for racial equality that created the opportunity for an interracial alliance of Indians and Africans coincided with a campaign by Europeans to discredit Indians by claiming that their presence in Kenya was unfavorable to Africans. The universalizing political impulse against the gross inequalities of the settler oriented colonial economy created the political space for interracial collaboration between Indians and Africans. In order to counter Indian sub-imperialist claims to parity, Europeans brought arguments regarding the political and economic interest of Africans into the debate. In September 1921, two prominent leaders of the Convention of Associations, Kenneth Archer and Lord Delamere, published a pamphlet entitled '*Memorandum on the Case against the Case of Indian Claim in Kenya of 1921*' (East African Standard, 1922). The basis of settlers' criticism of the Indian demands was fourfold. First, they claimed that the agitation in Kenya identified completely with 'Gandhism'. Archer and Delamere stated that Indians wore 'Gandhi caps'- white homespun *khadi* (cotton) caps that had become one of the most viable symbol of anti-colonial agitation in India; at the mass meeting in Nairobi where Mangal Dass, a member of the East African Indian National Congress, had announced, 'when we get self government in India, we too can bring cannons and rifles and fight for our rights in this colony'. Such proclamations, the European feared would stir up 'disaffection' amongst the Africans. They warned: ' Acting under cabled instructions from one of the Indian leaders, the majority of

Indian traders and shopkeepers are engaged in poisoning the minds of the native against the British Administration' (Sana, 2011:140).

Second and related to this, the pamphlet stated that unrestricted Indian immigration would be economically disadvantageous to Africans because the bulk of Indians in Kenya were artisans, clerks and small traders who created unfair competition for Africans who could perform these jobs. An Economic Commission Report published in 1919 supported this claim (Andrews, 1921).

Third, Delamere and Archer objected to the circulation of Indian trade and money across the Indian Ocean, pointing out that instead of investing their profits locally, Indian traders sent their money to India. Finally, and most significantly, they argued that the Indians were a danger to the Empire and to Christianity. "If the East is permitted to penetrate Africa and the trusteeship of the vast native population be transferred to other and alien hands, then gone is the dream of a series of Christian African states, created and linked together by the genius of British colonization. Is England to be marked with the stain of betraying the African native to Eastern Rule?" Indeed the resolution of the India question was urged by the settlers as one of utmost importance to the future of the British Empire in East Africa (Sana, 2011: 141). Interestingly, refuting the Europeans' claims that Indians were an obstacle to the economic progress of Africans, Harry Thuku,⁶⁷ argued that in fact since Africans were in close contact with Indians in their everyday lives, they had the opportunity to learn from the masonry, carpentry and other kinds of skilled work. He pointed to the experience of Africans who had come into contact with Indians in offices and workshops, and concluded that the Indians guided them and showed them much sympathy. Indeed a common target of resentment, the white settlers, and the involvement of the Indian, Kenyan and British governments in the Indian question gave Thuku the opportunity to collaborate with the Indians in the public political realms (Sana, 2011:143).

⁶⁷ Harry Thuku, was one of the pioneers of Africannationalism in Kenya, was born in the Kambui region of the British colony in 1895. Thuku became involved in the East African Indian National Congress and Young Buganda Association. Thuku eventually led the Young Buganda Association, Renaming it the East African Association (EAA) and broadening its appeal. His work with the EAA persuaded Thuku that the colonial system and colonial oppression must be challenged by Africans regardless of ethnic origins. His own emerging "pan-Africanist" views were reinforced by his contact with prominent anti-colonialists such as Marcus Garvey, the head of the U.S.-based (see, Harry Thuku, *Harry Thuku: An Autobiography* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1970)

The Indian Question in Kenya was similar to the Indian question in Fiji especially on the issue of representation and the view that Asians and Africans could not represent themselves or denied the right for representation. The phrase 'they cannot represent themselves' formed part of a sentence written by Karl Marx, which Edward Said made the front piece to *Orientalism* - 'they must be represented' goes the rest. He saw in the phrase a succinct statement of the general thesis that he elaborated concerning Orientalist discourse (Said 1979:21). Said argues that the power of discourse emanating from the West representing the East as its inferior antithesis, overwhelmed all other powers and depictions of things Asian, both for westerners and for the Asians themselves. He further argued that, the sort of circuit sometimes admired in discourse theory, that 'the idea of European identity as a superior one' is precisely what made the culture hegemonic both in and outside Europe (Said, 1979:7) For Said, 'represent' refers primarily to the process of constituting a sign or image capable of standing for someone or something, the constitution of representations in discourse that will not only refer but also characterize the referent. The struggles that most interest Said are those over modes, relations and forces, not of production but of this kind of representation, struggles to control signs and images. And the general interesting allegation of Orientalism is that, at some point, Asia lost control over the means of its own representation (Kelly, 2001:50).

Indian traders were an important element in the early development of production and trade in the reserves. By establishing shops in even the most remote area of the Colony, they stimulated the African population to become economically more productive and assisted its entry into the cash economy as laborers and producers. They developed transport systems and provided services, which aided the spread of the administration. No other group was both willing and able to perform the tasks they undertook in such difficult conditions. Like middlemen world over, the Indian traders were accused of dishonest and unscrupulous trading. In Kenya the accusations were made with particular vehemence, the traders were members of a large community, which challenged European primacy both politically and economically. They represented the claims of peasant agriculture against the plantation system. By asserting the paramountcy of African interests, the Imperial government defused the immediate crisis aroused by the political claims of the Indians. It also provided grounds for attack on the position of the traders in the reserves (Spencer, 1981:341). The Indian presence, therefore, not only disrupted the binary of black indigene and white settler, but also extended migratory interaction and contestations beyond the dominant paradigm: that of the white settlers and Asian immigrant negotiating a shared space (Rastogi, 2008:9).

The most frequent, and to the Kenya (colonial) Government the most grave, of all the criticism of the activity of the Indian trader was that, as a buyer of African produce, he was indiscriminating. He paid the same price for poor quality ungraded goods as for carefully prepared, dry clean and regular produce. Serious consequences flowed from this. The export of poor quality produce gained a poor name for Kenyan produce in international markets, and tended to depress the price, which it could command. Payment by weight alone, rather than by weight and quality, offered no incentive to Africans to produce high quality goods, which could more easily penetrate overseas markets and establish a sound reputation. The ignorance of the Indian trader, it was often argued, thereby stunted the possibilities of economic growth in the reserves. It appears true that *dukawallahs* had little or no knowledge of the produce in which they dealt. Nor was there any commercial incentive for them to find out, because wholesalers and exporters generally paid the same price, irrespective of quality. The price the *dukawallah* received was usually based upon the past experience of the purchaser of the quality of goods from the same area (Spencer, 1981:333).

In the 1920s, colonial administrative officers in general leveled two sets of charges against Indian traders: that they were dishonest, and that they were inefficient as stimulants to the expansion and improvement of production in the reserves. It is possible to discern two distinct trends in administrative policy towards the traders, which broadly reflected these two sets of criticisms. The first was the increasing encouragement given to African merchants, and the second was the effort to draw up plans to control or replace the Indian as purchaser of African produce. But these trends in policy were not solely attributable to the widespread view that the Indian merchant was a dishonest and inefficient trader (Spencer, 1981:335). They related, too, to the commonly held belief that it was the duty of the Native Affairs Department to stimulate the economic advancement of the Africans. The concept of trusteeship lay behind this idea, a trusteeship that was believed to be held and exercised by the British administration in Kenya. Indians represented a challenge to that trusteeship, most clearly expressed during the political crisis of the early twenties. Indian demands for a substantial share in that trusteeship, having been rejected, the Native Affairs Department set about attempting to justify the terms of the Devonshire Declaration by trying to ensure that Africans achieved a significant rate of economic advancement in the reserves. One aspect of the policy was the effort to advance African agriculture; another was the encouragement of African entrepreneurs in the reserve. Perhaps a critical difference between the two, and the factor which determined their relative success, was that, whereas the first aroused the opposition of

the politically powerful settler community, the second received its support (Spencer, 1981:335).

However, the existing dominance of petty Indian shopkeepers in the African reserves enabled them to control buying and selling prices, thus making them a dual target of African resentment. On the one hand, African farmers were forced to sell their produce to the Indians at low prices since the latter had a monopoly over trade fixed low buying prices. On the other hand, they bought from the Indian shops everyday goods like cooking oil that were set at high prices, again due to entrenched position of the Indian trader. This double blow and unpleasant effect caused Africans to be suspicious of Indian shopkeepers with whom they interacted on a daily basis. Indeed the allegedly questionable ethics of *dukawallahs* and their profit-oriented business made them inherently dislikable to several Africans who were already feeling the pressure of the post war economic structure and thus accused the Indians of keeping them in poverty⁶⁸. It is important, therefore, to note that at the conic level, the Indian shopkeeper was the most immediate and visible obstacle to Africans' economic aspirations. As a result, there was very real and ultimately unresolved tension in the everyday relationship between Indian shopkeepers and Africans in the reserves.

As the Indian crisis developed in the early twenties, Acting Chief Native Commissioner issued a circular to provincial commissioners, which urged them to take steps to encourage Africans to open shops. Watkins⁶⁹ asked his subordinates to determine the number of Africans who wished to start shops, the sums of money available to them, and the class of goods they wished to sell. The Native Affairs Department was anxious to help remove the handicap that existing African traders were suffering of having to buy goods at retail prices from Indians. On receipt of the relevant information, the department would contact a 'reliable firm', which would supply goods at reasonable wholesale prices. The Chief Native Commissioner later on issued a circular 89 of 1922 which offered advice on how Africans could be helped to start their own grain mills, an activity dominated by Indians, and Circular 9 of 1924 drew attention

⁶⁸TNA, CO/533/562

⁶⁹ Watkins Oscar. F was a British colonial administrator, Commandant of the East African Carrier Corps in the First World War. After the war he was acting Kenya Chief Native Commissioner.

to the methods which could be used by African traders to obtain goods without recourse to the local Indian trader⁷⁰.

In October 1924, official sanction and encouragement were given to a group known as the European and African Trade Organization (EATO). All district commissioners were circularized with information that the Organization was willing to advance goods to African traders recommended by the local district commissioners. The amount advanced was to be treated as a loan, returnable without interest within three months with half the profits made on sale. The profit would be credited to the trader in part liquidation of the loan and additional goods advanced until the full amount of credit was paid off from the profit. The aim of the EATO, founded in early 1923 at the height of the Indian crisis, was to work towards the elimination of the economic influence of Indian traders and artisan; its motto was ‘ Every European and every African is an Asset to Africa, Everyone else is a Liability’. Though there was considerable discussion between officials of the Organization and Coryndon, his Private Secretary, Dutton and Chief Secretary Denham, only one district commissioner appears to have responded to the circular of August 1924. For the rest of the decade uncoordinated efforts were made in every province by district commissioners to cut out the Indian middlemen. For example, Fort Hall District local farmers were contacted and successfully encouraged to buy maize direct from African growers; in Central Kavirondo Africans were encouraged to sell fish direct to wholesalers in Kisumu. Other measures came to the fore later in the decade. The trading centers where the Indian traders were concentrated, had, in the main been gazetted before the reserves in which they were situated had been defined. In the 1920s, the government embarked upon a policy of defending the boundaries of the reserves and establishing guarantees against further alienation (Spencer, 1981:336). This is how the postcolony was chaotic with various contestations between the occupiers of the plural economic spaces of Nyanza and Western regions.

4.2 The Dynamics of Afro – Asian Economic Activities in Nyanza and Western Provinces during the Interwar and the Second World War Period

The Asian economic role underwent certain subtle changes during this period which shaped their relations with the Africans. On one hand, there was a marked increase in the number of Asians engaged in large-scale business operations. They also continued to play their role as shopkeepers, traders and artisans. Their role in this respect was increasingly challenged by the

⁷⁰ KNA, DC/MKS/25/3/1

growth of African competition and hostility towards their (Asian) predominance in the middle ranks of the economic ladder. This had the additional effect of accelerating the diversification of Asian enterprises into new fields of secondary manufacturing industries or where possible into agriculture.

Unlike the local Europeans, Asians emerged from the war with sizeable savings from trade and artisanry, and they invested not only in the establishment of new factories, but also in the take-over of existing companies. Asian manufacturing in the post war underwent considerable change. Far more than before the war, the new Asian industries were situated in cities and towns. While continuing to expand in the processing of farm produce and other local goods, Asians took up a wide assortment of manufacturing. They also began to import the essential raw materials and to produce products for export as well as local consumption. There are several reasons for these changes. Because of the difficulties of continuing in the rural areas, many of those who had undertaken some form of rural manufacturing moved to the cities and towns to begin a new business. They were joined by traders and artisans who were also increasingly constrained to leave the outlying regions. Some among these migrants, because of stiff competition from established urban businessmen and craftsmen, found more opportunity in a new form of manufacturing. The fact that many of the families who left the rural areas had become second or third generation residents of east Africa meant that one or more of the younger members had obtained a university degree in business administration, economics, engineering, or law; a new generation of intellectuals. This enhanced the Asians' capacity for venturing into an enterprise that required a complex combination of capital formation, technology, management skills, and, in many instances, collaboration with foreign associates (Gregory, 1993:287).

Slowly, Indian businessmen moved out of the wholesale and retail business into industry, while artisans and clerks transformed themselves into successful entrepreneurs and managers (Van Zwanenberg, 1977:126; Seidenberg, 1996:39). With the acceleration of local industry, a permanent labor force was also created and stabilized (Shivji, 1976:36). The presence of African competition began to make itself to be felt among small retail stores, especially in the villages and other small centers and resulted in a drift of some Asian traders to the towns and cities (Ghai, 1965:44). More significant also, were the gradual transitions in their economic activities from small-scale enterprise of early years to larger business undertakings for

instance export of hides, oil and soap manufacturing and more interest in the cotton ginneries. Some of these factories were established in Kisumu.

As this transition took shape, the bulk of the trade was still in the hands of Indians. By 1926/27, the Africans bought small quantities of goods from Indians and then sold at a profit in the reserve⁷¹. The ordinary Indian trader would willingly give some financial assistance in terms of credit to Africans.⁷² The Indian traders, in whose hands most of the African retail trade rested, used their takings to renew their stock and expand their businesses⁷³.

The African traders in Ndere for instance, could take goods on credit from the Asian shops to sell and then pay later. However, this depended on the trust bestowed upon such people by the Asians. This gesture by the Asians was to gradually create a capitalist relationship between the two communities to ensure that this economic relation was sustained for a longer period. Africans sold local produce such as cassava, sweet potatoes, *ododo* (amaranth), pepper (*pilipili*), pawpaw and unripe bananas to the Indians⁷⁴. The Indian traders not only purchased local produce and sold manufactured goods and determined local prices, but also sponsored many pioneer African traders by providing them with stock usually on credit since these aspiring traders rarely had the necessary capital, contacts or credit standing to purchase directly from wholesalers in Nairobi and Mombasa.

In many ways the economic problems of the Asian-African relationship were the most crucial. Asian dominance of commerce especially in the retail trade was responsible in great part for African hostility to the Asians. It is clear that between merchant capitals, there was a high degree of competition. Trade expanded in the African reserves from the 1920s onwards, and from the outset, there was tough competition between the traders, both Asian and African. Small indigenous traders operating in the reserves acted as a link between foreign and Asian merchants firms and African commodity producers. Due to the proliferation in the numbers of traders in the reserves from 1920s onwards, the colonial administration acted to control the numbers of traders in agricultural commodities through licensing ordinances. Colonial officials, with Indian experience in mind, tried to prevent the development in Kenya of an indebted peasantry. This led to a multitude of rules preventing Africans from anything but

⁷¹ KNA, PC\NZA\1\27, AR 1927 Annual Report Nyanza Province

⁷² Ajay Gosh, O.I 2012 interviewed in Kisumu and taught at the New Kisumu High School

⁷³ KNA, PC\NZA\ 1\23, AR 1928\29) Annual Report Nyanza Province

⁷⁴ Odindo Joel, O.I., 2005 a villager interviewed at Yala market

minimum levels of borrowing, limited litigation to collect debts, attachment of property for the payment of debts, prior sale of crops to raise advance cash, selling of insurance policies to Africans and restrictions on collecting money by African associations'. For instance, the Credit to Native Ordinance of 1926 had imposed limits on the amount of credit which could be advanced by non-Africans to Africans, thus effectively blocking the expansion in size of African enterprises (Swainson, 1980:176). However, as discussed above, the Africans had already known how to get credit from the Asians away from the watch of the colonial government and her policies, which was a demonstration of some resistance to western forms of knowledge.

Far more than the tendency to barter or to loan money to cultivators were the effects on the development of production and trade of the linked problems of the instability and under capitalization of the *dukas*. Traders were unable, because of limited funds available to the large majority of them, to stock an ever-widening range of imported goods to meet the growing sophistication of the cultivators. The *dukawallahs* appeared to be conservative, unwilling to stock new lines which might have given fresh impetus to Africans to produce more. This demonstrated and indicated the limitations in the 'effectiveness' of the manner in which the Indian trader carried out his primary economic functions in the reserve (Spencer, 1981:332).

As a result of this trend, there was a slight decrease in the population of Asiatic in North Kavirondo by 1923 due to trade depression which caused the closure of a number of shops at Malakisi and Mumias⁷⁵. From a point of view of trade, Mumias was better than Kakamega and as the population statistics showed it was a larger place⁷⁶. There were about 46 Indian there as compared to 28 in Kakamega. By 1925, the plots obtained by Indians at Malakisi were not yet developed. Although the number of the African owned *dukas* increased considerably they were inconsequential and could not be pose as serious competitors to the Indian *dukas*⁷⁷.

Renewed efforts towards cotton production were made during the seasons 1923/24 to 1930/31 spurred by the Kenya Cotton Ordinance of 1923 which empowered the governor to regulate the growing of cotton and its quality (Fearn, 1961:74). In 1923, rules were introduced to

⁷⁵ KNA, DC/NN/1/4

⁷⁶ KNA, DC/NN/1/4

⁷⁷ KNA, DC/NN/1/6

control ginning, quality and seed purchase. Between 1923 and 1926, six further cotton ginneries were opened in Nyanza of which three had almost immediately to close down again owing to a drop in the price of cotton from 30 cents per pound in 1923/4 to 10 and a half cents per pound in 1930/1 (Zwanenberg, 1974). Earlier on in 1922, 600 acres of cotton and 30,000lb (13607Kgs) of cottonseed had been distributed in Samia (North Kavirondo), North Ugenya and Alego locations (Central Kavirondo). The District Officer explained that this was necessary since owing to the inability to obtain a market some years ago, it was difficult to get the people to take this crop. Cotton prices in North Kavirondo in 1923 had ranged between 25 and 28 cents a pound; in 1926 they were 18 cents and by 1927 they had dropped to 12 cents a pound. Of the latter price, it was reported ‘that the natives showed great dissatisfaction at receiving such low prices (Zwanenberg, 1974).

On the consumer side, the activities of the Kavirondo Taxpayers Welfare Association (KTWA), the first African political organization in Nyanza in the 1920s bringing together people from both Central and North Kavirondo, among other things, stimulated co-operative self-help schemes, particularly in grain milling by waterpower thus competing with the Asians in the processing of local produce. The formation of KTWA thus informed the African protest and resistance to bad trade practices which emerged between the Asians and the Africans on this plural and hybrid postcolonial space of Nyanza during the inter war period (Atieno-Odhiambo, 1976:226).

Although efforts were being made to ensure cotton production both in North and South Kavirondo, more trading centers were being gazetted to increase economic growth of the two regions. In 1924 for instance, urban centers were further gazetted at Mambara, Luanda and Kamutiwa in North Kavirondo District. A number of *dukas* were also opened in the rural areas, an indication of economic recovery. There were over forty African periodic markets already established in the district. Indian economic activities in the urban trading centers also increased. Non-Africans were concentrated in Kakamega despite the fact that Mumias was founded earlier (Obudho, 2002:204). The increase in the number of *dukas*, therefore, restored the Afro-Asian interaction, which was disrupted during the First World War. The Africans in Luanda sold vegetables to these Indians mostly in the markets⁷⁸.

⁷⁸ Watende Geoffrey, O.I 2012, Patel, O:I 2013 Watende interviewed in Luanda trading center works at Luanda police station. Patel Issa operates hardware at Luanda trading center in Western region.

According to the North Kavirondo District Annual Report of 1924⁷⁹, there were only two townships, Kakamega and Mumias. However, by 1924, Mumias was nothing more than a trading center and a suggestion was made to abolish it as a Township and re-gazetted as a trading center. At this time, the total population of Indian and British Indian traders was 28 within Kakamega Township while in Mumias the British Indian traders were 46. Cotton buying posts were already demarcated and on the Busia road just short of the border, Alibhai and Rahamtulla⁸⁰ took plots for the purposes of the cotton Industry. The same ginning company also took plots on the Malakisi-Tororo road while Messres Small and Company had a post at Oduya in Marachi. All these pointed to the fact the Asians were gearing up to take over the control and management of the cotton Industry in Nyanza and Western Provinces of Kenya. Table 2 below indicates the various commodities that Indians engaged in both in Nyanza and Western Kenya

Table 2: Main Items of Trade by Asians according to towns/trading Centers

Trading Center	Main Items of trade
Kisumu	Clothes, sugar, bicycle parts, apprenticeship, corrugated iron sheets
Kakamega	Soap, maize, rice
Butere	Tin lamps, salt,
Malakisi	Cotton, soap salt
Ndere	Soap, matchsticks, sweets, corrugated iron sheets,
Bungoma	Soap, sugar salt
Kendu Bay	Cotton, salt, oil, soap, Ghee

⁷⁹ KNA, DC/NN/1/5

⁸⁰ Alibhai and Rahamtulla are Indian brothers who ventured into the product business. And their family business was known as Alibhai & Rahamatullah. Products such as groundnuts, hides and skins were bought by Indians and sold to European firms stationed in Kisumu for export. In sum, they built up a vast business of cotton ginneries, land and property, import and export, palatial hotels, investment companies, coffee factory, and plantation. Later on, each family member began to assume his or her patronymic name as Lakha. Gradually, Alibhai and his brothers opened up depots in Kendu Bay, Homa Bay, Karungu and Kisii, all in south Nyanza. More depots were opened in central Nyanza from Luanda and Yala to Asembo Bay, and north Nyanza in Sio Port and Mumias (Western region).

Two trading centers were further gazetted at Kimilili and Bungoma in South Kitosh in 1925 and a new railway station was established at Broderick Falls (now Webuye). Broderick Falls and Bungoma were the only railway stations in the District. These lines increased the transport facilities for the Indians who had established themselves in these centers as well as the European and farmers in the rich Uasin Gishu plateau (Obudho, 2002: 204; Fearn, 1961:115). It was during this phase in 1925 that the British Cotton Growing Association (BCGA) secured a 33-year lease for a ginnery located at Malakisi in Bungoma district. Malakisi encountered problems due to the limited supply of seed cotton and this prompted the BCGA to sell the ginnery to the Indian firm of Messrs, Valthaldas Haridas & Company in 1930 (Fearn 1961:74). Events in Malakisi between 1925 and 1935 indicate that the Malakisi ginnery owned by Vithaldas Haridas and Company and acquired from the British Cotton Growing Association in 1930 operated and managed its own affairs satisfactorily and was up to date⁸¹. Nevertheless, the report by the DC showed that the Malakisi trading center did not flourish and did very little business during the cotton season. All *dukas* were of such a poor class that they had little to offer. Indians here complained that the trading center was full of undesirable African characters and only eight *dukas* were open for trade. Malakisi Indian traders moved all the way to Akalaite to sell goods there near the cotton stores, through natives working for wages and with hawkers licences made out in their (natives) names⁸². It is evident therefore that by using hawkers' licences in the name of Africans, Indians had to hide their identity in order to operate within the chaotic economic space of Nyanza. This is what characterized the post-colony both in Nyanza and Western provinces.

All levels of the administration were involved in cotton development in the mid 1920s and their failures to stimulate expansion led to a report by P. Booth, an agricultural Officer on the problem. He wrote:

Today I attended a large baraza at Chief Kadima's where I explained the methods of cotton cultivation. At the close of my lecture, I was asked a large number of questions. The chief being, 'why won't the government fix a definitive price to be paid for cotton? I did my best to explain in simple language the cause of low price paid last season, but even then they were not satisfied... they also consider that they

⁸¹ KNA, PC/NZA/2/12/2

⁸² KNA, DC/KMG/1/1/114

are being cheated when the price falls towards the end of the season (Vanzwenberg, 1974:447).

Such attitude underlay the preference for growing simsim rather than cotton. The failure of the administration to encourage Kenya's Africans to take to cotton cultivation was aggravated by the fact that people were beaten in September 23 in connection with cotton growing. This explains how colonialism was ruthless, it further demonstrates that western forms of knowledge authored and authorized by the west was costly to the Africans. Its underlying objective was to exploit Africans. The Asians adopted this tendency later on as they occupied the middle space between Africans and the Europeans, an ambivalent position which enabled them to mimic the colonial master, being an agent of colonialism.

In the early and mid 1920s, the general character of the Indian role had to a large extent been determined by the policies adopted towards them. These policies had a combined result both of greatly increasing Indian participation in the 'development' of the region and, at the same time, of restricting the Indian role within the well-defined limits. These policies affected Afro-Asian relations in Nyanza in different ways (Memon, 1976:209). The Indians and Africans opposed these colonial policies of residential and land segregation.

As might be expected, Africans and Asians resisted these exclusionary measures in various ways. At first they acted separately, but later they realized that unity is strength and began to coordinate their efforts. This strategy won them greater access to the country's urban space and government. These gradual successes did not, however, prevent these two groups from developing a sense of non-belonging in the country's urban areas during and after the colonial period; and each group coped with this reality in separate ways. For Africans, this meant investing more in their rural homes to the detriment of their urban dwellings. Asians, on the other hand, not able to return to their ancestral homelands in India and having no rural homes in Kenya to invest in, chose to disconnect from politics and invest instead in their professional and economic development. It is these colonial exclusionary policies both in politics and economics that shaped Afro-Asian socio-economic interests and relations within the economic and social spaces of Nyanza and Western province of Kenya (Otiso, 2005:74).

At the same time, it was reported that African traders were gradually able to compete here and there with their Indian counterparts (Memon, 1976:209). The groundwork was being laid for the emergence of an indigenous trading class whose interests tended to conflict with those of the immigrant Asian traders thus making Afro-Asian relationship a relationship fraught with

antagonism and tension. The demand from Indian traders for plots in existing and new trading centers was very brisk in 1926. The so-called ‘European Quarter’ at Butere trading center, for instance, was thrown open to Indians, and almost all the plots were quickly taken up. For trading center at Kimili and Bungoma, all plots were booked and waiting list also started. By this time, as indicated in the Table 3 below, the population of Indians and British Indian traders in Mumias was 65 (within an area of 590.2 Sq.Km) compared to 48 in Kakamega Township (an area covering 3,033.8 sq.km)⁸³.

Table 3: Showing the Population Distribution of Indian Traders in Kakamega and Mumia in Western Kenya By 1926

Town	Category	Population	Sq.Km
Mumias	British Indian	65	590.2
Kakamega	Indians and British indian	48	3.033.8

Source: KNA, DC/NN/1/7

While there was brisk business among Indian traders, African businessmen progressed very slowly during 1927. In the same year, it was definitely decided by His Excellency the Governor that Kakamega should be the headquarters of North Kavirondo District (Obudho, 2002: 204; Fearn, 1961:115). And since then, it has been treated as a permanent headquarter and improvement on it commenced. This headquarter was transferred from Mumias to Kakamega⁸⁴. Shillaro (2000:362) argues that the dawn of gold mining led to tremendous growth of Kakamega Township. When gold was discovered in 1931, Kakamega was a relatively quiet district station with “a few Indian *dukas*[shops] and a native market.” It was the seat of the North Kavirondo District office [Boma] and contained a government Native hospital, a leper camp, a prison, a Government African School [GAS], the district court of appeal, and a seed farm of the agricultural department. Although there were a few Indian *dukas*, Afro-Asian economic interaction took place within these *dukas* and defined Afro-Asian relations within Kakamega region (Wagner, 1933).

Afro-Asian economic relation was further affected when the Native Lands Trust Ordinance of 1930 enshrined the principle that the approval of the Local Native Council was to be sought

⁸³ KNA, DC/NN/1/7

⁸⁴ KNA, DC/NN/3/4/42

before any alienation of land for the benefit of Asians could take place. In fact, from the establishment of the Local Native Councils in 1925 it had been the practice of the administrators under the terms of the Secretary of State's dispatch of August 1921, to seek such approval. The Local Native Councils controlled the rents paid by Indians on Temporary Occupation Licences, and had the power to limit or refuse the issue of licenses. Indian traders were discriminated against by the councils, sometimes restrained, but often encouraged by their chairman, the district commissioner⁸⁵.

There is no doubt, therefore, that the expansion of Indian commercial activities in the reserve areas of Kendu Bay, Bungoma, Ndere, Kisumu and Webuye was held back as a result of the devolution of control over trading centers to the Local Native Councils. Indian fears were further aroused by the terms of the Native Lands Trust Ordinance of 1930. This established a Central Native Lands Board, consisting of six officials including the Governor, and four non-officials nominated by the Governor. In practice, these were Europeans. The central board was advised by district advisory boards of two officials; a European non-official and an African nominated by the Local Native Council. Indians were thus excluded from membership of the bodies, which could now fix the terms of leases in the reserves, within the limit of the 33-year maximum period set down in the ordinance⁸⁶. For 'protection against external attack/competition by other interests,' Indian traders in 1932 formed the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce. Neither the Federation nor its successors were able to meet and match the challenges, which eventually destroyed the Indian *dukawallah* (Spencer, 1981:341).

But these policies did not stop, most of the Asian traders in the reserves still held their plots without security on Temporary Occupation Licence, awaiting the grant of a lease (Spencer, 1981:339). Early in the year 1932, it became clear that mining would make development in Kakamega township inevitable. The opportunity was taken of inviting the Town-Planning Engineer, then on a visit to Kisumu to Kakamega at the end of March. By June there were indications that a ruffle of prosperity was beginning to stir the hitherto rather stagnant waters of commerce in the Town. The first garage made its appearance in the Bazaar. By October all plots in the Old Bazaar area had been taken up, and the need for a town plan realized months

⁸⁵ KNA, PC/NZA/2/23/1/1

⁸⁶ KNA, PC/NZA/2/23/1/1

before, began to become urgent⁸⁷. By 1934, Kakamega was the only Township in North Kavirondo District with a total of 697 Indian business people (as compared to 1926 data).⁸⁸ While Asians held virtual control over the business realm before 1932, many of the new businesses belonged to Europeans. Between 1933 and 1934, numerous shops catering to European miners' needs, and hotels including the Eldorado, the Golden Hope Inn, the Corkscrew Inn and the Boma, restaurants, and garages appeared (Shillaro, 2000:364).

The second of these policies, whose beginnings can be traced back to the twenties, was that of introducing licences for African produce and thus eliminating the Indian *duka* from this area of trade. The twenties and early thirties was a period when ideas about the introduction of buying licences affecting a wide range of African produce were discussed⁸⁹. Under Governor Coryndon⁹⁰, there is evidence to suggest that there was a general sympathy at the highest levels of government for the idea of introducing buying licences for maize. This, unlike the introduction of licences for cotton, would certainly have seriously affected the position of the Indian *dukawallah*. Indeed, it was one of the aims of the scheme to limit what was thought to be extensive malpractices of the Indian trader and to ensure that the cultivator received a fair price for his maize (Spencer, 1981:339).

In 1932, the Kassim Lakha family⁹¹ also introduced cotton planting at Ndere area, in Siaya County. Before the construction of the Ndere ginnery, cotton was always transported from Asembo to Sio port for ginning at Samia (Western province). The establishment of Ndere

⁸⁷ KNA, DC/NN/1/13

⁸⁸ KNA, DC/NN/1/15

⁸⁹ KNA, PC/NZA/3/313

⁹⁰ *Sir Robert Thorne Coryndon* (1870-1925) served as a governor of Uganda from 1918 to 1922 and Kenya from 1922 to 1925. In Kenya, Coryndon plunged into the Indian Question, and although his temporizing almost led to his being kidnapped by settlers as part of a planned rebellion, he was seen as sympathetic to European settler interests. Coryndon introduced the concept of a policy, which called for the development of both non-native and native production. During his administration, initial tentative steps were taken to establish Local Native Council. See Hill, R, 1995 *The Marcus Garvey and Universal Negro Improvement Association Papers: Africa for the Africans June 1921-Dec 1922 Vol IX*, Los Angeles, University of California Press).

⁹¹ *Kassim Lakha family*: The renowned Lakha family traces their descent back to their forebear, named Surji. As a businessman, he was engaged in multifarious activities. Together with his brothers, he founded extensive business and industrial interests in projects, such as a hotel chain in Uganda, coffee curing works, coffee plantations, hides and skins and sisal. In Kenya, he was one of the early pioneers in cotton ginning

ginners brought about land appropriation. In 1934, Mr Mehta Kalidas⁹², of both Uganda Sugar Company Jinja, and Kenya Industries Limited searched for free land in Alego to open a ginners. Mehta's intention to acquire land in Alego aroused some tension and suspicion between him and the Africans in Alego. Given that there was no idle land available to be purchased, Mehta had to look for a site elsewhere as Africans in Alego were not willing to donate any land to him. After mounting a search for a willing seller for four months around the area without success, he chose what he considered favourable land and opened direct negotiations for the land with Chief Amoth Owira of Alego (Reed, 1975:88)⁹³ Perhaps this is what caused some Africans in Alego to protest because their land was appropriated without replacement. Clearly, the Asian thrust into the Luo countryside of Ndere was facilitated by the chiefs.

While Asians in Ndere enjoyed peaceful trade relations with Africans, in Yala area, the Asian merchants complained of crimes committed by Africans. They notified the DC Central Kavirondo that a dozen houses had been broken into in Yala town and consequently a number of merchants had suffered. They, therefore, appealed to the government to arrange to station *askaris* in Yala trading center to protect their lives and property⁹⁴. These criminal acts by Africans could be viewed as representing their resistance and protests against Asians who were seen as an appendage of European rule in Kenya. Their appeal to the government to station *askaris* symbolized the ruthless and brutal way in which colonialism manifested itself in the colony. These acts were, therefore, meant to dismantle the unequal economic relations which existed between the Africans and Asians.

The essential British policy before the World War II of discouraging formation of industries in the colonies that would compete with the vested manufacturing interests at home adversely affected the Asian initiatives. Under pressure from the powerful British textile manufacturers, several projects proposed by Asians to establish textile mills in Kenya were vetoed by the

⁹² Mehta Kalidas: Was born on November 17, 1887 (another account cites 1888) in Gorana Village, India, and left for Africa in 1900 when he was 13 years old. Mehta married Santokben Mehta and had three sons. He established the first sugar factory and estate in Uganda in Lugazi in 1924. He also ventured in cotton ginning in Kenya as well as starting muhoroni sugar factory in Kenya. He retired in his old age as the founder of a major multinational conglomerate, the Mehta Group of (see, *Saturday Monitor*, May 16, 2012, *How Mehta Deamt up the First Sugar Empire in Uganda for further reading see Mehta, N.K 1966 Dream half Expressed, Bombay: Vakils.*)

⁹³ Ogallo, O.I., 2006 Opcit

⁹⁴ KNA, PC/NZA/3/39/1, 1927

colonial office. During the 1930s in all the mainland territories, Asian industrial expansion was curtailed by marketing legislation, hostility from European settlers and rising competition from Africans and a concerted move by the local native councils and district commissioners to oust the Asians from all industry in the African areas. The marketing legislation of 1935 confined Asian traders within African areas to a few designated trading centers (Gregory, 1993:284/5). Marketing of Native Produce Ordinance were passed against fierce Indian opposition in Kenya in 1935. By the early thirties, it was clear to the Indian community in Kenya that the decades of unrivalled domination of trade in the reserves were drawing to a close. The two threats; the competition of African traders encouraged by government action, and legislation, which regulated and restricted their activities, were already apparent and growing in strength (Spencer, 1981:341).

Evidently, the level at which Asians and Africans interacted provided little potential for friendship or mutual respect between them. The context of interaction provided grounds for mistrust and conflict. This hostility became more visible after the World War (Atieno Odhiambo, 1995). The sudden hostility between the Asian and the African traders could be attributed to the level of awareness that the latter group of traders was subjected to as a result of the colonial education and also the issue of African returnee soldiers who also ventured into business.

The Marketing of Native Produce Ordinance was also to control the quality and direction of African produce. Under this law, the government gave itself the right to limit traders in any African-produced commodities to individuals or firms chosen by it. The restrictions provided the means for further control of production and prices and thus provided the support for high priced European traders to continue in profitable capitalist business (Zwanenberg, 1975:212-213; Atieno Odhiambo, 1976:226).

Paradoxically, one of the objectives of this ordinance was to separate retail enterprises from trade in agricultural produce and to give African traders more scope in marketing. Many Asian shop owners who dealt in retailing and in produce marketing had to give up one branch of their business, as trade licenses for the two activities were not issued to a single trader.

Unfortunately, the strict requirements for obtaining a trading licence effectively eliminated African participation in produce marketing (Furedi, 1974:350). In Nyanza this was facilitated by the Nyanza Trading Licensing Board. By this time, the process towards limiting

competition and controlling prices and centralizing marketing was well under way for many crops and cotton was highly controlled through the Director of Agriculture⁹⁵.

Moreover, the physical concentration of trade in the designated buying centers also worked to reinforce the tendency toward monopoly and this made African entry into commerce even more difficult (Kaplan, 1967:539). The government and white farmers portrayed African traders as agents of Indian business. Moreover, it was argued that they should be producers and not traders. This restrictive policy was, therefore, a strategy used by Europeans to fight both Indians and Africans in order to secure the colonial spaces of Kenya. Such policies were to form the basis of nationalism, which brought Asians and Africans together against the Europeans and enhanced Afro-Asian political relations.

Despite the fact that the Native Produce Marketing Ordinance of 1935 was in place, Asian traders got round the restrictive provisions of this ordinance by having different members of a family obtaining separate licences for retail and produce trade. The situation whereby Africans were dependent for a great part of their livelihood on the sale of produce to Asians was in itself bound to create a certain degree of suspicion. This suspicion was generalized by relatively few but well-known cases of business malpractices (like increasing prices of commodities and use of faulty weighing scales) committed by Asian traders (Furedi, 1974:350).

As ginners, millers and other manufacturers involved in the processing of African produce usually bought directly from the African cultivators, they were severely restricted in their overall business. Meanwhile, African competition, which had begun in many of the processing industries within the 1920s, steadily increased and was encouraged by the government, which offered training and other aid to Africans in industries such as brick-making, dairying, and wattle extraction. The Local Native Councils, which were empowered to license almost all types of business in the African areas, began to withhold licenses from Asian applicants for the operation of dairies, flour and oil mills, quarrying and brick making, and similar industries and to aspire to an African control of all manufacturing in their areas. They were assisted in this by the district officers (Gregory, 1993:284/5). This ambivalent nature of the colonial government in dealing with both the Asians and Africans fitted well with Bhabha's (1994) argument of the binaries that had structured colonialism.

⁹⁵ KNA, PC/NZA/1/12/115

Before 1945, very few Asian merchants had ventured into manufacturing, due to the constraints of capital and lack of credit facilities from European banks. There were, however, a few exceptions to this rule as there were cotton ginneries operating in areas like Kendu bay, Ndere, busia and Malakisi areas of Nyanza and Western provinces respectively having been prevented from establishing their factories in the 'White highlands. Others were involved in small-scale grain milling, sugar refining and oil refining. However, most Asians remained in the highly competitive sphere of retail trade. The colonial government also excluded them from exporting and importing directly until the 1940s. Through licensing regulations, they were compelled to buy and sell through the large foreign owned merchant houses such as Smith Mackenzie. The competitiveness of such trade encouraged many of the larger Asian capitalists into manufacturing, even before the war (Swainson, 1980:125-6). It is evident here that Asians were a jack of all trade trying their hands in any available business within the chaotic plural spaces of Nyanza and Western regions of Kenya.

Conflicts of interest between established Asian businesses and those of new African entrepreneurs also arose. This period also witnessed the expansion in African cash-crop production and the emergence of African small traders in the rural areas. Similarly, a class of local African traders in Central and Western Kenya had also emerged. Those in Nyanza were particularly opposed to the magnitude of Asian trade in the reserves and the employment of African hawkers by Asians in trading centers there. The Kavirondo Chamber of Commerce⁹⁶ passed several resolutions seeking restrictions on the activities of Asian traders. The Chamber members even suggested separate trading centers for Asians and Africans and also condemned the Local African Council's unpopular practice of allocating plots to Indians in the newly established trading centers against the interest of African traders and designed to keep them in their former place as growers of *wimbi* (finger millet) and *mtama* (ordinary millet). The Local African Council was therefore requested to cease inviting Indian traders to trading centers and trade in the prescribed areas be put into African hands (Memon, 1976:210). However, Indians devised means of contesting and negotiating for economic spaces within Nyanza and Western Provinces, through certain institutions.

⁹⁶ The Kavirondo Chamber of Commerce was an all-African economic pressure group representing the Luo and Luhya African traders, a premise of nationalism. It was also a tool of negotiating and contesting economic spaces in both Western and Nyanza regions

For instance, Indians used the North Nyanza Indian Traders Association and the Indian Traders Association⁹⁷ in Western province to contest for economic space in the region. In a meeting presided over by the District Commissioner Mr Williams C.H, Indians objected to the yardstick to all licenses of 1000 bags which was the limit of the amount of produce they could sell especially in Maragoli area. It was pointed out that this did not apply in the majority of trading centers or even in Kakamega itself, but that it was applied in places like Maragoli solely to try and avoid the overselling of their crop. Any application for licenses from Maragoli Trading Center, it was agreed, would be considered on their merit. Through this association, the Asians also questioned issues of marketing of produce, plot and trading license⁹⁸.

The development of Asian capital in East Africa before the Second World War was confined largely to the areas of trade and some basic processing of consumer items. The areas of accumulation for those of Indian origin in East Africa after the advent of British rule in Uganda and Kenya were confined to the areas of trade and commerce due to restrictions placed by the early colonial state on land holdings by non-European races. From the outset, the Asian capital was caught in between the forces of settler capitalism and the state's 'protection' and supervision of indigenous capitalism. Asian merchant capitalism was to compete with both settler capital for the control of trade in certain agricultural commodities and also with African merchant capital which was by the 1930's in many areas challenging the hold of Asians over trade in commodities such as wattle bark and maize. The pre-war colonial state in Kenya colony was largely to determine the role that Asian capital was to play. It was the juxtaposition between settler capitalism and indigenous capitalism that determined their role as traders and low level manufacturers in East Africa before the war (Swainson, 1976:38).

During the Carter Land Commission (1932-3), it was claimed that there was only one Indian agricultural settlement in Muhoroni (Nyanza Province), and Indian representatives on the Commission along with the African members complained about the existing land regulations and requested an underdevelopment tax to force the cultivation or sale of European owned land which was not being utilized. During the Commission, the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce in East Africa further complained that their trading operations were

⁹⁷Indian Trade Association was generally used as a vehicle and a platform of addressing economic issues affecting Indian traders

⁹⁸ KNA, DC/KMG/1/1/166-1950

being restricted by the colonial government, in that trading centers could only be established within the reserves with the approval of the Local Native Council and that the plots of land being allocated to them were too small and the terms of the leases limited to five years. The Indian contingent, on the basis of these objections, asked for the establishment of regular townships in the reserves, which were gradually to emerge after this date. Thus, by the 1930s, the Asian community was involved in a whole range of activities from building to shoe-making, but the main focus of their enterprise was on trading in commodities, acting as the link between the African producer of goods such as cotton and the (foreign) exporter of that commodity (Swainson, 1980:125).

Before 1945, therefore, very few Asian merchants had ventured into manufacturing largely due to the constraints of capital and lack of credit facilities from European banks (Swainson, 1976:39). Asian merchants were not permitted to import British manufactured goods (coal, weighing machines) directly, and they relied for their supplies of manufactured goods on the large British based merchant houses in Kenya, such as Smith Mackenzie⁹⁹ and Mitchell Cotts (Swainson, 1976). This gave rise to a situation whereby the Asian merchant class could only accumulate capital through an increasingly competitive form of retail trade, which in many cases, particularly after the Second World War, provided the impetus towards some measure of import substitution manufacturing. Before the war, many groups of traders had become involved in the importation of one commodity such as cloth, and in this case they moved frequently into direct production of textiles. This became a typical pattern, from importing the commodity into manufacture of the same items (Swainson, 1976:40).

The Asian willingness of investment was supported by a new economic climate. The extension of railways, roads and other communication patterns encouraged the establishment of many forms of central places. The second important booster to industrial and urban development during the post 1932 period in Nyanza and Western Kenya was the widespread mining of gold. The number of prospectors increased from 309 in 1930 to 23,158 in 1934, yet diminished thereafter to such an extent that by 1953 only one or two companies were still prospecting gold in the region (Fearn 1961:126). The discovery of goldmine led to the expansion of Kakamega and the establishment of Macalder Mine and Kitere in South

⁹⁹ As agents of the British India Steam Navigation Company, Smith, MacKenzie and Company were involved in the import and export of goods carried alongside the mail. BI ships brought in goods such as rice and cotton among them, *see* Swainson, 1980. *The Development of Corporate Capitalism in Kenya*.

Kavirono District. The major mining urban centers included Kakamega, Kitere, Macalder mines, Asembo Bay and Lolgorien (Obudho, 2002:207). The inauguration of gold mining (the gold fever) and rapid urban growth stimulated Afro-Asian trade around Kakamega. By 1933, a brisk market existed for local products such as vegetables, potatoes, eggs, chickens, fruit and milk, besides building materials including poles, grass, strings, mats, water jars, and firewood¹⁰⁰. Idakho, Isukha, Logoli, Nyore, Marama, and Tsotso¹⁰¹ women dominated much of the trade. Besides fresh supplies, these market women sold cooked food, with a few combining both activities. While local producers benefitted from higher prices offered by the Kakamega mill compared to prices at trading centers throughout the district, it was the low value perishables mentioned above that enjoyed sustained demand in the mines¹⁰².

Luyia producers also suffered from restrictive state produce marketing policies, which limited direct sales to mining companies. Asian middlemen¹⁰³ thus constituted the conduit through which African produced maize was conveyed to the mines. This, coupled with competition from European produced maize from the Kenya Farmers Association, profoundly reduced the value of maize sales to Luyia households (Shillaro, 2000). The Asians were also pre-eminent in demonstrating specific on-the job skills to Africans. In fact, their mode of skill acquisition can be said to have indigenized itself at all levels below the most formal contracting; it ran on quite different assumptions from the state version of apprentice training, and particularly opposed the view that trade schools were a necessary preliminary to trade practices (King, 1977:77). The Africans who had learned skills from the Asians were passing their skills to other Africans. As in the association with the Asians, new workers acquired through observation the skills of the African craftsmen. In time, this training was so valued that the novices began to offer payments for the opportunity to learn a trade. The system was so flexible in that the learner could leave to begin work on his own as soon as he felt that he had sufficient skill. The training took place not only in the cities and towns where some Africans artisans set up shop, but also in the villages to which many of the skilled returned in search of better opportunity (Gregory, 1993:172). In spite of this, Africans still remained deficient in mechanical knowledge. At that time and later, none of the governments was able to dispense

¹⁰⁰ NKDAR, 1933, KNA, PC/NZA/1/28

¹⁰¹ Idakho, Isukha, Logoli, Nyore, Marama, and Tsotso are sub clans within the wider Luyia community of Western region of Kenya

¹⁰² NKDAR, 1935, KNA, AK/2/27

¹⁰³ *A middleman is used in the above context to refer to a person who buys goods from producers and sells them to retailers or consumers.*

entirely with the Asian artisans. As late as 1948, the South Nyanza Local Native Council had to hire an Asian road supervisor and an Asian mechanic because no qualified Africans were available (Gregory, 1993:174).

The North Kavirondo Annual report of 1936 showed that the Afro-Asian relation was friendly. In Kakamega, the decrease in the non-native population on the goldfields led to the closing down of a number of businesses, and trade within the Township was less flourishing than for the past five years. On the other hand, enhanced produce prices led to a revival of trade in the trading centers and the natives got more to spend than they had since the beginning of the world slump¹⁰⁴.

According to the colonial state, In North Kavirondo, market organization at the beginning of the 1930s in North Kavirondo was considered haphazard by the colonial state and therefore called for regulation granted that this could be achieved with the minimum possible disturbance to the smooth flow of trade. Conventionally, produce buying was done in the main trading centers chiefly by Indian traders who acted as a link between African commodity producers and agents of firms operating on the international market (Talbot, 1976:150). This encouraged the proliferation of African traders in the reserves who engaged in trade by bulking up produce before delivering it to an Indian dealer. In 1936 for example, a study of marketing conditions in maize growing areas “found that a multitude of petty merchants were becoming interested in the maize business at many centers, making supervision of quality difficult”¹⁰⁵. Efforts to curb the activities of itinerant traders were reflected through measures meant to confine trade at specific market centers. The 1936 North Kavirondo annual report, for instance, indicated such efforts within the district to induce native buyers to gather in markets, and thereafter to prohibit produce buying within a radius of three miles of such markets. This was meant to facilitate the inspection of produce. The three miles radius scheme necessitated a reduction in the number of markets which according to the DC North Kavirondo, was carried out in the district without friction¹⁰⁶.

The importance attached by the colonial state to what was termed better “lay-out” for markets necessitated the appointment of a special marketing officer, C.O. Oates. According to Robert Maxon (2003), Oates (a colonial special marketing officer), who took up the post from March

¹⁰⁴ KNA, DC/NN/1/18

¹⁰⁵ KNA: AK/2/27

¹⁰⁶ KNA, DC/NN/1/18

1936, was entrusted with quite a broad mandate which, among other things, included provision of advice to the Provincial Agricultural Officers with respect to produce inspection, monitoring the enforcement of the rules encapsulated under the Marketing of Native Produce Ordinance, and monitoring the quality of produce emanating from African areas (Maxon, 2003:68). In the course of 1937, Oates visited North Kavirondo district twice and “was impressed by the progress made in streamlining the market” within the five months between his two visits. The marketing Officer was also satisfied with the quality of produce examined by him (Makana, 2006:115). It emerged therefore that the main shortcoming that beset the system of marketing agricultural produce prior to these interventionist measures undertaken by the colonial state was the absence of a mechanism that ensured quality through cleanliness, as well as the separation of different grades of such produce so as to attract better export prices. It is important to note that concerns about quality of produce originating from Kenya had been raised by metropolitan commercial interests even before the 1930s (Ndege, 1993:217).

In North Kavirondo district, for example, the Local Native Councils became instrumental in constructing go-downs, which were subsequently rented to the Kenya Farmers Association (KFA) to facilitate the bulk purchase of agricultural produce. By 1937 for instance, there were three Local Native Council go-downs in North Kavirondo district at Luanda, Butere, and Broderick Falls, the latter in present day Bungoma district. Each of these go-downs had been leased to the KFA for 700 shillings per year¹⁰⁷. The go-down at Broderick Falls was, however, handed over to an African company of some 80 members for use free of charge for one year from July 1936. The company in question here was the Kimilili Native Farmers Association whose leader was Philipo Mwangale¹⁰⁸ boasting a membership of 150 by 1937, the Kimilili Native Farmers Association exemplified attempts by African peasant producers in Bungoma to articulate their economic interests and to negotiate for better returns for their produce as they increasingly interacted with the market in the 1930 (Makana, 2006). Indians were already excluded from holding land in both the African reserves and the ‘white highlands’. It was this juxtaposition between settler and indigenous capitalism before the Second World War which would later on determine their role as traders and small-scale/low level manufacturers in Kenya (Swainson, 1980:124).

¹⁰⁷ KNA, DC/NN/1/19

¹⁰⁸ KNA, AK/2/27

As a testimony to the Indian presence and economic activity in Nyanza unlike in Western province, a tall Town Clock was erected along the main Oginga Odinga Street in Kisumu. It was unveiled on 19th August 1938 by the then Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Kenya H.E Chief Marshall Sir Robert Brooke-Pophan. The town clock, commonly referred to as (*saa maduong* in Local dialect) was built in memory of Kassim Lakha who arrived in East Africa in 1871 and died in Kampala in 1910. It was erected by Kassim Lakha's sons: Mohamed, Alibhai, Hassan and Rahimtulla Kassim so reads the inscription on the Town clock (Omenya, 2010).

Figure 12: Town Clock (Saa Maduong) in Memory of Kassim Lakha



Source: Picture taken by Gordon Omenya

It is significant that in the earliest years of company formations, Asian business partnerships were largely confined to wholesale and retail trade. Any enterprise that needed to raise large sums of local capital could do so more effectively through the vehicle of a joint stock company. Some Asian firms had moved into primary processing even before 1939, the most important forms of enterprise being oil-milling and cotton ginning in both Kenya and Uganda.

The merchant capital accumulated by this class of Asians before 1945 was to provide the basis for their move into industrial production after the war (Swainson, 1980:54). Leys (1975:38) identified this class as a merchant capitalist class, which was poised to become an industrial bourgeoisie of the classical type. It is therefore important to highlight that by 1939, Asian merchant capital dominated the sphere of retail trade, while white settler and foreign firms remained largely within the area of plantations and import/export trade (Swainson, 1980:57). Indian capital was also largely restricted to rural money lending for much of the nineteenth century (Bates, 2001:20).

Differentiation in terms of the shift from retail trade to manufacturing resulted in a much better socio-economic profile for Indians as a whole (Moliner, 2007:17). In 1945, the secretary of Yala Merchant Chambers¹⁰⁹ comprising members of Indians, Arabs and all traders without exception brought to the attention of the Executive Office of the Regional Board, Kisumu about their displeasure and lack of stock of some items whenever they went to buy them in bulk in Kisumu, from the Kisumu merchant(s). The chamber thus requested if they (Yala Traders) could be allowed/granted a direct allocation so that the Yala Merchant Chambers could be tasked with the responsibility of distributing some of these items, which would save them money and time. Some of the items to be distributed would include matches, sugar, jagree, Dietz lamps, globes torches and cells, teacups and saucers and tumblers¹¹⁰.

Around 1940, Nyanza Cotton Company owned by Asian limited applied to the Department of Agriculture seeking for permission to erect and run a posho mill on their ginnery at Nambare. Around the same time, Mr Folkes notified Lindsay Basford, the Commissioner of Lands Settlement that he proposed to sublease the Nambare Ginnery for a period of three years to Mr Nazarali Mulji¹¹¹ of Kampala. For practical purposes this would be a renewal of the sublease which expired on the 30th September 1941. Although the Asian economic activity in Nambare centered on ginning in 1941 and 1942, a list of Asian voters in the Western Electoral Area indicated a mixture of people with different skills living in different parts of the Province for instance, some of them were merchants, watch makers, shop assistants, shoemakers, civil servants, tailors, businessmen, goldsmith, barber, schoolmasters, clerks and teachers spread

¹⁰⁹ *Yala Merchant Chambers* was set up to represent the economic interests of Indians and Arabs small-scale traders living in Yala trading center in Nyanza province

¹¹⁰ KNA, PC/NZA/3/2/194

¹¹¹ Mulji Nazar Ali was born most probably in 1901 in Moshi. Nothing is known of his early life. He was however one of the generous, humane and eminent persons in Kenya

throughout Kakamega, Broderick falls, Bungoma, Mumias and Kisumu¹¹² The diversity of these activities is connected with the specialization of the different communities as captured in table 4 below.

Table 4: Showing Asians' Specialization (for more details see Michel Adam, 2010)

S.No	Indians	Activity
1	Jains	Merchants
2	Hindus	Shoemakers
3	Cutchi patel	Civil servants
4	Hindus	Businessmen/ commerce
5	Sikh/hindu	Automobile/goldsmiths
6	Sikh	Schoolmasters and teachers
7	Ismailia/hindu	Clerks shop assistants

Source: Michel Adam, 2010

4.3 Asian Capitalism

Within the ginning industry, a memorandum on ginnery and cotton buying protection in Nyanza was issued which also covered ginneries in Western Kenya. In a meeting held at the Provincial Commissioners office on 8th July 1940, Ndere, Nambare, Kibos and Messr Small and Company (Kendu) Ginneries were given independent cotton buying areas which other ginneries were to keep off. At the same time other cotton buying posts were either removed from the list of posts to be licensed in that year while others were closed. Some of the affected cotton buying posts were Ambira, Buholo, Sidindi, and Mori. Messrs Small and Company was, however, given exclusive rights to buy cotton in Karachuonyo, Mumbo and Kabondo location for a period of 33 years from the date of the grant of the lease of the land on which the ginnery at Kendu was situated. In this arrangement, no buying post of another firm was to be allowed within a radius of seven miles provided that the buying was satisfactory.

Unlike other ginneries, there was no special protection granted by licence for Malakisi ginnery in Western Province but it could be said that there was an understanding, not covered by any undertaking written or verbal, that another ginnery will not be allowed to be established within a radius of twelve miles during the currency of the lease provided that the

¹¹² KNA, DC/KMG/2/1/61

ginners were competent to deal with the cotton produced. The idea was to give these ginneries administrative protection against competitive buying so as to ensure steady supply of cotton to sustain their operations¹¹³. The observation above indicates that Asians were out to try all the possibilities of raising capital by all means. This is demonstrated by the fact that they were in retail trade, cotton buying and selling, produce distribution for instance maize, sugarcane production, manufacturing of oil and production of jagree and Ghee among others. These activities justify the fact that the postcolonial space was truly chaotic.

A fourth quarterly report on the Muhoroni-Kibos Indian farms for 1943 indicates that there were three instances of poor maize harvest. Kehar Singh, one of the farmers had a very poor rice crop due to blast disease while other farmers reaped good crops with the exception of Harban Singh who lost all his rice due to dry up of his swamp. All maize and paddy grown in the Kibos/Miwani area was supplied to the Kibos Flour and Oil Mills. A fair quantity of Jagree was manufactured during the quarter and much was sold to natives on the Black Market. It should be noted that along Kibos-Miwani, Kibigori, Chemelil and Muhoroni Indian farming areas of Kisumu district, members of the Sikh community were the most dominant as shown by the records of farmers who had submitted harvesting returns with the Department of Agriculture¹¹⁴. It is important to note that agricultural instructors for Indian farms were mostly African natives. A good example was Jonathan Oliech who also provided Native service for farmers in Central Kavirondo (Odingo, O.I, 2013). In the third quarter of 1943, a total of 5,248 bags of maize were obtained from the Indian Farmers from Kibos/Miwani, Kibigori, Chemelil and Muhoroni. Maize from kibos/Miwani was sent to Kibos Flour and Oil Mills, where it was paid for and stored. But also, the Assistant Agricultural Officer received a report to the effect that certain Indian farmers were black marketing their maize. These Asians operated under the umbrella of the Nyanza Indian Farmers Association.¹¹⁵

By 1945, Oginga Odinga alongside other people formed the Bondo Thrift Association which was a fore runner of the Luo Thrift and Trading Corporation (LUTATCO). This association started off by collecting money from members earmarked for business. But also, members in distress could borrow from this money. Later, the association began to think concretely about trade and decided to consult some advocates and the Registrar of Societies with a view to soliciting their advice and support on how to launch a trading company. However, during this

¹¹³ KNA, DC/KMG/1/2/10

¹¹⁴ KNA, AK/4/21

¹¹⁵ KNA, AK/4/21

consultation, the association found itself snubbed and the Asians prevailed. Of the Asian advocates in Kisumu, Odinga had this to say:

When I sought help in forming a company from Indian lawyers in Kisumu, they advised a welfare society; companies would be beyond our knowledge and ability, they said. I went to Kisumu to buy books on company law and settled down myself to draft our memorandum and articles of association. We were then ready to decide on a name. We called a meeting for that. Some said it should be called the Bondo Thrift and Trading Corporation. Others were in favour of calling it the Luo Corporation, others the Kenya Thrift and Trading Corporation, and still others the East African Thrift and Trading Corporation (Odinga, 1967:78).

It is, therefore, evident that Afro-Asian trade rivalry was very rife in Nyanza. This rivalry depicted the African struggle to dismantle and challenge Asian domination in trade in Nyanza region.

By 1945 in North Kavirondo District, the Indians engaged in handling produce did extremely well and consequently every Indian retailer tried to get into this business. It is noteworthy that one of the obsessions of the Indians in the trading centers was the education of their children as they realized that the future would demand something better than the past in this respect. Trade was almost entirely in the hands of the Indians. Apart from the mining industry, only four European firms were established in the District (Riddoch's Kelly's, K.F.A and Folkes and Co) and of these, only the first was actually engaged in selling goods such as hardware, petrol among others¹¹⁶ Otherwise, every other shop in the township and trading centers was Asian, engaged in native trade, which meant buying produce and retailing goods. The foregoing refers to Kakamega township and the ten trading centers (Malakisi, North Maragoli, Nambare, Kimilili, Bungoma, Broderick Falls, Luanda, Marama, Mumias Township, Kakamega Township). It was unlikely that there would be any more trading centers for a long time, as long as the Indians occupied them. The native opinion was definitely antagonistic towards them and it was the wish of the Africans to get the reserve trade in African hands. The number of Africans who held trading licenses in 1945 was 392, of which 379 were shops in the reserve, i.e. entirely outside the township and trading centers. These shops had a poor time in 1945, as they could not get goods unless by buying them on a retail basis from Indians and this state of affairs greatly contributed to hardening of the native views¹¹⁷. This also

¹¹⁶ KNA, DC/NN/1/27

¹¹⁷ KNA, DC/NN/1/27

demonstrates how capitalism as a mode of production propagated by the Asians was influencing the African economy.

4.4 Asian Economic Role in the Industry in the Inter War and the World War Two Period

Though less consequential for economies of East Africa than ginning, another major industry, the manufacture of sugar, was initiated between the wars by Asians and remained predominantly an Asian enterprise. The development of the sugar industry in Kenya is inextricably linked to the history of Asian Agricultural Settlement in the country. The most successful of these early Asian agricultural settlements as indicated earlier were at Kibos, in present day Nyanza Province (Wanyande, 2001:1).

The first attempt to establish a sugarcane plantation in East Africa can be traced to Jagat Singh who bought 102 acres of freehold land in Kibos, Nyanza Province of present-day Kenya and planted sugarcane, maize and Indian pulses. By 1908, Ahluwalia notes that the area under sugarcane had increased to 1,000 acres and continued to grow every year. It was not until 1919 that the first sugar factory in East Africa was set up by G.R. Mayers at Miwani, about 20 miles from the shores of Lake Victoria, where he set up the Victoria Nyanza Sugar Company Ltd. It was here that the first sugar production on a commercial basis was started when the Miwani Sugar Mills was established on a medium scale at Miwani in Kisumu District of Nyanza Province, in 1922. It was run as a private business concern by the Hindocha family. Hindocha was an Asian who became a very successful businessman in the area (Wanyande, 2001:1). But they couldn't sell sugar in the depression years, since there was so much coming from Uganda. The sugar industry revived a bit in 1935 but it really picked up only after 1947¹¹⁸.

Nevertheless, the entry of large Indian houses of capital, including Narandas Rajaram and Company, gave the Asian merchants access to considerable capital with which they were able to compete against the Europeans until they had edged them out of the lucrative cotton trade. Two of those Asian merchants were to play a key role in the development of the sugar industry. The first was Nanji Kalidas Mehta who was financed partly by Mathurdas Gokuldas (whom Mamdani describes as the "one-time cotton king of Bombay) and Muljibhai Madhvani, who was earlier under the aegis of Vithaldas Haridas and Company (Daily

¹¹⁸ www.sikhiwiki.org

Monitor, 2013). Three reasons have been cited for Mehta's entry into the sugar industry. First, the price of sugar rose significantly during World War I due to a shortage. This provided an incentive to those who had a nose for profit – and the strong, sweet smell of molasses, already being produced at small jaggeries – had an unmistakable whiff of money around it. Then Mehta visited Mauritius and saw first-hand the potential profit to be made out of venturing into sugar. Thirdly, the colonial administration's attempts to undermine the Asian merchants in the cotton industry encouraged some of the ginners to look for alternatives and “Mehta was drawn to the sugar industry in order to avoid such interference by the colonial administration” (Daily Monitor, 2013).

Meanwhile, the manufacture of crude sugar in the form of jaggery had greatly increased and had become an African as well as Asian and European enterprise. Although most of the Asians' production of jaggery was on a very small scale, some establishments, such as Hasham Jamal's plant at Muhoroni served hundreds of acre of cane. Apparently learning from both Europeans and Asians, numerous Africans were beginning to manufacture jaggery, which they used mostly to prepare local gin known as the Nubian gin¹¹⁹ (Gregory, 1993:279). The preparation of Nubian gin was very common in Kibos and Mumias areas of Nyanza and Western Kenya respectively. In fact, some Asians (especially the Sikhs and some patels in Kibos) also frequented the African settlement houses to take this drink. This was a sign of the emerging inter-racial relations between the Afro-Asian communities. However, this act by the Asians could be viewed as a marketing strategy of the Asian products¹²⁰.

Asians introduced a number of other industries in the interwar years. By 1922, for instance, Asians had begun an industry of quarrying and carving the unique soapstone of South Kavirondo. The Indian farms area was the major sugar producing area in Kenya, and most of the cane growers were operating under the Nyanza Cane Farmers Cooperative Society whose main function was to grade Jaggery. There was also the Kibos Planters Association.

Moreover, the growth of competition from Africans as petty traders and artisans coupled as it was with the marketing legislation of the 1930s (which largely deprived the community of the dominant role it had played in the rural trade since the early colonial period), paradoxically provided an impetus for diversification of Asia business activity in East Africa (Mangat,

¹¹⁹ Nubian gin: This was an African traditional brew prepared by Africans especially the Nubian ethnic group living in Kibos area of Nyanza province

¹²⁰ KNA, PC\NZA\3\15\142, 1931-50

1976:482). In Nyanza, a meeting of the Nyanza Indian Farmers was held attended by the Senior Agricultural Officer to discuss and decide the future policy with regard to Jaggery sales. Mr T. C Sood of Miwani stated that the Nyanza Farmers Cooperative Society had tried its best to control the sales of Jaggery in the past, but members were continually selling part of their jaggery through the society and part outside the society and in this way taking advantage of the increased local price. He went on to explain that before the society was formed, jaggery was fetching 65 cents per frasila, but since the formation of the society, quantities of jaggery have been exported and local price is now shs 3/- per frasila ¹²¹. In Kakamega, Mr M.G Modi who migrated to the area in 1935, from Movan India built the first-privately owned jaggery factory.

However, through the Nyanza Indian Farmers Association in Kibos, the Indian cane growers in Nyanza petitioned the Colonial Secretary in 1937 requesting that the permission that they had been granted to erect a sugar mill should not be cancelled until the end of three years and that money should be spent on the roads serving the Miwani-Kibos-Chemelil area in which the Indian farms were situated. This was also the biggest Indian agricultural settlement in the lowland areas besides the Lake Victoria¹²². It is evident that Asians' role in the sugar industry laid the foundation upon which the current sugar industries in Kenya were established. Other major sugar Industries like Mumias in Western Kenya and Sony Sugar were later put in place after independence by the government in order to try and reduce Asian dominance in the sugar Industry.

4.4.1 Afro-Asian Relations in the Dairy Industry: Contestations over Ghee Production

Asians too had a share and contribution in the milk and dairy industry in the interwar period. Veterinary Officer MaClure was primarily responsible for the successful introduction of dairying into the Kavirondo reserves. One factor of importance is that Jaluos were not a milk-drinking people, and success in the ghee production had been more pronounced in the Jaluos country (Nyanza) than in the Bantu areas of North and South Kavirondo. In South Kavirondo, the Jaluos living near Wakisii exchanged large quantities of milk in the Kisii markets through barter, with the result that dairying was most firmly established in those areas at some distance from the Bantu people. A second favourable factor according to the Veterinary Officer in his report to the DC Laikipia-Samburu who sought advice on the success of dairy

¹²¹KNA, AK/11/173

¹²² KNA, PC/NZA/3/2/34

industry in Nyanza, was the easy access to trading centers, which disposed of any marketing difficulties in trading which could have handicapped the producers in more sparsely populated areas¹²³. In his opinion, the Vet Officer stated that the most important factor, however, lied in the relative poverty of the individual in a densely populated area, where every possible means of securing ready cash was eagerly accepted. This stimulus was lacking among the more wealthy pastoral tribes. An evenly distributed rainfall ensuring regularity of supplies throughout the year was another advantage possessed by the Kavirondo. It will therefore be seen that Kavirondo, and the jalu country (Nyanza) in particular, afforded a favorable field for the introduction of native dairying. In each of the three districts, the methods adopted for fostering the industry were different¹²⁴. In North Kavirondo, the field was completely closed to the private dairy owner; all dairying was controlled by the Local Native Council which established its own dairies, equipment, and staff in 18 centers. The results shown compare unfavorably with those in Central Kavirondo and South Kavirondo, and private ownership of dairies was now being actively encouraged, the Local Native Council equipment being gradually handed over to individuals at cost price. In Central Kavirondo, Native Council Dairy was erected as a model, and individual enterprises encouraged. Between 1926 and 1936, 170 native owned dairies were established but in some of the favorably situated areas, little or no progress was shown¹²⁵.

In South Kavirondo, there was an unrestricted field for Indian and African alike. The Indian did the pioneering in opening up new areas, and albeit securing profits which the natives considered should be theirs, was instrumental in the distribution of large sums of money to the milk producers, who were indifferent as to the source of that money. At the end of 1935, there were roughly 120 Indian owned separators and 450 native owned machines in South Kavirondo; since then the Local Native Council decided to eliminate the Indian from the reserve and to confine his dairying activities to trading centers only. For the Indian it must be said that he possessed a financial acumen, which the African lacked, and that attempts to defraud milk suppliers had been far more common and more blatant among the African dairy owners than among the Indians. By 1931, dairying in Central and South Kavirondo had become sufficiently well established to justify regulation and supervision, since overcrowding, adulteration, non-payment of suppliers and a low standard of housing called

¹²³ KNA, PC/NZA/2/12/64

¹²⁴ KNA, PC/NZA/2/12/64

¹²⁵ KNA, PC/NZA/2/12/64

for attention. The Local Native Councils were induced to pass dairying rules designed to eliminate existing defects in the system, and Dairy Inspectors paid by the Councils were engaged to undertake the work of supervision and instruction. Financial help from the Councils was also forthcoming; equipments bought at wholesale rates were being issued to approve persons who, after an initial deposit of not less than 30% of the total, paid off the balance of the capital cost of the equipment in installments¹²⁶.

In May 1936 there were 38 Indians who owned licences for over 140 dairies operated by native employees in the native reserves. On the refusal of the Local Native Council to grant licences, it was no longer possible for the Indians to occupy the plots and they disposed of the machinery, in nearly all cases, by sale to their native employees who then operated the dairies on their account. During 1936, native agitation for the elimination of the Indians became acute¹²⁷. It appeared just to hold that, where the Indian claimed to own the premises, he should be required to apply for a lease and that where he did not claim to own the premises, the dairy licences should be made out in the name of the native owner. Applications for leases were made but the Local Native Council could not be persuaded to agree to them. The Indians then sold their separators or rather, in nearly all cases made them over on terms to their native employee who was then issued with the licence. The dairy went on as before and there was hardly any one that was closed. In a correspondence to the Hon Secretary of the Kisumu Chambers of Commerce, the PC, Nyanza stated that the Veterinary Office assured him that the changeover had not resulted in any loss of quality and that although somewhat lesser price was received by South Kavirondo producers than by the Central Kavirondo producers, the difference was fully explained by the extra cost of transport¹²⁸. However, the PC further pointed out that he had asked the DC to arrange to grant licences to Indians in trading centers if suitable applications were made. There was also no objection to Indians renewing their application for plots for dairies in the native reserve although the PC was unable to undertake that they would be granted. He however, pointed out that they could be granted in a few cases where it was felt that the presence or supervision of a suitable Indian would be of benefit to the industry. All these observations came in the wake of a letter written by the Kisumu Chamber of Commerce concerning ghee production¹²⁹.

¹²⁶ KNA, PC/NZA/2/12/64

¹²⁷ KNA, PC/NZA/2/12/64

¹²⁸ KNA, PC/NZA/2/12/64

¹²⁹ KNA, PC/NZA/2/12/64

At a meeting of the chamber held on 6th October, 1937, attention was drawn to the decline in the production of ghee in the Nyanza Province. It was stated that the present production of this commodity had fallen to approximately one third of its former level, and the opinion was expressed that this decline was a consequence of the prohibition of Indian owned separators in the native reserve and out of the trading centers. One result of the decline in production was already seen in the importation of ghee from Tanganyika to the extent of about 2000 tins a month. Similarly, it was also admissible that the loss of Indian supervision had probably been a contributory cause¹³⁰. It was admitted that, if the native council had shown a more liberal spirit and had agreed to a few of the best Indians being given leases of a reasonable number of sites subject to definite stipulations as to suitable buildings, machinery and personal supervision, the step would have been good for the industry. The veterinary officer was later taxed with the responsibility to prepare a statement to be placed before the Local Native Council from which they would be able to judge the economic disadvantage of their present attitude and of the advantage of revising it to the extent of recommending a reasonable number of dairy sites to be leased to Indians on suitable terms. The chamber, therefore, resolved that the government should be asked to reconsider the whole matter with a view to allowing Indian Traders to operate their own separators on plots leased on a day-to-day basis in the Kavirondo Reserve¹³¹.

Except on the ground of overcrowding, no applications made by Indians for dairy permits were refused until after the April 1936 meeting of the South Kavirondo Local Native Council. At this meeting, it was agreed that any Indian who owned more than eight separators should be required to reduce them to eight and that no new permits should be issued in respect of Indian owned separators majority of which were taken over by the natives¹³².

Like many other Afro-Asian conflicts in retail trade, there were also Afro-Asian conflicts and economic rivalries within the dairy Industry. The DC South Kavirondo in 1937 raised issues of natives of South Kavirondo with the PC Nyanza regarding Indian dairy licences in that area. On 10th December 1937, the DC attended a meeting at Ndhiwa Tribunal, ostensibly called by the “*Buch Johala*” (Native Chamber of Commerce), but actually attended by some 800 persons including the chief of neighboring locations. The DC states that the natives asked for information on the decision that Indians were to be granted dairy licences as they

¹³⁰ KNA, PC/NZA/2/12/64

¹³¹ KNA, PC/NZA/2/12/64

¹³² KNA, PC/NZA/2/12/64

informed the DC that the Indians had spread the news that they were to be granted licences in Trading Centers as a first step to allowing them into the reserve¹³³. “The natives were quite worked up on this subject which had assumed a political aspect in their minds. He informed them of the true position and gave them an emphatic undertaking that non-natives would not be granted licences out of trading centers unless the non-native first obtained a dairy plot through the usual channels. This assurance did much to quieten their apprehension. They continued thereafter to ask how we could contemplate issuing licences in trading centers to Indians when every day Luo applications were being refused on the grounds that it would be economically unsound to increase the number of dairies in the Luo location. They pointed out that the milk for the Indian licences would necessarily have to be drawn from the area of operation of existing Luo dairies. Finally, they asked me (DC) to “present to you (PC) this view with a very strong request from them that licences be not issued to Indians in trading centers and that the dairy trade be preserved to the Africans.”¹³⁴

Indians were informed that while the Local Native Council maintained its attitude or position, there was little prospect that any application for a dairy site in the reserve would be approved except possibly within the boundaries of a trading center. During the past two years (1937 and 1938), there had been five applications from Indians. Four of them were for sites in the reserves and were rejected. The other applications specified Karungu area but did not make it clear whether the applicants meant the trading center or some other part of Karungu location. These applications were also rejected. There was no reason, in evidence, to believe that the admission of Indians to sites in the reserve would do anything to improve the ghee industry. The applications made in 1937 were simply done for the purpose of re-issuance of licenses, which had earlier been withdrawn and rejected on the grounds that the number of dairies had already reached its maximum point/limit¹³⁵.

Indians were the pioneers of Ghee Industry in Kenya and it is evident that the Indian, whose dairying operations were rigidly confined to Central and North Kavirondo trading centers, played a very valuable part in the development of the dairying industry in South Kavirondo. The Indians’ main virtue was that with more substantial financial backing than the African, they were able to withstand fluctuations in ghee prices which had in the past forced many African separator owners out of business, while in the knowledge that payment for supplies

¹³³ KNA, PC/NZA/2/12/64

¹³⁴ KNA, PC/NZA/2/12/64

¹³⁵ KNA, PC/NZA/2/12/64

was relatively certain that sellers of milk frequently preferred to sell to an Indian rather than to an African¹³⁶.

Jagpal¹³⁷ supports this view by attesting to the fact that Ghee Industry was one of the industries that reflected a close working relation between *jalu* (Luo) and *muindi* (Indians) ‘we supported them and they supported us during bad times’.

Ghee production in Nyanza was so complicated due to the fact that, Indians who saw themselves as the pioneers of the Ghee Industry, felt that the colonial government favoured Africans who they considered as their competitor within the Ghee industry. In his letter to the Colonial Secretary, the PC Nyanza disputed a press statement by Indians in the Kenya Daily of 18 August 1937 arguing that, by autumn of 1936 it was agreed on all hands that the number of ghee dairies in the South Kavirondo district had increased beyond the point of efficiency. The quality and price of South Kavirondo ghee were markedly below the quality and price of Central Kavirondo and North Kavirondo ghee and many of the premises were filthy. Many Indians who had bought separators and churns financed natives to erect dairies in the reserve, which were operated by natives. It was not clear whether the Indians owned the dairies and employed the natives to operate or whether the native owned the dairy but the equipment was advanced to him by the Indian. There were many intermediate relationships between these two. These hybrid and ambivalent relations depicted the struggles, negotiations and contestations, which characterized the post-colony.

In his letter to the District Commissioner North Kavirondo, Kakamega dated 22nd July 1939, the PC Nyanza indicated that he was aware of the intensity of the feeling of the Indian community regarding the Indian owned creameries in the reserve. The Africans in South Kavirondo rejected the establishment of the Indian creameries in the reserve and an assurance was made to the effect that whereas the native feeling about Indian presence in the reserve would be respected, applications for creameries in trading centers would be sanctioned provided that there was room for them within the boundaries of the trading center and provided that the premises conformed to health requirements¹³⁸.

¹³⁶ KNA, PC/NZA/2/12/64

¹³⁷ Jagpal Singh O.I, 2013, interviewed in Kisumu owns a machinery shop along Obote road (Kisumu) dealing in agricultural machines

¹³⁸ KNA, PC/NZA/2/12/64

According to the Veterinary Officer, Nyanza, there were extensive areas in South Kavirondo in which the average number of stock owned by any one family was sufficient to provide a surplus of milk for sale in the dairies; the only areas north of the Sondu River in which similar conditions prevailed were in Nyakach, East Kano, Uyoma and Kitosh. Dairies in West Kano and Kisumu locations, in which there were fair surplus of milk, were forced to close down due to the demand of the Kisumu fresh milk market. Kisumu fresh milk market sold milk as widely as the markets at Lela, Luanda and Yala, which would otherwise be made into ghee.

A notice issued by the Municipal Board of Kisumu proposed to inaugurate the municipal milk supply as from 1st July 1944. The proposal of the Board in assuming physical control of all native milk brought into the town was to ensure that consumers obtained a reasonably pure supply of milk, instead of the heavily adulterated commodity that they had habitually bought. With effect from 1st July 1944, all milk brought into the town by native purveyors was brought to the municipal Depot for testing if fit for consumption and then paid for. According to this proposal, it would become an offence for consumers to buy milk from elsewhere other than from a registered distributor with a heavy penalty on conviction. It became mandatory that all milk was brought to the depot before sale and this was meant to stop the tendency of the native to take milk direct to households. Householders were henceforth compelled to obtain their milk from one of the four registered dairymen, whose details were as follows:

The Kisumu Dairy	Plot	8	Sec	35	Ogada Street
L.D Mohindra	“	3	“	28	do.
Shantilal P Joshi	“	6	“	35	do
Tarachand Sood	“	71	“	35	Station Road

Apparently, a number of the registered dairymen were Asians. This proposal was an economic move of entrenching and sustaining capitalism as a form of knowledge authored and authorized by the west and perfected by the Asians¹³⁹.

¹³⁹ KNA, PC/NZA/2/12/64

4.4.2 Asian Domination of and Contribution to the Road Transport 1920-1945

After the war, while the railway continued as the main form of transport for imports and exports between various rail stops, the cars, lorries, and motorcycles, as far as roads permitted, rapidly displaced foot travel, trolleys and *gharry* and *hamal* carts in the urban centers, and bullock carts, mules, donkeys, camels and human portage in the rural areas. The use of motor vehicle during the war had portended the change. Although reliance on draft animals and African porters continued, the motor vehicle clearly transformed the transportation soon after the war (Gregory, 1993:120)

Whereas in the late 1920s and early 1930s as the European settlers community acquired individual cars, the European taxi service increasingly served the needs of the tourist trade. The Asians led in providing taxis for the urban and interurban business of all peoples. They soon found lorries more suitable than cars for transporting large number of Africans. A similar pattern developed in the scheduled bus service. Like the earlier trolley system, this enterprise was designed to accommodate European passengers. The initial buses were reconditioned British manufactured Napier Lorries with a capacity of thirty-six passengers. Though intended for Europeans, these municipal buses soon attracted non-Europeans in large numbers and were patronized by Africans. Europeans and Asians who were both capable of buying or hiring cars, soon considered it valuable to use the public transport. As the early bus contracts conveyed monopolies, Asians were barred from offering effective competition in the municipalities. In the 1920s, when too many ginneries were competing for too little cotton, some enterprising Asian ginneries began to send Lorries around the cotton fields to pick up the farmers and their cotton. They by passed the markets and proceeded directly to the ginneries that paid the farmers directly. This increased the farmers' profits and stimulated production (Gregory, 1993: 148). In the 1930s, however, as bus transport was extended into rural areas and was developed between towns and villages, the government as a matter of policy refrained from conferring monopolies, and in their situation the Asians quickly took the initiative in providing the inter-urban transportation for Africans (Gregory, 1993:125).

Asians also assumed the lead in the conveyance of goods. During the 1920s, the Asians mainly seized the opportunity offered by the railways' differential rates to distribute imported manufactures, including petrol and fuel oil throughout Kenya. In the 1930s, because of their position in the export-import and wholesale-retail trade as well as their experience in transport, the Asians primarily responded to the African need to distribute their cash crops, to

local, urban markets, warehouses and shipping lines. If possible, on their return trips or even together with loads of manufactures and produce, the Asians carried Africans to and from the reserves and the centers of labor. When barred by legislation from specific roads, they proved adept at devising alternate, parallel routes. When restricted by the licensing system to the carriage of certain goods along designated roads, they ignored the restrictions and clearly concealed their operations (Gregory, 1993:125). That is how chaotic the plural spaces of the post-colony were. It was a struggle for the control and share of the available economic spaces of Nyanza and Western provinces of Kenya.

A number of Asians owned and operated buses and Lorries in the emergent transport sector in the 1930s. On the Kisumu-Nairobi road, the active bus owners included H.K Mirali and Company and Ladhu Ali Bux. Between Broderick Falls and Bungoma, Mohamed Kanji and Company was a prominent bus owner. The bus transporters on the road from Kakamega to Busia via Mumias were the four Asians Gulamali Meghji, T.K Meghji, Noor Mohamed Walji, Roop Lal and also an African by the name Nason Ongewe. Of the forty three lorry owners in South Kavirondo in 1942, at least thirty four were Asians and twenty two of the serviceable Lorries belonged to Indersingh Bukhan Singh (Gregory, 1993:125).

The rapid development of the Asian transport industry was distressing, not only to the government, including the railway interests but also to the Asians' European rivals in motorized transport. An example of European company that was bitterly resentful of the Asian competition was Roadways (Kenya) Ltd. Although it was initially successful, by 1939 the company had a very heavy deficit. The managing director blamed the Asian and African competitors for the deficit. The bus company started plying Kisumu-Kakamega route in 1932, with a service of three trips per week and later rose to six. By 1939, three Asian competitors were plying the same route as Roadways (Kenya), carrying passengers in Lorries, and extending the service on to Kitale. One ran daily, the others on alternate days. There was also African owned lorry driving on alternate days. To stay in business, Roadways had to set a fare of Shs1/60. Two of the Asians and the African operators, however, were charging only Shs 1/, and the third Asian had set a remarkable low of Shs -/50 on the slack, midweek days. In addition to these four, all of which were allowed to carry passengers, there were two lorries licensed only for the carriage of goods but transported passengers illegally at Shs -/50 (Gregory, 1993:126).

Though the Kenya government was deeply concerned with problems arising from the rapid expansion of road transport, during the 1930s, it adhered to its policy of open competition among the vehicle owners and did not show favoritism based on racial lines. In 1936, the acting Provincial Commissioner of Nyanza criticized Asian-owned buses and Lorries on the pretext that apart from the few new vehicles, most of the vehicles had bad brakes, dangerously worn tyres and loose steering. The vehicles were also overloaded, exceeded the speed limits, and frequently had no insurance. Unfortunately, he explained, “it is very difficult to prosecute because native passengers are generally coached beforehand to say that they are being carried free of charge” (Gregory, 1993:127).

In the interwar years, the Africans remained generally subordinate in new form of transportation operated by both Europeans and Asians. Toward the end of the period, in Kenya and Tanganyika, some Africans were participating in road transport as both owners and drivers. By then, the numbers of African drivers increased and there was also a significant number of them who, as assistants to Europeans and Asian mechanics, were acquiring new skills of vehicle maintenance. Apparently, however comparatively few in these countries had accumulated the capital essential for purchasing and operating motor vehicles. The main change for the African was that they, like the other communities were becoming dependent on the new form of transportation. Although bicycles served their local needs, buses or the one-and-a half-ton or three-ton lorries, filled with standing passengers and their goods, had become the Africans’ customary means of local distance travel. Portage, except for personal use in carrying wood for the fuel and vegetables for the local markets, had all but disappeared (Gregory, 1993:130).

Despite the participation of other races in the road transport, it was primarily an Asian contribution. As Hazlewood (1964) noted, road transport was a competitive industry of many relatively small firms. In this respect, it was like shop keeping, an enterprise in which the Asians could excel, and they were mainly responsible for developing the new business, which, as distinct from the railway, was a product of private enterprise. The effect on the African was profound in that apart from opening the Africans areas to trade and making possible a cash-crop economy, the Asians employers trained Africans as drivers and mechanics thus making it possible for the eventual entrance of Africans into the ownership and management of road transport.

Contrary to the usual assumption that Asians constituted instead a barrier to the Africans' rise into a middle-class¹⁴⁰ position, they in this particular industry, joined with Africans, assisted them financially, and merged with them in an expanded business. Their history in this enterprise was a striking example of the Asians providing in Kenya a transition, especially in the sphere of economics, from European colonialism to African independence (Gregory, 1993:150). It is evident, therefore, the transport industry had similar characteristics in both Western and Nyanza provinces of Kenya. In both regions Asians took the lead and conspired with Africans to short change the colonial administrators out of sheer need of necessity. This Afro-Asian relationship in the transport industry points to the fact that, the postcolony was not just about resistance but also collaboration.

4.5 Afro-Asian Social Relations in Western and Nyanza Provinces of Kenya in the Inter War and Second World War Period

4.5.1 Afro-Asian Relations in the Housing Sector

The commercial success of the Indian was not commensurate with his accommodation in Nyanza. The housing of Asian clerical staff in Kisumu was reported to be most unsatisfactory and scandalous due to overcrowding. The type of housing favoured by the Asian community and which had been evolving (The shop cum residence) found its most mature development in this period as either the single storey front shop and shop residence with walled backyard or the two storey town house with shops on the ground floor, stores, a walled backyard and residence upstairs (Anyumba, 1995). These types of houses suited the long hours of business transactions and those remain typical of the community. This structure too suited the exclusiveness and security needs of the extended Asian family.

Security concerns for the Asians affected their interaction with Africans in their areas of residence. However, within their houses, their relationship was limited to the Africans they employed as house servants or *ayahs*. House servants did the cleaning and cooking and *ayahs* cared for the children¹⁴¹. While the Asian women in these houses spoke the vernaculars of India they learnt some elementary 'kitchen' Swahili to enable them to communicate with the African servants. Some learnt the local Luo language from their African house helps. Inter home visits between Asians and Africans was however minimal. In Ndere, Yala and Kendu

¹⁴⁰ Middle Class: This terminology is used here to denote an economic class based on the income levels of Africans

¹⁴¹ Ondiallo, O.I., 2006 Opcit

Bay, the Asian community was housed in the trading centers where they used their shops for both commercial and residential purposes¹⁴²

Within these Asian houses, as Ochieng¹⁴³ argues, there was clear division of labor between Asian women and their house helps. Asian women visited African markets to purchase vegetables while their house helps remained at home to do chores like cleaning the house and tending the garden. Asian women also taught their African house helps how to prepare the foods they purchased from the market. Once the African house helps mastered the art of cooking various Asian dishes, they would continue to cook without any supervision. African house helps would henceforth be sent to buy some of these vegetables from the vendors in the market. The level of interaction between the Asian women and their house helps was that of the master-servant and was limited to the space between the kitchen and the living room of the Asian houses. African house helps were not allowed to spend nights in the main houses of the Asians but they went back to their residences or spent in the servant quarters.

During this period, the Afro-Asian housing was also the issue around which race relations revolved both in Nyanza and Western Province. The policy requiring Africans (except for domestic servants) to live in segregated areas was implemented through a variety of by-laws, including those which prohibited Africans from leaving those areas at night and those which required the local authorities to erect housing in African locations. It is factual; therefore, that Africans who arrived in town in the period before the Second World War were segregated in terms of residence (Olumwullah, 1986:186).

During the interwar period, social developments continued to be undertaken along racial lines. As early as 1919, Asians operated within the Indian *bazaars* and shops from where they did business, in towns and in the rural areas such as Bungoma, Ndere, Luanda, Malakisi, Kakamega, and Kendu Bay. Mito, an oral informant who was asked whether Asians in rural areas visited people in their homesteads said that:

The Asians never stayed inside *gweng*, (village) they preferred staying in the trading centers, therefore interaction with them in areas of residence was minimal unless one went to their shops. Asians could also not visit Africans in their rural homesteads/houses or even attend a funeral of their employee(s) or

¹⁴² Ondiallo, Faraji, Ochoko, O.I., 2006 Opcit

¹⁴³ Ochieng Felix O.I., 2014 Interviewed at Kondele area of Kisumu, works as a driver for Praful Patel.

friends in the village. (Although gift is accepted when a family is bereaved among the Hindus, just like Africans their belief system also recognized the fact that there was life after death in form of reincarnation). They would always give financial or material support in such situations¹⁴⁴.

Although Asian interaction with Africans was very limited, they still supported them in times of need for example during the loss of a loved one. Such gestures strengthened their relationship especially with their African employees. Ajay¹⁴⁵ argues that their socialization was that they spent more time doing business and therefore, stayed in areas/places where their customers would easily access them or where the Asians easily reached out to their customers.

The colonial authorities were convinced that the European Settlers would fail in the commercial sector where Asian presence was much felt and this in essence was the foremost cause of segregation within the society. Earlier in 1913, William Simpson, a sanitation expert advocated for both residential and commercial segregation of Kenya's Indians on sanitary ground and this segregation policy was not in vain. In his dispatch of May 21, 1920, the then Colonial Secretary, Lord Milner, directed that 'the principle of race segregation should be adhered to in the residential areas of townships and wherever practical in commercial areas also. Suraiya, (2006:29) argues that the colonial government undertook to segregate Asians in order to reserve certain areas for white settlers. They asserted that, in the interests of social comfort, social convenience and social peace, the residence of different races in different areas was desirable in order to mitigate hostility and ill feelings.

Although colonialism and its segregation policy could be blamed for the racial pattern of residential establishments in Nyanza and Western Provinces of Kenya, Asian culture and religion also played a part in affirming social segregation within these two spaces. Before India's partition in the 1947 as 'Indians' and afterwards as 'Asians,' the Asian immigrants came largely from an impoverished agricultural background of western India. A composite of ethnic groups, they were separated by the Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, Jain and Christian religions; the Gujarati, Marathi, Kutchi, Punjabi and Konkani languages; and a variety of subcultures. They were fragmented even further into congeries of extended families (Gregory, 1993:1)

¹⁴⁴ Sembi Khan, O.I 2013, Dan Mito, O.I 2007, Sembi is an Asian who operated a garage in Kendu bay. He also has trailers used in transportation of goods within the country. Dan Mito works with the County Council in Kakamega but lives in Vihiga county of Western region

¹⁴⁵ Ajay Gosh O:I, 2013 Opcit

The Hindus formed the majority among Indians followed by Sikh community. Members of the Indian Diaspora were deeply conscious of their rich cultural heritage. They were aware that they were inheritors of the traditions of the world's oldest civilization; and being part of such a rich legacy, they were naturally keen to maintain their cultural identity (Gupta, 2010:47). This pattern was also repeated both in Western and Nyanza provinces of Kenya.

Because of diverse contexts of migration and settlement, a variety of factors differentially contributed to South Asian community's social development overseas. Sometimes overseas South Asians were socially fragmented and at other times they were united. In some places, South Asians disregarded many of their cultural traditions, while in other places these cultures were steadfastly maintained. The divergent histories of South African migrant communities talked more about international migration processes, social and cultural change, political development and ethnicity (Clarke *et al.*, 1990a). According to Cohen (1997a: 61) intercontinental migration, i.e. indenture, provided 'for some poverty-stricken Indians.... a window of opportunity for social mobility that the rigid caste system inhibited, but did not totally prevent. The caste system therefore enhanced Afro-Asian social segregation to some extent alongside the colonial racial policy.

In the Town Planning Committee meeting of 2nd December 1936, it was recommended that Kisumu town be divided into two zones: Asiatic and African zones. However, this was objected to by the Acting commissioner for Local Government, Lands and Settlement who cited the White Paper of 1923 in which the policy of racial segregation in townships was definitely abandoned except in the few instances where the government was required by legal commitments to maintain occupation restrictions¹⁴⁶. It is evident here, therefore, that race was a variable used by the colonialists to either include or exclude identities from residing in specific areas. Although, being partisan to the White Paper 1923, the colonial government through its administrators (Kisumu DC) was quick to downplay the recommendations by the Town Planning Committee.

The District Commissioner, Kisumu, responded to the Commissioner of Local Government, Lands, and Settlement, assuring him that the Kisumu Township Committee had been under no delusion with regard to the segregation of races. The terms "European residential area" had been used merely as a convenience to describe areas which were so used. The DC further

¹⁴⁶ KNA, PC/NZA/2/18/11, 1936

stated that, the issue of non-segregation had been raised at a meeting of the Township Committee by Mr Dhanwant Singh and upon his motion, it was decided to classify the areas in the township as follows: ‘Milimani’ – the portion used as European residential area to the south end of the town; ‘Winam’- the portion including both the Bazaar and the Indian residential area North East of Milimani, “Manyatta” – the locality of the Arab¹⁴⁷ village east of ‘Winam’; ‘Kibuye’- the locality of the Catholic mission swimming bath east of ‘Manyatta’, and ‘Kaloleni’- the African residential zone south of ‘Kibuye’. The segregation committee comprised of the Asians, the DC and Medical officer of Health¹⁴⁸. It is important to note that there was an attempt by the colonial government to zone areas according to races in Kisumu as compared to Kakamega in the western region. Similarly, it is also evident that Asians experienced acute shortage of accommodation whether in Nyanza and Western regions of Kenya. Unlike Western Kenya where the Indian Association of Kakamega handled crisis in the housing sector, in Kisumu, the Kisumu Housing Committee dealt with the same problem as the social spaces became plural.

In 1938, the layout for residential estate in Kakamega township was done in such a way to eradicate racial discrimination. According to the layout, the whole area would be called Class ‘B’. A 30’ frontage was considered sufficient for the type of building which a Somali and the poorer Indian would erect. Without discrimination, it was obvious that the Somalis would want the plots nearest their cattle pounds. The wealthier Asiatics could if they wished to do so, take up Class ‘A’ Schedule 1 or 11 plots according to the DC, North Kavirondo and indeed two Asians had already done so.

The Acting Provincial Commissioner Nyanza, Mr Tomkinson, also observed that the expression ‘Arab and Swahili plots’ could not be allowed to stand as it created racial discrimination in township. The Acting Commission for Local Government also agreed with the Provincial Commissioner and advised that the “Arab and Somali Residential Area’ would therefore not be used and proposed to revert to the original intention of calling the new plots Class ‘B’ residential area¹⁴⁹. This did not however, destroy racial segregation and Indians were specifically confined to Class “B’ residential sites (which was referred to as Indian).

¹⁴⁷ Manyatta is a residential area in Kisumu District of Nyanza region populated by the Arabs thus the coinage of the name Manyatta Arab.

¹⁴⁸ KNA, PC/NZA/2/18/11, 1936

¹⁴⁹ KNA, PC/NZA/2/18/18

Before 1939, two interacting ideas governed the African policy on housing. First, all housing within the town had to conform to the building rules under municipal ordinances. Second, the African population was not, as had been earlier indicated, regarded as a permanent element in town as their accommodation remained largely unanswered in this period (Olumwullah, 1986:236).

The denial of elaborate African housing was a major factor in the control of African influx into the town. Therefore, most of the Africans who stayed in towns such as Kisumu and Kakamega resided in servant quarters provided by their Asian employers while others worked and went back to their homes, which neighbored the town. These divisions were also marks of identity of varying degrees of superiority and inferiority on the postcolonial space of Nyanza (Omenya, 2010).

There was an acute shortage of Asian housing both in Kisumu and Kakamega. The Indian Association of Kakamega through their secretary continuously raised the issue of housing shortage in Kakamega with the DC arguing that the position of housing for Indians in kakamega was worse¹⁵⁰. In Kisumu, the Kisumu Housing Committee handled this shortage. Asians living in town and working for the government were housed in the Railway Asian quarters. These quarters were overcrowded and not enough to cater for the housing needs of the Asians. This made Asians acquire houses in areas that had so far been generally accepted as the European area. A program of building quarters for government Asian servants was also in progress to alleviate the problem¹⁵¹. Because of the shortage of housing, some Asians resided in the Indian bazaars from where they carried out trade.

It should be noted that the social status of the occupiers of the Indian Bazaar largely included poor class Indians whose interests dovetailed with those of Africans and who therefore had good reasons for promoting symbiotic relationship. Their social life involved people adjusting to and surmounting the tribulations of colonial urban life (Murunga, 2007:10). It is no wonder then that the Bazaar housed many Indian traders and their families. In the bazaar, you could find tailors, barbers, blacksmiths, shoemakers and *dhobis* (*Dhobi* is an Indian word meaning washerman or washerwoman). The term *dhobi* remains in use to date by Africans to refer to people who wash and dry clothes. Africans acquired the *dhobi* culture from the Indians. At the bazaar, Africans also supplied Asians with essential foodstuffs like vegetables, tomatoes,

¹⁵⁰ PC/NZA/3/1/346

¹⁵¹ KNA, PC/NZA/3/41/3/1, 1928

onions and millet while at the same time gaining the skills of making shoes from the Asian cobblers¹⁵². The necessity of a *dhobi* was an important basis of Afro Asian relations in the bazaar residential area.

Zoning of residential areas according to race did not prevent Afro-Asian interactions. In the Asian households, Asian women prepared *chapatis*, *samosa* and *bhajias* (some variants of wheat baked bread and cakes) which they sold to both Asians and Africans. Some of their dishes were incorporated into the diets of Africans (Seidenberg, 1996:102). *Chapati*, which is currently popular with Africans is basically another version of the Indian *roti*.¹⁵³

At Jamnadas residence in Kisumu, African children would go to the compound to eat a certain fruit which was locally known as *jamna* coined from the name Jamnadas. Henceforth, they would say that they were going to *kajamna* (Jamnadas place) to eat that fruit. This name has stuck with the Africans up to date.¹⁵⁴

With the outbreak of the World War Two, African income and housing improved slightly in comparison to a decade earlier. Indeed, between the World Wars, policies involving expenditures on housing development in the entire colony were distinctly secondary to policies involving control over the African urban population (Olumwullah, 1986:215). However, because of necessity, the Asians related with Africans who they employed as domestic workers, guards and house girls. As early as 1944, the issue of inadequacy of accommodation particularly in Kisumu for the non-Government Asian population was a big issue.¹⁵⁵ Similarly, by 1945 congestion of Asians within the business area in Kakamega called for the need for the provision of plots by the colonial government to construct Asian houses. This request was approved by the Commissioner of Lands who suggested that factory plots should be used as temporary residential areas by the Asians. However, the Asians rejected these plots preferring to wait for permanent plots where they could put permanent buildings for

¹⁵² Ajay, O.I., 2012 Opcit and Owino Milton, O.I 2007/12 Worked as an electric and electronic engineer for Copy Cat; a business enterprise owned by Indians along Oginga Odinga road in Kisumu before opening his own engineering company

¹⁵³ Patel Sennan, O.I, 2012, Interviewed at DHT Secondary school in Kisumu taught both at DHT Secondary School and at New Kisumu High School; a black majority school

¹⁵⁴ Owiyo, Joab, O.I. 2011 Interviewed in Kisumu, Joab is a retired Post Master and worked for the Kenya Post and Telecommunication. He served as a postmaster in Mbale, Lumbwa, and Kakamega in the 1980s

¹⁵⁵ KNA, PC/NZA/16/45

residential purposes.¹⁵⁶ Permanent buildings were meant to ensure the security of Indians wherever they stayed.

In the meantime, because of the political, social and economic developments which characterized this period, Stitcher (1975:36) concludes that African consciousness of the larger social structure grew as demands for higher wages and better living conditions became linked for the first time, with demand for equality with Indian and European workers and for African equality with other races generally. Class-consciousness became mixed with race consciousness, and labor protest became linked with African nationalism, which cemented Afro-Asian relations towards the struggle for African Independence.

4.5.2 Afro-Asian Relations in the Education Sector

The racial approach noticed in the provision of housing also applied to the provision of other social services like education. Chattopadhyaya (1970:412) while comparing Asian and European education, argues that the initial apathy of government for Indian education in Kenya was compensated for by Indian private enterprise. Thus in 1920, a number of private Indian schools were founded with the contributions of private persons. Such schools were usually managed by an elected committee and were financed partly by public subscription and partly by modest fees by parents. Help also came in the shape of endowments or generous donations from rich leaders of the Indian community, for example, Allidina Visram. As the Indians penetrated the interior inland, they set up schools for their children and ran those schools at great sacrifice to themselves. Later on, the colonial government came to their aid, helped with grants and gradually took over some of the schools. In a short time, the country was dotted over with trading centers, with Indian settlements and their schools.

The inter-war and Second World War period saw three phases of the development of education. Phase one, 1923-28 saw the rapid spread of 'bush' and catechiscal schools that were later to develop into elementary schools. Phase two, 1929-36 saw the emergence of Independent school movement and a new emphasis on upper primary school system. Phase three, 1937-1944 saw a change, following the lifting of barriers that limited African education to below secondary school levels (Ogotu, 1981:146). However, all these developments fell short of improving Afro-Asian relations in schools given the European focus on African education, which was under the missionaries.

¹⁵⁶ KNA, DC/NN/1/27

education and sports were organized on strict racial lines which gave the Europeans an edge over the other races, the Indians, the second best, with the Africans making do with whatever was left. The education policy for Africans was first enunciated by the Colonial Secretary in a command paper in 1925, which said that:

The first task of (African) education was to raise the standard alike of character and efficiency of the bulk of the people, but provision must also be made for the training of those who are required to fill posts in the administrative and technical services, as well as those as chiefs who will occupy positions of exceptional trusts and responsibility. The aim of Asian education was 'to provide an eight years' course of primary education for all children of six years and over (As quoted in Ogot, 1968:276).

The racial attitudes of providing quality education were also reflected in the field of funding. Despite school-age African children outnumbering Europeans at any given time during the colonial period, African education received very little funding. In 1925, for example, the colonial government spent Ksh 524,835.85 on European education, which represented 33% of the national budget on education as compared to Ksh 424,279.47 on African education, which represented 26.6%, and Ksh 23,862.68 on Indian education, which represented 15% with the remaining 25.4% going to administrative costs (Kisiangani, 2003:96). Despite the demographic superiority of the African enrolment, the colonial government spent very little money on the education of individual African pupils. Looking at the per capita expenditure for the education of the different races, Kisiangani (2003:96) notes that less money was comparatively invested in an African pupil (lumped together with Arabs) than either the European or Asian. This discrepancy in funding seems to have underscored the colonial government's belief in the inferiority of the black people.

The government's sympathy for the education of Kenya's Indian children was in evidence by 1926 when the government founded schools in Kisumu, Kakamega, Nairobi, Mombasa and Lamu (Chattopadhyaya, 1970:412). Outside big towns, Indian education depended upon the initiative of the local population. In course of time, the government responded to the educational needs of the Indian children though the response was varied in extent from area to area. The Asian school system in East Africa in general consisted of primary and secondary courses. The Asian schools were almost entirely staffed by Asian teachers. The Indians were initially interested only in primary education, which was considered sufficient for qualifying their children for a commercial career. Secondary education was expensive and was

considered the luxury of the rich. Moreover, the parents wanted their children to be the bread winner of their families on completion of their primary course without going in for the next higher or secondary stage. It was only after the Second World War that the Indian parents began appreciating the importance of Secondary education in shaping the career of their children. Indian childrens' school education was supplemented by what is called family education, which was provided by parents at home for their sons and daughters till they had seen fifteen changes of summer. Despite the Asian eagerness to take what technical training they could access, their emphasis was on the skills passed on within the family; for instance, the Sikh taught his son carpentry, the Gujarat trained his son and daughter to work in the shop (Chattopadhyaya, 1970:408).

Given the small inadequate space for the Indian school in Kisumu, in 1928, there was a proposition for the construction of new buildings for Indian school. Consequently, a 10 acre plot situated near the Police line was proposed. This 10-acre site was reserved by the Kisumu Township Committee at the request of the Indian community. The construction of a school on the side was also recommended by the Medical Officer of Health. The idea was to build a big school with many facilities because they had estimated that in the course of the subsequent months, the numbers of Indian children seeking education could increase to about 200, because of the increased number of boys from the Indian sugar estates in the Miwani area who would want to attend the school.¹⁵⁷ By 1929, the Khoja Ismailia Community supported two schools at Luanda and Mumias. Each was staffed by an Indian teacher and they catered for about 2 dozen and 1 dozen pupils respectively. In western Kenya, there was the Butere Indian School to cater for the education interest of Asian children with a number of African servants.¹⁵⁸ Through their Secretary, they applied to the District Commissioner, Kakamega, for allocation of plot number 26 for the purposes of the school. Other schools included Indian School Luanda and were inspected by the Inspector of Indian Schools.¹⁵⁹ In 1932, the Government African School, Kakamega was completed and was formally opened on December 3rd by the Hon Director of Education. The school opened on 27th January 1932 with a staff consisting of the principal and three African teachers.¹⁶⁰ It should also be pointed out that in Yala, there were two Indian schools: Ladharam School Yala and the Indian School Yala, but these schools were for Asian children only. The same applied to Asembo bay with

¹⁵⁷ KNA, AV/12/154

¹⁵⁸ KNA, DC/KMG/2/13/28

¹⁵⁹ KNA, PC/NZA/3/6/40

¹⁶⁰ KNA, DC/NN/1/13

the Indian School in Asembo Bay. Children in the school were taught in Gujarati especially translation from Gujarati into English and arithmetic.¹⁶¹

The Government Indian School in Kisumu was later to serve the whole of Nyanza Province and therefore there was a need to have a hostel or a boarding house for Asian children coming from outside Kisumu. By 1935 the school was accommodated in a building belonging to the Sikh Community and another belonging to the Sanatan Hindu Union, which was later rented by Government when the former building proved to be too small to cater for all the pupils.¹⁶² Each Asian community also had its areas for sports for example, tennis court for the Siri Guru Singh Sabha in Kisumu.¹⁶³ By 1939, grants of sports plots were given to the Kisumu, Shia Guru Singh Sabha and Shia Imami Ismailia Council. These were the only leases registered by the Registrar of Titles in respect of sport plots granted to Indian communities.¹⁶⁴

There was also emergent emphasis on African education because of the need to produce clerks and other junior officials for the colonial administration. Colonial education, which was an extension of Western education, imposed on the African mind certain binaries including those of colonizer/colonized, primitive/civilized, European/other as well as religions/superstitions. These binaristic mapping of power relations gave the impression that through colonialism, civilization and modernity would flow from the center which was the West to the periphery which was Africa. This false notion had to be forced down to the oppressed African people with the result that colonial subjects surrendered their identity to the West. In this way, education seems to have been transformed into a critical instrument for destroying the African identity (Kisiang'ani, 2003:91). Institutionalized schooling in colonial East Africa prevented the mixing of boys and girls as well as grounding the segregation of the races (Seidenberg, 1996:106).

The above developments affected Afro-Asian relations in that both communities could not attend the same schools; therefore, interaction in schools was deliberately minimized. To show that Africans, Europeans and Indians were different, the platform of difference was used in setting up a nation-state which exploited the Africans and marginalized them. Indian education was chiefly centered at Kisumu with small struggle for existence in such places as

¹⁶¹ KNA, PC/NZA/3/6/36, KNA, AV/12/181, KNA, AV/12/186

¹⁶² KNA, PC/NZA/3/6/28

¹⁶³ KNA, BN/40/17

¹⁶⁴ KNA, BN/52/1

Yala, Ndere, Luanda and Kendu Bay, among other areas. Each community, for instance, Arya Samaj and Ismailia communities had and managed their own school(s).¹⁶⁵ The plural urban space was racially segregated with limited avenues of Afro-Asian socialization.

Such schools as Arya Samaj Girls, Ismailia Girls and Siri Guru Singh Sabha up to 1938 continued to admit pupils on strictly racial lines (Annual Report 1938). As indicated earlier, in Kendu Bay, the Indian School Kendu Bay (Ismailia) was at the *Sanatan* Mosque where the Asians worshipped. Only Asian children attended this school and after standard four, they went to Kisumu for higher education.¹⁶⁶ This also applied to the Indian Schools in Yala and Ndere.¹⁶⁷ In 1942, education was made compulsory for Asian boys between seven and fifteen years in Kisumu, Nairobi and Mombasa (Chattopadhyaya, 1970:408). Given the existence of separate education, Afro-Asian social relations in schools were minimal in this area of study.

Given the inadequacy of government schools, emphasis was placed on communal schools, with sectarian groups resisting amalgamation with other groups and establishing parallel educational facilities for girls along sectarian lines. Although many groups had nursery schools, formal education at the primary and secondary levels was left to the large and well-organized groups such as the Arya Samaj (for Hindus), the Visa Oshwals (for Jains), the Singh Sabha (for Sikhs) and the Shia Ismailis (for Ismailis), who eventually established complete school systems.

With their constitution, administrative and judicial institutions, hospitals, schools welfare societies, insurance companies and banks, the Shia Ismailis were often described as a “state within a state” (Seidenberg 1996:106). Because of plural nature of the Asian community within itself, and because each Asian community organized their own schools, Afro Asian interactions in this area became minimal.

By 1944, in Western Kenya, just like in Nyanza, all the sub elementary and Elementary education for Africans was in the hands of the Missions, who were assisted by Grants-in-Aid from the District Education Board (that is, L.N.C funds in origin) for selected schools. Primary education was undertaken at the Government African School Kakamega and at certain mission stations. Secondary education was provided in Maseno and Yala both outside

¹⁶⁵ AR 1928/30

¹⁶⁶ Otieno Michael, O.I, 2013, Ojijo Pitalis, O.I., 2006 Otieno Michael and Pitalis Ojijo are residents of Kendi Bay and retired civil servants.

¹⁶⁷ KNA, PC/NZA/3/642, 1939

Kakamega District. With regard to non-native education, the Indians maintained a school at nearly every trading center with the largest in Kakamega Township.¹⁶⁸

Apart from education registered associations such as the Indian Associations, reinforced racial segregation. A good example of such associations was the Indian Association of Kakamega which operated with a clear constitution. In May, 18th 1944, the Association held an election at the Asian Sports Club and elected officials with Premjibhai Dattani voted in as the President.¹⁶⁹

4.6 The Comparative Aspects of Afro-Asian Relations in Nyanza and Western Provinces of Kenya

The interwar and the Second World War period were very critical as far as Afro-Asian relations were concerned. It may be recalled that until the early 1920s, there was little resentment among the Africans regarding the Asians presence in Kenya. This was despite the fact that 90 per cent of trade was in the hands of the Asians. This was mainly because Africans were relatively new to commercial activities in the region. The economic role of the Asians was seen to be largely harmonious with the Africans. However, as colonialism advanced and particularly in the interwar and Second World War Period, African resentment towards Asians grew and became a built-in factor in the region. The reasons for African animosity towards Asian settlers lay in the socio-economic changes that were taking place within the Nyanza and Western post colonies within this period. These changes ultimately widened the hiatus between Asians and Africans, and extended the area of friction between the two communities (Biswas, 2010:28). Comparatively, these hostilities were experienced both in Nyanza and Western provinces. However, unlike Western Province, trade rivalries and conflicts were more pronounced in Nyanza.

The Asian economic role underwent certain subtle changes during this period which shaped their relations with the Africans. On the one hand, there was a marked increase in the number of Asians engaged in large-scale business operations. They also continued to play their role as shopkeepers, traders and artisans. Their role in this respect was increasingly challenged by the growth of African competition and hostility towards their (Asian) predominance in the middle ranks of the economic ladder. This had the additional effect of accelerating the diversification

¹⁶⁸ KNA, DC/NN/1/26

¹⁶⁹ KNA, DC/KMG/1/1/166

of Asian enterprises into new fields of secondary manufacturing industries or where possible into agriculture.

Sugarcane farming was the main large scale Asian undertaking in the Nyanza region; in Western Province, maize farming provided the economic space for Afro-Asian interaction. Comparatively, Afro-Asian interaction within the sugar sector in the Western region was lacking until later on in the post war years. It suffices to say, therefore, that as sugarcane farming and sugar production was the main undertaking of Asians in Nyanza, Western province dominated in Maize production, which was under the domain of Africans. Although Maize production was controlled by Africans, its distribution became a major concern of the Asians until the Native Produce and Marketing Ordinance came into place (see Obudho, 2002:204).

In both provinces, renewed efforts towards cotton production were made during the seasons 1923/24 to 1930/31 spurred by the Kenya Cotton Ordinance of 1923 which empowered the governor to regulate the growing of cotton and its quality (Fearn, 1961:74). However, because of the fall in prices, the natives of both Central and North Kavirondo developed apathy and dissatisfaction towards the growth of this crop. Although efforts were made to ensure cotton production both in North and South Kavirondo, more trading centers were gazetted to increase economic growth of the two regions. In 1924 for instance, urban centers were further gazetted at Mambara, Luanda and Kamutiwa in North Kavirondo District. A number of *Dukas* were also opened in the rural areas, which was an indication of economic recovery.

The expansion of Indian commercial activities in the reserve areas of Kendu Bay, Bungoma, Ndere, Kisumu and Webuye was reduced due to the devolution of control over trading centers to the Local Native Councils. This reduction was evident in the dairy industry where licences had to be issued to Asians to operate in the reserves. Although the Asians were the pioneers in the industry and controlled the dairy industry, their operation was mainly in Central and Southern Nyanza region. This is because in Northern Kavirondo, private ownership and operations in the dairy sector was limited. This situation therefore, minimized the tensions and conflicts between the Africans and Asians in North Kavirondo or Western Kenya.

Economic spaces of Afro-Asian interaction slightly differed in Nyanza and Western provinces of Kenya. For instances, one major booster to industrial and urban development during the post 1932 period in Western Kenya was the widespread mining of gold. Although some mines

were discovered within Macalder and Asembo Bay in Nyanza, they were of little consequence and prominence as compared to the goldmines of Kakamega region (see, Fearn, 1961:126). The discovery of gold led to the expansion of Kakamega town. Significantly, unlike Macalder and Asembo gold deposits in Nyanza, the inauguration of gold mining and rapid urban growth stimulated Afro-Asian trade around Kakamega. This is because by 1933, a brisk market existed for local products such as vegetables, potatoes, eggs, chickens, fruit and milk, besides building materials including poles, grass, strings, mats, water jars, and firewood.¹⁷⁰

In Western Province, specifically Kakamega area, mining took the center stage. Indeed, the state criminalized African mining activities until 1948. Both oral and archival sources yield numerous cases of “gold thefts,” “illegal gold mining” and “illicit gold buying.” Gold theft entailed unauthorized taking of gold from licensed miners or mining companies; illicit gold mining involved the recovery of gold by non-licensed miners; and illicit gold buying referred to trade in gold by un-licensed miners and buyers. Thus, the undercurrent of illicit gold buying and illegal mining continued to plague the industry. Mining officials attributed the phenomenal growth and recurrence of these activities to several factors. First, the officials argued that attractive prices paid for illicit gold provided an irresistible impetus. Yet, the assertion fell apart given the fact that Africans often disposed of their gold to Asian profiteers almost for nothing. Records show that Africans received £1 for gold worth £100 on the Asian dominated black market hence the Asian traders garnered most profits (Shilaro, 2000). In all situations, both Asians and Africans were convicted of illegal possession of gold. For instance in July 1938, three natives employed in the Kavirondo Gold Mines Mill were convicted of illegal possession of gold amalgam in circumstances, which suggested that such people regularly stole gold. Similarly, an Indian was also charged at Kakamega of illicit gold buying and fraudulently dealing with minerals and was fined Shs 1,200.¹⁷¹ This illicit gold buying and selling was also prone in Nyanza among the few African goldminers and their Indian associates.

The concept of go-downs¹⁷², although popular in North Kavirondo, was however not popular in Central Kavirondo. In North Kavirondo district, for example, the Local Native Councils became instrumental in constructing go-downs, which were subsequently rented to the Kenya Farmers Association (KFA) to facilitate the bulk purchase of agricultural produce. By 1937

¹⁷⁰ NKDAR, 1933, KNA, PC/NZA/1/28

¹⁷¹ KNA, DC/KMG/2/18/3

¹⁷² Go-downs are large warehouses used for storage purposes

for instance, there were three Local Native Council go-downs in North Kavirondo district at Luanda, Butere, and Broderick Falls; present day Webuye. In Central Kavirondo for instance, all maize and paddy grown in the Kibos/Miwani area was supplied to the Kibos Flour and Oil Mills, in Kibos where it was paid for and stored. This could have probably been due to the fact that some Asians in Kibos area sold maize through black market, a scenario not common in North Kavirondo probably due to the abundance of the commodity.

The go-down at Broderick Falls was, however, handed over to an African company of about 80 members known as the Kimilili Native Farmers Association led by Philipo Mwangale (in Western Kenya). The Kimilili Native Farmers Association exemplified attempts by African peasant producers in Bungoma to articulate their economic interests and to negotiate for better returns for their produce. This was different from the Luo Thrift and Trading Company (in Nyanza), formed by Jaramogi Oginga Odinga. The main agenda of the Luo Thrift Trading Company was to empower Africans economically. Unlike the Kimilili Native Farmers Association, which was an association of farmers, the Luo Thrift Trading Company (LUTATCO) brought traders together. It was also associated with Asians and received help from Asian lawyers and businessmen. Its association with Asians demonstrated that African elite had the power to enter into economic relationship with Asians for the economic wellbeing of the African community.

As a testimony to the Indian presence and economic activity in Nyanza unlike in Western province, a tall Town Clock (locally known as *saa maduong*) was erected along the main Oginga Odinga Street in Kisumu. It was unveiled on 19 August 1938 by the then Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Kenya H.E Chief Marshall Sir Robert Brooke-Pophan. This clock was constructed in memory of Kassim Lakha by his sons Mohamed, Alibhai, Hassan and Rahimtulla Kassim as indicated on the inscription on the Town clock (Omenya, 2010). No major land mark like this exists in North Kavirondo. This indicates that Kisumu town was not only significant to Kassim Lakha and his family but also to all the Asians in the region.

It also apparent that in both North and Central Kavirondo districts, Africans developed fierce trade rivalry with the Asians to an extent that they reprimanded the Local Native Councils for allowing Asian to trade in the reserves. In championing their course, Africans formed trade organizations such as the Kavirondo Taxpayers Welfare Association, Native Chambers of Commerce (*Buch Johala*), Kimilili Native Farmers Association and Yala Merchant Chambers. Unlike all the chambers in Kavirondo district whose membership was Africans,

the membership of Yala Merchant Chambers comprised of both Asian and African traders. In order to counter the rising African competition and to contest for the economic spaces within Nyanza and Western regions, the Asians established The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce, the North Nyanza Indian Traders Association, Indian Traders Association, Kisumu Chambers of Commerce, Nyanza Indian Farmers Association among others.

With regard to housing and education, there were similarities since schools in Nyanza and Western provinces were racially segregated. The Asians' schools also offered Gujarati. The missionaries, whose objective was basically proselytism, handled African education. In terms of housing, the Asians in Kisumu and Kakamega experienced acute shortage of housing leading to the concentration of a number of Asians in the overcrowded bazaars. In Kakamega, the Indian Association of Kakamega was at the forefront as far as Asian housing crisis was concerned, while in Nyanza, the Kisumu Housing Committee was in charge. Despite the reality of segregation in housing and education sectors, Asians still interacted with Africans who were either their servants in their houses or employees in their shops. Whereas in Nyanza province, Asians especially in Kendu Bay and Ndere, were given nicknames such as *Oluoro liedo*, (*one who fears shaving*) *tek ateka kidi* (*as hard as a rock indicating that this particular Indian could not allow bargaining and his prices were fixed*), *Ogola Amali*, *Adharaum* (*Indian with a cut nose*) such nicknames were not common in Western Kenya. They generally referred to them in their Luhya dialect as the *abahindi* (singular) or *Omuhindi* (plural). Another one was called Abib Okore. Okore (from the root word *Kor*) is a Luo name for the chest. Abib was named Okore because he coughed frequently.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the Afro-Asian Socio-Economic relations in the inter-war and the World War II periods have been interrogated. This period witnessed the transition of Asians from small-scale trade (*dukawallas*) to large-scale trade, which was characterised by Industrial production. As these changes took place, there emerged stiff competition, rivalry and conflicts between Africans and Asians. The Africans started to rival Asians not only in commerce but also in the transport Industry which played a major role in shaping the economy of Nyanza and Western Provinces of Kenya. Business organisations such as the Kavirondo Chambers of Commerce and the Kavirondo Taxpayers Welfare Association also played a critical role in countering Asian dominance in trade. But also, the Asians used associations such as the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce, North Nyanza Indian Traders Association and

the Kisumu Chambers of Commerce to contest and negotiate for their economic space within the two regions.

It is demonstrated in this chapter that the political economy during the interwar period informed the patterns of Afro-Asian relations, since the colonial government introduced economic policies, which ambivalently worked in favour of Afro-Asian relations. The colonial politics of this period favoured the interest of Africans at the expense of the Asians as stipulated in the Devonshire Declaration of 1923. It has been demonstrated that Asians were the pioneers of the dairy, sugar and transport industries in Nyanza and Western provinces. Although gold mining was one of the major economic ventures in Western Kenya, its deposits in Nyanza was comparatively insignificant. However, the discovery of gold spurred and increased Afro-Asian trade and relations in Kakamega town.

It has been noted that, although cultivation of cotton was an initiative of the colonial government its introduction in Nyanza met with some resistance, which was evidently viewed as a subversive resistance by Africans to western forms of knowledge and values. Racial segregation in schools and in residential areas were however not conducive for the development of Afro-Asian social relations as their interaction was limited. However, because of necessity, some of these racial barriers were overcome. It is important to note that during WWI and WWII, Asians became increasingly disillusioned with British rule as it became clear that the European settlers were given preferential treatment over other groups. The Asians also developed political associations with some few responsible African leaders and trade union movements.

Finally, the period strengthened the Asian Diaspora in urban centers especially in Kisumu. Chloe (2007:27) argues that demographic figures for Africans before 1948 were notoriously unreliable; these were based on the crude figures produced by the hut tax collection. The first official census of the African population was taken in 1948 and counted 5.25 million. The substantial increase in population suggested by this figure is exaggerated because of the inaccuracy of the statistic collected before 1948. This census would later give the population of Asians in Kisumu as 4,973 while that of Asians in Kakamega at 604 (Ochieng, 1992:152). The growth of urban population can also be visualized into the number of urban-centers in different size and group over space and time. At the time of the first Kenya population census, there were 17 towns with aggregate population of 276,240 with majority of urban dwellers being non African racial groups such as Asians, Europeans and Arabs (Obudho, 1982). In the

next chapter we examine and compare Afro-Asian socio-economic interactions during the period of 1945-1963.

CHAPTER FIVE

AFRO- ASIAN SOCIO-ECONOMIC RELATIONS IN WESTERN AND NYANZA REGION FROM 1945-1963

Abstract

In the previous chapter, the Afro- Asian relations in the inter war and during the World War 11 period was discussed. It was argued that the colonial politics of this period favoured the interest of Africans at the expense of the Asians as stipulated in the Devonshire Declaration of 1923. It was also evident in the chapter that the Asians were the pioneers as far as the dairy, sugar and transport industries were concerned within Nyanza and Western provinces of Kenya. It was concluded that racial segregation in schools and in residential areas were however not conducive for the development of Afro- Asian relations as their interaction was limited. However, because of necessity, some of these racial barriers were overcome.

In the current chapter, Afro-Asian socio-economic interactions in Western and Nyanza Provinces of Kenya from 1945-1963 is analyzed. 1945 did not simply mark the end of the World War 11, but also signalled the beginning of a new era for both the imperial metropolitan powers and the colonial world. Social, economic and political struggles were intensifying. There was growth of secondary industries and the percentage of those in the African paid labour force rose (Ongile, 1988:3). The post-war social and economic activities were therefore to shape Afro-Asian relations in a remarkable way. Continued Afro-Asian interactions in the transport and sugar industries are interrogated. The continued economic strategies employed by the Asians to survive within the competitive economic space of Nyanza and Western Kenya as the struggle for Kenyan Independence neared are also examined.

In this chapter the impact of the independence struggle on Afro-Asian relations in the cotton industry and how government involvement shaped these relations, are explored and analyzed. During this time, Asians started moving towards Kisumu town away from rural Nyanza. Consequently, the effect of this movement on the Afro-Asian relations in Kisumu is also investigated.

5.1 Contextualizing the Post War Social-Economic Environment in Western and Nyanza Province of Kenya: Asians Transition into Large-Scale Economic Ventures and the Informal Sector

This section provides a glimpse of the new economic ventures that the Asians engaged in during the post war period alongside cotton production. The Asian competence and skills in trade was manifested in the way they carried out their trade. This period also witnessed the formation of the Indian chamber of commerce as well as other formal economic ventures such as the Luo Thrift and the Kavirondo African Welfare Association, which both Africans and Asians used as a tool to contest for economic spaces within Nyanza and Western province. The sugar industry and the transport industry were some of the major economic ventures, which shaped Afro-Asian relations within this period.

While contextualizing the post war social-economic environment in Western and Nyanza province of Kenya, it is important to note that immigrants from the Indian subcontinent played a determining role in the development of commerce and industry not only in Kenya, but also in the whole of East Africa region. Beginning with coastal-based merchant activities before the colonial period, the commercial prominence they attained enabled them to remain the pre dominant force both during the colonial period and after. This in turn, provided them with a foundation for playing a similar role in industry, from the 1940s to present (Himbara, 1994:35). Some of the determining factors that distinguished the Indians from businessmen in other Kenyan communities were their commercial skills, as evidenced by an ability to survive in remote areas on modest resources and by sheer determination and hard work; their vision of a potential mass market and the patience to transform it into an actual market; their general efficiency and competitive edge; and the role of family units and collective organizations in providing mechanisms to engender discipline and cohesion. Not even the domination of politics and agriculture, through legislative means of the white settlers, and later Kenya Africans, could offset or reduce the critical importance of local Indian capitalists in retail and wholesale trade as well as finance and manufacturing (Himbara, 1994:35).

Three stages in which the above factors characterized the development process of Kenya and East Africa can be identified by tracing examples of commercial and industrial activities, and the specific patterns of accumulation that followed. The initial phase was the entry into the hinterland of coastal-based Indian merchants and financiers, as well as new immigrants from the Indian subcontinent, beginning in the 1840s. The next phase began with the Second World War, which effectively isolated East Africa from its traditional suppliers of goods,

necessitating local improvisation of the manufacture of various products. Thus, the wartime isolation of East Africa, and the accompanying reorientation of colonial policy, signaled the implementation of strategies aimed at stimulating productivity and self-sufficiency in British colonies, including Kenya. Among these strategies was a greater effort to coordinate East Africa into a single market. The effect of these changes was a spectacular pioneering of industrial activity on the part of some of the country's commercial bourgeoisie between the late 1940s and the early 1960s. It is during this phase that white settlers attempted but failed to establish themselves in the wholesale and retail distribution of their agricultural products. The period also marked a widespread attempt by Africans to enter commerce. However, they had little success (Himbara, 1994:36).

Through concerted international and local pressure in favour of African development, the period witnessed the reversal of colonial policies. It has been argued that in this period of Kenya's history, there was a disposition towards reforms because the political and economic strife of the colony would jeopardize the status quo of Kenya's Europeans (King'oriah 1980: 237). In the post-war period, as the returning "*World War II veterans*" (*Jokeya*-Luo nickname for carrier corps) sought to invest their war time savings in business such as in shops, tea rooms and water mills, they found themselves placed in direct competition against the Asian traders whose primary life of accumulation had been based on collection of produce. These soldiers also came against the trading pattern that had developed over the last four decades. Such men as *Ogonji*¹⁷³ had built their rural wealth by being the grain producer and cotton buyers of Ndere, Luanda, and Nambale in Nyanza and Western Kenya respectively in the inter-war years (Atieno Odhiambo, 1995).

Second, there was the racial strain with regard to the Asians. The Asians were receiving preferential treatment (being agents of colonialism), for they had the monopoly of the wholesale and retail trade. African traders were, therefore, seen to function at the mercy of the Asians, since they had no capital to rival the Asians. It was against this background of frustration on the African because of the unequal economic relation, which had flourished

¹⁷³*Ogonji*, was the name given to Govindji Karsandas Karia (an Indian) by Africans residing in Ndere. *Ogonji* being a Luo name was an easy way of culturally domesticating Indians within the reserves. Such names gave Indians a local identity which made them to be considered as part of the African society. *Ogonji* was one of the wealthy Indians engaged in cotton and grain business in Ndere, Luanda and Nambale

since the establishment of the economy, that one must see the motive force behind the rise and emergence of African initiative in the field of trade after World War II (Ibid, 1995).

Asians in areas such as Ndere, Yala and Kendu Bay were not comfortable with issue of licenses to Africans to do the same business in these areas where they enjoyed business monopoly. This aroused some bitterness among Africans who felt that Asians were colluding with government officers to deny them trade licences on the same category of business that Asians were also engaged in (Omenya, 2010:160).

Several organizations such as the Kenya African Union, Central Nyanza Chamber of Commerce, the Ramogi African Welfare Association (RAWA), the Nyanza Soldiers Association, the Luo Union, together with numerous clan and sub-clan welfare organizations were formed to air African grievances and challenge the dominance of Asian traders in the rural areas. Even the defunct *Piny Owacho* (a local political organization) organization was revived (Ogot, 1999:46). These organizations represented voices of negotiation, protest and compromise within the political and economic spaces of Nyanza. They were initial avenues through which Africans wanted to take over the political and economic power of the postcolony.

In the post World War Two period, there was a move of capital into industrial production where Asians played a critical role. It is clear that the increased level of accumulation of merchant capital by 1945 and the expansion of markets for the manufactured goods were to stimulate the growth of the larger Asian merchant capitalists into industrial production. The problem of credit was to be overcome after the war and the new Bank of India¹⁷⁴ (set up in 1945) became most important in the financing of Asian industrial expansion. In the pre-war period, Asian capital was largely confined to merchant concerns and some primary processing. The extension of Asian capital into manufacturing after 1945 must be placed in its historical context. The areas of accumulation for those of Asian origin in East Africa in the early part of colonial rule were restricted to trade and commerce by the regulations against non-whites holding land. Asian merchants were confined within urban boundaries, so that their only hope for expansion was into manufacturing or primary processing. The only agricultural holdings owned by Asians in Kenya were several sugar estates in the west of Kenya (Kavirondo), an area not settled by Europeans (Swainson, 1980:126). Although there

¹⁷⁴ Bank of India- was a bank owned and managed by Indians. It provided credit facilities to boost Asian trade in Kenya. Other branches were opened up in Mombasa and Nairobi.

was a change in Asian economic engagements from small-scale retail trade to large scale manufacture, not all of them moved with these changes to embrace large-scale industrial undertakings; some of them maintained their position as small-scale traders. The economical process was exclusively between Asian capitalism and *Duka* system.

In a circular issued from Lindsay, K.G, the Acting Chief Secretary to all the Provincial Commissioners and Labour Commissioners in 1946, it was clear that the pressure from Africans wishing to engage in retail trade was increasing as the process of demobilization was completed and resettlement got underway. The Chief Secretary observed that since the issue of Secretariat Circular Letters No. 33 of 18th March 1946, the position had improved as regards the supply of certain trade and consumer goods, and indeed in some cases over-buying had resulted in loss to certain traders. As regards certain items, however, such as nails and other items, the supply position still remained very difficult. But, regarding other lines such as pottery, cooking utensils and consumer goods, such as patient medicine and toilet preparation, the supply position had improved and was likely to improve in the future rapidly; in some cases the market was already saturated. Therefore, in view of the fact that it was the government's policy to facilitate the participation of the Africans in legitimate trading activities, and to give them full and equal opportunity to do so, the government drew the attention of the chairmen of the Provincial Traders Licensing Committees and of Administration Officers to the possibility of issuing further trading licenses to suitable African aspirants. Wherever possible, such new licenses were to be issued in the first place to ex-servicemen wishing to engage in trade, who commanded reasonable capital resources and appeared suitable for recommendation to the District Commissioner.¹⁷⁵

Although Afro-Asian economic relation took place within large economic establishments such as Industries, Afro-Asian interactions were also witnessed within smaller economic ventures situated within the trading centres. It was at this lower level of engagement that the intricacies and dynamics of Afro-Asian interaction were succinctly defined. Both Asians and Africans were requesting for plots as individuals and companies. For instance, in 1946, Stefano Okumu (an African businessman) applied to the District Commissioner of North Kavirondo requesting to be allowed to build a permanent tailoring shop on the Indian trading plots at Butere. Similarly, Produce Dealers and Millers, a company owned by Asians and Govindji Nathalal of Broderick falls also applied for plots in order to carry out trade in Butere trading

¹⁷⁵KNA, DC/KMG/2/29/1

centre¹⁷⁶. Madhavji Liladher of Tailors and General Outfitters also applied for a plot within the same trading centre. These applications confined within the same geographical location, indicate how both Africans and Asians were competing for the limited economic space within Western Kenya.

In a true spirit of a postcolonial Asian, Sunderlatal Kirparam, initially a resident trader in Butere expressed his desire for another plot in Butere around 1946 on which to build a small brick house. Sunderlatal basically required a plot to build a dwelling house for his siblings (three younger brothers and two younger sisters). In his application to the District Commissioner Kakamega, he argued that ‘we are born in Africa, grown up in Africa and educated in Africa’ an indication that he was more of African than an Asian¹⁷⁷.

So great was the postwar expansion in indigenous trade that the colonial administration sought to control the number of applications, in certain areas, for trading licences to establish shops and wholesale centres in the reserve. For instance, in Central Kavirondo, MacWilliam (1976:5) notes that, in 1946, out of 749 new trading licences issued, 632 were held by African traders. In many reserves, however, Asian and African traders were locked in conflict. After the war, the colonial administrators tended to interpret the marketing laws for commodities in favour of the African petty traders and this disadvantaged the Asian merchants. This prejudice related to a traditional colonial design to restrict the areas of operation of Asian merchant capitalists (Swainson, 1980:178). African district pressure groups of African traders also pressed the government to erect barriers against ‘foreign’ traders (i.e. Asians) who were importing commodities into the reserves. The imbalance between Asian and African traders in terms of size and available capital was only to be remedied after the attainment of independence, when indigenous capital was promoted by the state (Swainson, 1980:179).

The post war period also witnessed some heightened levels of skill acquisition by Africans from Asians. The nature of acquisition of these skills entailed close working relationships between the Asian artisan and the African trainee. This arrangement would further enhance Afro-Asians economic relations. In the car-related workshops (automotive Industry) for instance, there was a very wide spectrum comprising of European, Asians and African garages where vehicles could be repaired. It looked as if the emergence of the Indian sector during the post war period had been along the same lines as in the building trade and much of

¹⁷⁶KNA, DC/KMG/2/13/28

¹⁷⁷KNA, DC/KMG/2/13/28

the dynamism of the African car repair sector derived from its operation in an indigenized Indian mode (King: 1977:79).

Africans acquired skills in mechanics because of the widespread of the Indian use of African casual labour. The best of them progressively learnt to be mechanics on the job in both industrial and in the Indian homesteads, where the family would often employ one or two African primary school leavers to learn the trade after hours. Such people would be taken on at pittance, but within a year or two would have mastered all, but the most highly specialized areas of car repair. Odera¹⁷⁸, an oral source, states such mechanics at Kamas were apprenticed in the job in garages belonging to Asians and after gaining skills, they would relocate and work in the neighboring towns such as Kakamega, Luanda or even Nakuru. Like their counterparts in the building trade, there was no formal theory, no trade tests, no off the job training, nor any specific training 'mission' on the part of the Indian. The readiness to open up such trade skills to Africans is simply explained by the rapid movement of many Indian families out of the caste craft confines of the colonial period, in the late 1950s. The business interest of many families diversified very swiftly from this time, and with some members of the family taking advantage of higher education; the trend was towards being less protective of the craft secrets of earlier years.¹⁷⁹ The very large numbers of Africans who picked up car repair skills in this market from the late fifties to the present learnt in many cases a different style of repair than that available in some of the large European depots. The latter had a tendency, since they derived a great deal of their profit from spare parts to train their mechanics to replace rather than to mend. The tendency with many of the Indian workshops was either to mend, or to replace with elements from the Indian-run second hand spare parts warehouses. It is of course the combination of improvisation and great technical skills that made the Indian car repair sector so competitive (King, 1977:79). This could be explained by the large numbers of Asian spare parts shop at Kamas in Kisumu town.

The informal sector (jua kali sector) makes today what the formal Indian craft community made in yester years. As the Indian craftsmen in many cases translated themselves during the late colonial period upwards into small industry and manufacturing, their places were taken

¹⁷⁸Odera O.I, 2012 Odera Peter works at Magharibi Garage at Kamas in Kisumu. Kamas is a centre where motor vehicles are repaired. The place is characterized by Indian shops dealing in motor vehicle spare parts

¹⁷⁹Nazer, Ismail O.I, 2012 Is an Indian *dukawalla* operating at Webuye bus stage in Bungoma District, Western Kenya

over by the incipient African artisan society. This new group of Africans specialized in marketing of goods that had been restricted to the low income Indian families. They also took over the Indian functions of selling cheap goods and services to middle class Indian families some of which could also be obtained from the large European companies. Tin technology (tin lamp), along with much else now characterized as African informal sector activity, was not the result of formal vocational training but of the presence of the Indian craft community in Kenya. Such tin work tended to be associated with the Bohra Muslim community. This technology spread throughout Kakamega, Kisumu and other parts of Kenya both in the colonial and postcolonial period (King, 1977:1). *Tach Nyangile*, the local name for the tin lamp gained widespread usage in most of the reserves in Kakamega, Kisumu, Mumias and Bungoma regions of study. Perhaps, this tin making technology by the Bohra Asians¹⁸⁰ could have been a cultural activity associated or intertwined with some economic activities.

Unlike the measure to Africanize the civil service or retail businesses, the process of indigenizing skilled Indian trades went on throughout the 1930s to the 1960s without any public attention. Across the country, Africans were initially employed in Indian workshops to do unskilled work while the actual manufacture remained in the hands of Indian. In a marked contrast to the present learning, the intention in many cases was not that the African was to learn to make, for instance, oil lamps. Far from it, a few of the oldest informants described a situation in which the Indian employers used to protect their craft secrets from African competition. Nevertheless, Africans gradually picked up the technique in the early 1940s, as indicated by the few members of Luo and Luhya communities in western Kenya who appeared to have acquired these skills from the Indians.

This technology of lamp oil making was later on Africanized as evident with changes in the designs of the products from the tinsmith industry from 1940 to 1970s. Initially, the first generation of Africans had merely copied the Indian precedent of making very small candles with flat tops and a single funnel, which had to serve the wick, and for refilling with paraffin. By the end of the Mau Mau emergency in the fifties, the size had increased; the top cover had been rounded out into a shallow dome to make it attractive. The next major change came just

¹⁸⁰*Bohra Asians: The name is a corruption of a Gujarati word, vahaurau, meaning 'to trade'. The Bohras are Muslim and one of the most tightly and comprehensively structured of all Asian communities in Kenya. They interpret Jihad not as an armed struggle against the infidel hordes, but as a personal struggle against evil. (see Salvador, C 1989, Through Open Doors and Michel Adam, 2010 L'Afrique indienne. Les minorités d'origine indo-pakistanaise en Afrique orientale)*

about the time of independence when the two-funnel style was introduced; one for the wick and one for filling (which made it more safer and cleaner) (King, 1977:156).

Although this aspect of socio-economic engagement was meaningful and beneficial to Africans, Africans continued to look at Indians as an obstacle in their economic development. The concentrations of Indians in towns and settlements as well as in trade and industry had important consequences in their relations with Africans. Most Indians were richer than most Africans and because the Indians lived together in crowded settlements and were a specialized trading group, they were highly conspicuous and a potential source of envy and dislike to the African, who met them mainly as buyers of produce, shopkeepers and givers of credit. Indians occupied middle level bureaucratic positions and also captured the operations of artisans such as masons, tinsmiths, plumbers, carpenters and tailors (Suraiya, 2006:37). With the above economic adventures, Asians did not fail to try their hands in other unique ventures such as the transport industry as discussed below.

5.2 Road transport and Afro-Asian Interaction in the Post war Period

The main idea here is that Afro-Asian interaction was ambivalent in the way they competed in controlling the transport industry. The road transport system was important both to Africans and Indians because, the Indians used unorthodox means in order to cater for the transport needs of Africans thereby rendering the European owned means of transport uneconomical.

Asian rivalry and cooperation in the post war period also continued to flourish. Although an increasing number of Africans began to buy used vehicles during the war period, the number burgeoned immediately after as manufacture of vehicles resumed and Asian and European transporters replaced their much-worn equipments. In Nyanza, many Africans, mostly ex-servicemen, purchased the discarded vehicles.¹⁸¹ In 1945, some Africans; Nason Ongewe, Omumbo Achola, and Daudi Migot each bought a lorry from a Nyanza Asian transporter, Kassam Khamisa. With their lorries, Achola and Migot set up passenger service on the Kisumu-Asembo and Kadimu road in Nyanza Province while Ongewe joined two other Asians Gulamali Meghji and T.K Meghji, in starting a similar service between Kakamega and Busia in Western Province. Two other Africans, including Joel Mukoya, bought similar lorries from Khamisa, and four more Africans are known to have acquired lorries from another Nyanza Asian, L.B Sedani. David Ogega, who named his business in Kisii as

¹⁸¹Ominde, O.I, 2012

‘Transport Agent, Miller & Posho Supplies’, acquired two lorries which became the only African vehicles in South Kavirondo. Mruka Zaddock Budedu and six other Africans were already established as transporters in Buhehe Samia Location in North Kavirondo of Western Kenya region (Gregory, 1993:131). This lorry transport therefore spurred economic activities and more so trade within the two regions of study.

By 1946, Africans were dependent on the Indian, usually another retailer, and in this respect native trade could only be regarded as a projection of Indian business. Africans were so anxious to indulge in the transport, both of goods and humans, but this was only possible through acquisition of a licence. In the beginning, numerous applications were received for vehicles and transport licences, very few of which, even though recommended, were actually granted. The rejection of some of the applications at the meeting of the Transport Licensing Board in 1946 caused great alarm and despondency, as many of the applicants whether rightly or wrongly rejected, had already sunk large sums of money in the purchase and preparation of their vehicles.¹⁸² It can be restated that in Western Kenya, just like in Central Kavirondo, the Indians monopolized trade in the reserves and a large number of African traders depended on the Indians for supply of their goods.¹⁸³ The issue of transport license by the Kenya Transport and Licencing Board followed a very conservative licensing policy in order to avoid ‘wasteful cut throat competition’ within road transport (Gregory, 1993:132).

Efforts by the Africans to enter road transport received an unexpected impetus in July 1946, when the British War Department offered more than 600 Ford, Cheverolet, Dodge, and International lorries to the East Africa public at a minimal price. The department also made available a large quantity of spare parts, and to facilitate sale, it granted permits for the vehicles. Asians also acquired some of the lorries. One of the foremost Asian buyers was Premchand Raichand and Co. Ltd., a Nairobi wholesale-retailing firm, which had many branches in Kenya with twenty lorries already in its possession. In one purchase, it obtained sixty-five of the surplus vehicles, of which thirteen were sent to Kisumu to begin transport business in Nyanza. Many Africans who had just joined the business sought licenses for the new expanded transport ventures, and many others, unable to purchase when the prices were high, now became eager participants. Whether buying from the government or from Asians and Europeans, these Africans had no difficulty in supplementing their savings to meet the

¹⁸²KNA, DC/NN/1/28

¹⁸³KNA, DC/NN/1/29

cost of purchase because Asian traders or moneylenders, who took the vehicles as security, readily lent them money (Gregory, 1993:131). It is evident here that Asians tried to help Africans to get into the transport business. However, whereas it seemed like Asians were helping Africans, they were doing business as money lenders. This was an indication that the post-colony was not always about resistance and conflict but was also about borrowing of positive economic values among the different populations. There were a number of contestations by Africans as far as the acquisition of transport licence was concerned. Some of these contestations took a legal dimension with Africans seeking legal redress from the Supreme Court.

Although appeal to the Supreme Court was possible, few rejected applicants resorted to this expensive procedure. African applicants rejected by the district officers and the board responded with a strenuous protest that was soon based on racial lines. These protests were done in two fronts. First, the Local Native Councils in Nyanza began to demand that Africans receive the greatest proportion of the transport licences. Secondly, individual Africans also lodged their petition. David Ogega of Kisii (South Nyanza) for instance, appealed to the district commissioner for help against the Asian transporters. He explained that Ismael Owino and himself (both Africans) as operators of two passenger vehicles on the Kisii-Kericho route, had encountered stiff competition from over nine passenger buses owned by Asians whose intention was to make their business fail'. 'If we could be granted at least three or four passenger buses in South Kavirondo,' Ogega wrote, 'I am sure we could fight a good and successful war of the natives versus the Kericho Indian passenger transport'. Otieno Opondo was even more critical of the Asian competition when he asserted to the commissioner; 'I do not understand, why a native of the Nyanza Province should struggle so hard to get a route, while it is so easy for an Indian (the Jews of East Africa) to obtain permission to use roads without difficulty' (Gregory, 1993:132).

As early as March 1947, Roadways, another bus company complained to the Nyanza Provincial Commissioner that 'pirate' buses were making it impossible to carry on regular service, and one of the new rivals the Nyanza African Bus Service of Kisumu, in turn complained of competition from Roadways. The competition, which first appeared in the form of newly licensed Africans contesting with established Asians and Europeans, soon advanced to a state of African transporters' resenting the licensing of more Africans. The competition and government's new policy of favouring Africans forced the Asians to change

the nature of their transport business. When the ex-military vehicles became available during the postwar period, Asians lent money to Africans who had insufficient funds to meet the costs of buying them. Subsequently as the newly licensed African transporters encountered additional expenses of reconditioning their vehicles, converting them to specific transport purposes and then running and maintaining them, the Asians continued to provide the necessary funds. As a district commissioner in Nyanza explained:

These Africans soon found that they had no capital to keep these worn out lorries and taxi-buses on the road. They were faced with heavy garage bills. Their vehicles lay idle outside garages, which refused to repair them until adequate deposits had been made. It was at this time that the Indians began to take an interest, and obtain mortgages over these vehicles. The Indians supplied the capital in order to have the vehicles repaired (Gregory, 1993:139).

Within a short time because of the intense rivalry and inexperience in a business of this kind, a large proportion of the Africans were unable to repay their loans. The Asian money-lenders then claimed the vehicles that had been offered as security. The licences, however, were not transferable; and because of the government's attitude, the Asians knew that they had little chance of getting these vehicles relicensed for their operation. In this predicament the Asians and Africans conspired for an illegal accommodation. The 'ownership' of the vehicles was secretly transferred to the Asian moneylenders who henceforth managed the business under the old names with the former African owners usually as front men. Of course, the government was not informed of the transactions and the vehicles continued to be registered and licensed in the Africans' names (Gregory, 1993:140).

The nature of illicit 'partnership' varied from business to business as each Asian and African worked out a mutually satisfactory arrangement as to how their enterprise would be managed, and how the profits would be shared. In a typical situation, as with Kassam Kamisa and Jacobo Orwa, or with Karmala Manji (Indian) and John Daudi Migot, all of Kisumu, the African declared the Asian his manager. However, when their employees were questioned by the government about ownership of the business, they maintained that the African was still the owner. This was a sign of Afro-Asian 'symbiotic' relationship. In a few cases, the African openly took the Asian into the business as a partner and then withdrew entirely while the transport company continued to function under its old name. In other cases, the Asian took out a 'hire agreement' while the African ostensibly remained the owner. Although in all such arrangements where the ownership was transferred to the Asians, it would be wrong to

assume that there was exploitation of the Africans. In the extensive Kenya files on road transport, there was no single complaint from an aggrieved African. The two parties obviously had a mutual interest in this conspiracy against the restrictive colonial government. In fact, there was eventually a considerable transfer of ownership among the Africans, exactly in the same way, as the new owners sought to avoid the complications and uncertainties of relicensing (Gregory, 1993:140).

While conspiring to evade regulations under the road service licenses, the Asians and Africans also ignored the restrictions on the 'C' licenses which were the easiest to obtain and the cheapest to buy. Though restricted to carrying their own goods, many of those with 'C' licenses illegally filled their lorries with both goods and passengers for business purposes. If stopped by the police, the driver would swear that all the goods that they were carrying belonged to them and were not being transported elsewhere for commercial gain or trade. Similarly, in order to further confuse the police officers, the drivers of these lorries coached their passenger before hand to inform the police officers especially when the lorry was flagged down that they were not paying any fare as passengers to the drivers but were just hiking a free lift. With time, the transporters made a mockery of the 'C' licenses. The flaunting of the regulations and, in general, the rapid growth of road transport after the war, posed new problems for the railways (Gregory, 1993:140).

It was road transport that developed all other towns such as Mumias and Kakamega in Western Kenya while Lake transport led to the growth of Kisumu (Gregory, 1993:146/7). Road transport also opened the African reserves and not only made the sale of outside manufactures in those reserves possible, but also the collection of African produce. In the long run one of its main contributions was the promotion of an African cash-crop economy. African goods were transported mainly by lorry, but it was not unusual anywhere in Nyanza or Western Province to see the tops of buses crowded with baskets of farm produce and even goats and animal hides and skin despite the fact that there was Afro-Asian competition in the transport sector.¹⁸⁴

Asian competition with Africans in the transport sector in some way became an impediment to the employment of entrepreneurship as a coping mechanism by African households especially in Bungoma area of Western Kenya. Although reflected in virtually all the

¹⁸⁴Matete, John O.I 2012 An oral informant interviewed in Kakamega town is a retired civil servant who is currently doing small scale farming in Lubao area within Kakamega County.

commercial arenas, this competition was particularly instrumental in stifling African engagement in the transport sector. Thus, as Fearn (1961:190) affirms, although the opportunity to emulate the Asian transporter by Africans was provided by the availability of ex- military vehicles, which the demobilized African soldier bought from his gratuity and other savings, by 1948, transport in Nyanza was “very largely in the hands of Indians.” However, despite the ‘imitation’ and ‘mimicry’ with which colonized peoples coped with the imperial presence, their relationship became one of constant, if implicit, contestation and opposition. Indeed, such mimicry becomes the very site of that conflict, a ‘transparency’, as Bhabha (1994) puts it, which is dependent for its fixity on the underlying negative of imperial presence, which it seems to duplicate. For Bhabha (1994), ‘mimicry’ does not mean that opposition is rejected, but rather that it is seen to encompass more than overt opposition. Opposition is not simply reduced to intention, but is implicit in the very production of dominance whose intervention as a ‘dislocatory presence’ paradoxically confirms the very thing it displaces (Ashcroft *et al.*, 1995:9).

Yet, despite the obstacles imposed on rural capital accumulation by the colonial state, coupled with stiff competition from Asian traders, many enterprising households in Bungoma continued to take an active part in commodity trade, and to expand their engagement with the colonial economy through straddling. Those who held licenses such as Pascal Nabwana, Khaemba Saenyi, Elias Masinde, Jeremiah Wasike, and Paulo Wakhisi¹⁸⁵ (all businessmen) maintained their involvement in commodity trade. Furthermore, there was an expansion of this class of commodity traders in Bungoma district between 1948 and 1953. Therefore, it can be argued that the postwar period witnessed acceleration in the process of rural differentiation within Bungoma district (Makana, 2006: 272).

Apart from the transport industry, it is evident that after the Second World War, the Asians were steadily displaced by Africans in the processing and other basic secondary industries, and that many of these Asians, as far as they left these industries, moved into the more capital intensive types of manufacturing. They were accompanied in this move by many other Asians both artisan and traders who had not previously been involved in manufacture (Gregory, 1993:312).

¹⁸⁵ Paulo Wakhisi, Pasacal Nabwana, Khaemba Saenyi, Elias Masinde and Jeremiah Wasike, were business men in Western province of Kenya. They had licences to carry out trade and did not have any political connection or lineage to Western politicians of that time

For instance, within Kibos/Muhoroni area, the major crop in the Indian farms was sugarcane occupying about 7,031 acres of land. Sugarcane did well here except for a few farms where bad farming practices affected its cultivation. Although sugarcane did well in Muhoroni, the area was not suitable for maize production due to poor drainage of the clay soil and heavy rainfall. But also, as many farmers complained about shortage of labour, some farmers had plenty of labour especially from the Africans and turned some labourers away. The condition of labour in this area was captured by the Assistant Agricultural Officer Kisumu, in his quarterly report. In this quarterly report, he argued that Africans were willing to provide labour if they were treated properly and given a fair wage. However, African labourers in Kibos near Kisumu preferred to go and work in Kisumu as compared to working in the Indian farms¹⁸⁶.

At this time, one of the most prominent African commercial outfits was the Luo Thrift and Trading Company. Jaramogi Oginga Odinga was outstanding in directing the affairs of the organization. Under the motto of *Kinda e teko, Riwruok e teko* (In struggle and persistence lies unity and strength), Odinga mobilized the traders, teachers, chiefs plus other locals into the premier African enterprise of Western Kenya during this period. This Luo Thrift and Trading Company sought to create an economic kingdom as well as a national identity for the Luo African rural folk (Atieno Odhiambo, 1995). This development seemed to be a rebellion against the Asian dominance and the wider colonial structures and institutions. As a result, Africans began to engage in business activities that posed a real threat to Asian and European commercial activities.

It is important to note that the post Second World War marked the emergence of the independent market-place pattern of entry into business for Africans. They not only began to engage a wider variety of businesses involving trading, transportation and service industries (such as small eating-houses and general provision shops), but also set up some more complex enterprises, including limited liability companies and public companies. The main source of investment was the relatively large amounts of money from the earnings and gratuities of former soldiers who had participated in the war. The pooling of some of these earnings resulted in a boom in trade. The Luo Thrift would later grow at an astonishingly fast rate, expanding into numerous activities towards 1950. These expansions included a shop at Maseno (valued at Shs 44,817), Ramogi House at Kisumu (Shs 63,725), a printing press in

¹⁸⁶KNA, AK/4/22

Nairobi (Shs 27,922) a lorry (Shs 4,000) and miscellaneous activities (Shs12, 400). The company had 1,100 African shareholders and a paid up capital of Shs 300,000 (Himbara, 1994:78). The vision behind the formation of the company and its rapid expansion was described by Mr Oginga Odinga, the managing director and the future party leader, at the opening of Ramogi House as follows:

The Luo Thrift and Trading Corporation...Had very humble beginnings. It started as a thrift association... Our aims then even thoughts were not only dim but could be said to be utterly confused. However, we groped our way until 1946 when a second idea flushed into our minds. As new shaft of light led us to the point of establishing a limited liability company.... The first large project of the Company was the establishment of the Ramogi Press in Nairobi... As we were novices in this commercial venture, we needed to publish and circulate such information as would infuse into our members strong love for our enterprise... it may be of interest to you to know that the press in question has been transferred from Nairobi to our town here-Kisumu. Meanwhile, another and even bigger project was already budding...I refer to the Maseno store. This was erected in early 1948 when Ramogi press had been on for only a few months....I come now to the subject of our today's assembly: the Ramogi House. The idea of a hotel was first mooted in 1948 by the Directors and was wholly approved by the members...An attempt was made with a strong backing of Mr Atkins {district commissioner Central Nyanza} to obtain a loan from the Local Native Council but without a success.... Our funds were thinning out faster than we expected and in our hour of need, we turned to the Diamond Jubilee Trust Ltd (Himbara, 1994:78)

With this impulsive approach to commercial undertakings, it was only a matter of time before the company went bankrupt. In fact, the same year that the company launched its largest project, Ramogi House, an official filed the following assessment of its performance with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry

In September [1950], I was advised by the District Commissioner, Kisumu, that the corporation was in a parlour financial state and might shortly go into liquidation as it is heavily in debt to Asians.... Trading losses published in the prospectus so far are: August 1947 to December 1948-Shs 38,126; Shs 41,468; seven months of 1950: shs 9877.... Ramogi House is now to be let to an Indian...to be run I understand as the Cosmopolitan Hotel.... It is extremely shaky.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸⁷KNA/MCI/6/783

The Asian stranglehold on wholesale buying and the inability of the African traders to obtain their goods in wholesale or to buy on credit remained a significant feature of the postwar era. It was exacerbated in 1948 by the general shortage of imported trade goods, and by the tendency for Asian competitors to be supplied much more readily with the little goods that were available. Both these handicaps generated resentment among African retail traders (Kitching, 1980:180).¹⁸⁸

The widespread resentment against Asian traders was intensified around the middle of 1948 by what was felt by Africans to be a number of particularly serious malpractices. There was a common view among Africans that Asian traders deliberately hoarded certain commodities and only sold them on the 'black market' for high prices (Furedi, 1974:351). Similarly, Afro-Asian trade rivalry was also witnessed in the distribution of maize for the Maize and Produce Control Board. In some cases where Africans were reliant on Asian mechanics to repair their vehicles used in the distribution, repairs were badly done or sometimes not done at all (Fearn, 1961:190).¹⁸⁹ It is, therefore, evident that Asians used some forms of knowledge to undermine and dominate Africans in business.

In 1948, within North Kavirondo District, the African retail trade on the whole continued to be a projection of Indian business due to lack of capital and even more, lack of business knowledge. The African, however, played his part in the produce buying trade although even in this sphere, he was hampered by lack of capital. African entry on a large scale into carrying trade had not in the whole been successful. Sights of broken down lorries and taxis were common in the reserve. This was not only due to lack of capital, but also lack of knowledge in the running of the business and the care of the machine. African trading companies were a legion in the reserve. Some were merely combinations of shops, but others went to the length of getting registered with proper articles drawn up by an Indian lawyer. It was regrettable that few of them seemed successful and strife between the members was not rampant¹⁹⁰. It is evident therefore that the Asians devised a way of surviving in the postcolony. The diasporic condition in which the Asian found himself was an ambivalent one; it was a 'punishment' to be estranged from home, however, that estrangement also brought with it a profound creative energy which ensured Asian survival (Jaspal, 2011: 48).

¹⁸⁸Ogada, James O.I., 2006 James Ogada is an employee of Kisumu County Council and he comes from Kajulu, one of the Tripple K clans of Kisumu (Kisumu, Kano Kajulu)

¹⁸⁹Owiyo, O.I., 2012/06 Opcit- A retired postmaster living in Kisumu

¹⁹⁰KNA, DC/NN/1/30, KNA, DC/NN/1/12

While Africans tried to compete with Asians in produce distribution, Asian wholesalers responded to the African threat to their dominance by offering low prices to African traders than could be obtained from the Collective Group Buyers Organization. This was done with the sole intention of weakening the strength of the Collective Group Buyers Organization. With the ultimate collapse of the Collective Group Buyers Organization, the Asians returned to their status quo of being the sole distributor of produce thereby kicking out their African competitors from the business (Kitching, 1980:186). Such were the Asian malpractices that Africans resented and which led to tension between the two communities. But, even though tension mounted from Asian malpractices in certain economic ventures, their economic relations with Africans in other areas were still evident. For instance, although, the Luo Thrift Trading Corporation Limited was a rival and counter corporation to the Asians' dominance in trade in the Nyanza area, its directors still sought some help from the Asians. This was evident by the immense financial and material support from the Asians during the construction of AFRIKA HOUSE, an office to be used by the Ramogi Press after its relocation from Nairobi to Kisumu (Omenya, 2010:162).

Like in the World War II period, the economic space of Kakamega was still characterized by gold mining and trade. Although the state criminalized African mining activities until 1948, this sector was full of illegal operations, which influenced Afro-Asian relation within the places where gold was being mined. Unlike the case of the Kimberley diamonds in South Africa where miners opposed licensing of Africans because they sought to eliminate competition and secure control over labor, in Kakamega, such legal exclusion only served to solidify African ingenuity. For example, illicit gold miners utilized threats against licensed miners. Two licensed Asians, Curchuran Singh and Sauta Singh, were for instance, chased out of Maragoli by Logoli illicit miners armed with machetes. Another Asian who had pegged claims near the Maragoli closed area was also threatened and his house stoned. In fact, such threats had no racial boundaries. In 1948, for instance, Leokadius Ndede, the only licensed African with a claim near Luanda in Bunyore and prospecting rights on a tributary of River Awach on the Luyia-Luo border, endured constant threats from local Nyore illicit miners. In his complaint to the Inspector of Mines, Ndede claimed that "on any day of the week, between 20 and 30 natives would be found illegally working in that area."¹⁹¹

¹⁹¹ KNA, PC/NZA/2/7/117

Indeed, there were records referring to a legal African prospector in 1948. Dubbed “the only intelligent African producer of legally produced gold,” Leokadius Ndede came to the scene of trade in gold in a police report chronicling his arrest by plain clothes police for suspected illicit gold dealing. The site was the shop of an Asian goldsmith where Ndede had taken his gold for weighing. The arrest followed Ndede’s refusal to accept Shs.90 offered by the Asian goldsmith for the weight of ten-cent piece of gold. In his defense, Ndede stated:

Shortly after this, a plain-clothes policeman picked me up and I showed them [sic] the gold I had produced and went to the police station. I showed them my Prospecting Right Registration and they released me. I suspect the Indian goldsmith bore me malice for not selling him the gold and told the plain clothes man about me. Nobody knew I was carrying my gold to-day until I showed the goldsmith.¹⁹²

Ndede’s experience demonstrates the prevailing dominant perceptions among immigrant races that Africans were naturally thieves. Indeed, between 1949 and 1951, only five Africans were listed as legitimate miners in Kenya colony. They were described as “literate African miners of ‘small worker’ type, doing isolated workings on scattered claims using hand methods only (Shillaro, 2000).”

Gold mining continued in the division on a small scale by illegal panners on the Edzawa and Yala rivers. The activities of African gold miners were well concealed, and their gains were taken to Indians in Kisumu, who paid more than the Official price for gold and exported it to India. In order to compete within the economic space of North Kavirondo, African trading companies such as the Mbale Traders Association, The Teriki Traders Association, the Maragoli Traders Association and the Kilingili Traders Association were created. Kilingili Traders Association was however the only active body and acted as a forum for Africans to air their trade views¹⁹³. Archival report indicates that apart from the rural industries and the gold mining industry, which later on receded in economic importance, the area of Kakamega did not progress much industrially.¹⁹⁴ It is on the basis of the small deposits of gold that Asians considered venturing more in the manufacturing sector.

To a visitor in North Nyanza by 1950, the stranglehold possessed by Indians on the internal trade of the district was most surprising, as was the general backwardness of the African trade

¹⁹² KNA, PC/NZA/1/1/117

¹⁹³ KNA, DC/NN/1/36

¹⁹⁴ KNA, DC/KMG/2/29/41

and traders. African trade was marked by haphazard and unregulated buildings, a complete paucity of stocks of trade goods, a corresponding lack of business acumen and wholesale buying organisations; there were no adequate District Council market rules and hawking (by unlicensed hawkers) was indiscriminate. Although the market situation in North Nyanza was chaotic, a definite Market Policy to clear up unregulated market buildings was approved and effected in 1950 with great success. Henceforth, an executive committee, consisting of a District Officer, Health Inspector, Marketing Officer and the secretary of the African District Council agreed to monitor other markets within the region. There were also plans to draft by-laws which would be used to govern the operations of the already existing markets and the new ones.¹⁹⁵ Although these markets were chaotic they played a critical role in ensuring Afro-Asian relations as they offered economic sites of interaction.

Afro-Asian economic interactions in Nyanza Province provided a window for unfolding the other side of the diasporic Asians. In the diasporic subjects, then, it is evident that there was a stark relief of the hybrid and dual characteristics that were most often associated with postcolonial discourses (Jaspal, 2011:48). For instance, among the Asian trade unionists, it was not only Makhan Singh and Pinto who strove for working class solidarity. But also, Pranel Sheth, who worked closely with Makhan Singh and was influential as a journalist as well as a trade unionist, is an example of a number of Asians who supported Africans even against the interest of their own community. The Afro-Asian political alliance and activities were therefore a subversive resistance to colonialism and a means of achieving political freedom.

A number of African vernacular newspapers began to emerge; many of them printed by the Asian owned presses and backed by Indian finance. For instance, Pranal Sheth,¹⁹⁶ a close ally

¹⁹⁵KNA, DC/NN/1/32

¹⁹⁶Pranal Sheth: was a journalist and one of a small group of young Indian socialists who were also members of the Kenya Indian Congress. His journalist colleagues were Mr Pio Gama Pinto, Mr D.K Shah, Mr Chanan Singh, Mr Piyo Rattansi and Mr Haroon Ahmed. He edited the Colonial Times and the Daily Chronicles; both Asian owned and stridently anti-colonial. He was also close to the Luo leader, Oginga Odinga (perceived to be a socialist), and by 1966 clashes between his friend (Oginga Odinga) and Kenya's leader Jomo Kenyatta left him exposed. Stripped of his Kenyan citizenship, Pranal was bundled on a plane and deported to India. Later that year, he was admitted to Britain, where his wife and family soon joined him. With Kenya's limited press freedom, well-nigh extinguished in the wake of the Mau Mau insurgency of the early 1950s, Pranal moved from journalism into law. He qualified as a barrister, spending the last year of his studies in London, and was called to the

of Kenya's first Vice-President Jaramogi Oginga Odinga contributed immensely in the *Ramogi Press's* Kiswahili publications after moving to Kisumu from Nairobi where he worked as Odinga's right hand man. Described by Jaramogi Oginga Odinga as 'the fire which burns behind the scenes; that cooks the food for the people to eat', Sheth first wrote for the *Chronicle* and then *Ramogi*, a weekly edited by the late Achieng Oneko. With Odinga, Sheth wrote several influential articles on African development, helping to formulate policy regarding the future of Kenya. He also urged Asians to support Africans in their struggle for land and freedom (Rattansi, 2004:21; Seidenberg, 1996:166). So as identities and postcolony changes, the tools of bargain and struggle also changed on the postcolony. In this case, the press became an important instrument of liberation struggle.

After moving to Kisumu in 1952, and while writing for Achieng Oneko and Oginga Odinga, Sheth became concerned over the plight of Asian and African small farmers in Kibos, whose sugarcane was purchased at an exceptionally low price by the Miwani Sugar Mills Ltd. Although a prominent Asian family owned the factory, the Hindochas, Sheth organized the farmers. During his eight years as the president of the Nyanza Co-operative Society, through strikes and hard bargaining, he was able to negotiate and raise the price of farmers cane from Shs 8 per ton to Shs 63. Sheth also opened the society to farmers of all races. Attracted by its success, local European farmers applied for membership and the powerful Kenya Farmers' Union asked for affiliation (Gregory, 1993:159). Despite their rivalries, Asians and Africans shared the credit for developing trade unions and, as a result, improved the economic conditions of the African and Asian working class, thereby influencing imperial policies and furthering a nationalist movement (Gregory, 1993:161).

In the 1953, a number of Indian merchants and transporters were also engaged in the buying and distribution of produce in their respective areas of residence. Most of these merchants in Western Kenya were buying their goods from Kisumu. They also saved their money in banks (such as National Bank of India) within Kisumu. For instance, while making an application to the District Officer in Bungomato own a gun, Hussein Sundarji reasoned that he had to go to Kisumu once a week to deposit cash money in a Kisumu bank and also withdraw money in cash from the bank to Bungoma. He also stated that he bought most of his goods for business from Kisumu and usually had to go by lorry, which sometimes developed mechanical

bar at Lincoln's Inn in 1962. Initially, he practiced in Kisumu, the Luo homeland, where his friendship with Odinga developed. See the guardian newspaper, 28, July 2003.

problems causing him to delay on the road till night. Similarly, Mr Abdulrasul Valji, a merchant and a transporter from Western Kenya also used Kisumu-Bungoma route in order to send money and transact some business at the Kisumu post office. He, therefore, appealed to the District Officer Kakamega to consider recommending him to possess a gun. The movement of Asian traders and merchants was so frequent and this spurred infrastructural developments in Kisumu as compared to Kakamega through the support of Asian trade. Other merchants like Ali Abdu of Kimilili as well travelled all the way to Kisumu, to buy hides from Kisumu wholesalers, using his lorry while at the same time carrying a large sum of money¹⁹⁷. The worry that the Asians developed was that, because they travelled with a lot of money in their vehicles, in case of any breakdown along the roads, they would be attacked by Africans and robbed of their money and goods. They were thus subjected and vulnerable to crime, which went beyond racial boundaries.

Incidences of crime were not only common along the roads, but also within the trading centres. And in the interest of his African night watchman, Trambakal Vithalji of Luanda market of western Kenya erected a hut/shade for the watchman for the main purpose of protecting his shop. This came in the wake of robbery that was carried out in his shop leading to a loss of 3000 shillings and the goods were never recovered. His complaint was that there were no government *askaris*/guards available in the town to secure the town from criminals.¹⁹⁸ Similarly, in Malakisi, the Indian Traders Association informed the O/C Kenya Police Kimilili and Kakamega about some African gangs of Malakisi and Nyange areas under the control of Chief Jonathan Baraza and Chief Sudi respectively, who were harassing Indian shopkeepers, taking their goods and running away without paying. These people were also giving threats to the shopkeepers as well as beating them.¹⁹⁹

Lawlessness was also part of the plural economic spaces within the postcolony as evident in the year 1953, when a number of Asian businessmen in Marachi, Nambale, Broderick falls, and Bungoma applied for a licence to possess guns. Most of these applications were made through a prominent Asian lawyer in Kisumu by the name I.N Desai. Although some of the applicants who wanted to possess guns were Asian Special Police Officers and informers like Mr Magan Manji and Vithaldas Prabhudas Thaker of Broderick Falls respectively, others were transporters and produce merchant like Maganbhai Karsan Patel of Nambare and

¹⁹⁷KNA, DC/KMG/1/6/61

¹⁹⁸KNA, DC/KMG/2/13/28

¹⁹⁹KNA, DC/KMG/1/1/166

Hussein Sundarji who was a general merchant and transporter in Bungoma, operating under Sundarji Dosa and Sons as a sole proprietor²⁰⁰. The main reason for these applications was to protect themselves from criminals who were apparently believed to be Africans. But also, the need to possess guns also demonstrates how the colonial state was brutal and ruthless.

In Central Kavirondo and Kisumu in particular in 1954, there was a rising tension against itinerant deliveries of bread from large Asian bakeries that frequently stopped their vans and sold bread outside African bakers shop in markets and trading centres. According to Mr Gordon, P.M, the Central Nyanza District Commissioner, this was discouraging business for Africans trained at Kabete as bakers with a view to put up their establishments; their own markets, since the larger Asian bakeries could usually undercut them in pricing of the commodity. This was also a problem in Kakamega District where a draft to amend the legislation was done to give the DC the necessary powers to control the practice²⁰¹. But again in Kakamega, a number of Asian wholesalers were not operating in the district directly but through their agents or indirectly by appointing a local retailer as their wholesale sub-agent. Mr Jone P.H noted that the activities of these people were definitely beneficial to African traders; however, they were resented by the few who wanted to break their dominance in trade. Most of these sub agents were local Indian retailers. For instance, the East Africa Tobacco Company had appointed a local Indian retailer as its sub –agent. This sub agent had a vehicle and toured the African markets selling cartons of cigarettes to the shop owners. His status was complicated because it appeared that he also carried a supply of other articles on his own account, such as soap and matches, which he sold to the retailers and not to the general public. His activities were resented by other local merchants who claimed that the shop owners henceforth no longer took the trouble to come to Kakamega to get supplies and that they, therefore, lost not only this ‘semi-wholesale’ trade, but also the retail trade incidental on the visits of such people to town.²⁰² Initially, Nurmahomed Valji and Company and Bungoma Flour Mills continued to operate in Mumias and Bungoma respectively. But, it should also be noted that by 1960, there was still a distinct move from the African business community to oust Asian traders from their entrenched position in the African Reserves, thereby raising tension as far as Afro-Asian social and economic relations were concerned.²⁰³

²⁰⁰KNA, DC/KMG/1/6/61

²⁰¹KNA, DC/KMG/2/29/1

²⁰²KNA, DC/KMG/2/29/1

²⁰³KNA, DX/21/10/5

5.3 Mapping the Asian Large Scale Industrial Venture in Nyanza and Western Kenya

This section explores the various large-scale industrial ventures that the Asians were engaged in within the Western and Nyanza region. Issues of cotton ginnery, sugarcane production, petroleum industry, manufacturing industries and gold mining are discussed. In the pre war period, Asian capital was largely confined to merchant concerns and some primary processing. The extension of Asian capital into manufacturing after 1945 must be placed in its historical context. The areas of accumulation for those of Asian origin in East Africa in the early part of colonial rule were restricted to trade and commerce by regulations against non-whites holding land. Asian merchants were confined within urban boundaries, so that their only hope for expansion was into manufacturing or primary processing. The only agricultural holdings owned by Asians in Kenya were several sugar estates in the west of Kenya (Kavirondo); an area not settled by Europeans (Swainson, 1980:124). Partly as a result of the new ginning activity, Asian manufacturing greatly expanded. Among the Asian owners of ginneries were Mehta, Hasham Jamal and the Kassim Lakha brothers. Asian manufacturing included an assortment of relatively small secondary industries, but was concentrated in the processing of agricultural products and mineral resources. The factories thus continued to utilize local raw materials rather than imports (Gregory, 1993:275).

Accompanying the early years of company formations was also the contribution of Asians in the machinery production. The origins of Kenya's machinery branch go back to the late 1940s. Asian engineers who had served their apprenticeships in the railway workshops in Nairobi began establishing their workshops. In the growing cities, these undertakings were aimed at the repair and service of the burgeoning post-war market for imported transport equipment, while in the more rural areas, the Asian entrepreneurs' workshops specialized in the repair and maintenance of tractors and general agricultural equipment. Thus, firms existed in Kisumu that specialized in building sugar cane crushing machinery whilst in the Rift Valley and western Kenya, ploughs and harrows were produced in response to the needs of large-scale diversified arable-farming community. The products from these small machinery firms, predominantly owned by Asians, reflected the wider range of machine making specialism that had evolved. These machines have ensured a sustainable operation of industries within the Sugar belt region of both Nyanza and Western provinces of Kenya (Mathews, 1991:70)

The post war period was marked by a rapid move of capital into the manufacturing sector as well as a concentration within that area. The war period did generate a specific demand for particular consumer items, which were in short supply due to transport problems. These products included: blankets, leather, shoe, soap, chemicals, oils, textiles and glue. The wartime may have stimulated demand for locally manufactured goods, but the main impetus behind industrialization process was to reach its peak in the mid and late 1950s (Swainson, 1976:38). The postwar government policy of supporting industrialization applied to both local and foreign capital alike. Therefore, the Asian enterprises that wished to set up a manufacturing concern, after 1958, were given protective tariffs against the imported item.

During the 1950s, the rise in consumer demand gave great impetus to industrialization and during this time, restrictions on Asian enterprise were gradually lifted. The large-scale Asian Industrial groups used takeovers in the 1950s and 1960s to consolidate their hold over particular branches of production; a tactic used by most capitalist enterprises at a certain stage of concentration e.g. Chandaria Family²⁰⁴ (Swainson, 1980:125-6). This firm continued to monopolize production until foreign firms erected several competing plants in the late 1960s. In a similar fashion, the group bought the East African Match Company in the late 1950s from its European owners. The Chandarias bought a 50% share in this company in 1960, which they later increased to 75% with Khimasia family holding the remaining 25%. The Chandaria ‘empire’ in Kenya expanded rapidly in the 1960s, and its industrial investments were served by a large marketing network spreading to areas such as Kisumu and Kakamega. The Khimasia family²⁰⁵ made similar moves from trade into import-substituting industrial concerns after the Second World War. These Asian industrialists had been involved in virtually all the cases in trading in the commodities, which they ultimately manufactured

²⁰⁴Manu Chandaria EBS (Elder of the Burning Spear) is a Kenyan businessman of Indian descent born in Nairobi on 1 March 1929. Along with being the chairman and CEO of the Comcraft Group of Companies, a billion dollar enterprise that has a presence in over 40 countries, he is a successful businessman in Kenya and established his own, very successful, business. Manu Chandaria, for example, a successful businessman in Kenya established his own, very successful, business. He has been appointed to the board of a number of other private companies. He has also been appointed, at different times, to a large number of government committees and task forces. He is a former chairman of the Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM) and was founding chairman of both the Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA) and the regional EABC see Irwin, D 2015, *Kenya's Business Networks: An Inside Circle?*, Sage Open Online access.

²⁰⁵Khimasia Family was an Asian family which owned six industrial concerns mainly in food production and clothing, see for instance Kirkpatrick, C.H, Lee, N and Nixon, F.I (1984) *Industrial Structure and Policy in Less Developed Countries*, New York: Routledge

themselves. In 1958, they established a factory to manufacture fruit squashes, mineral waters, jams and jellies; which began its move into food and drink manufacture, the products of which were marketed by their existing organizations. Before 1958, the group had largely been involved in the import trade, chiefly in the areas of food and cloth (Swainson, 1976:43). Although most of Chandaria Industries were based in Nairobi, with a branch of his Mabati Rolling Mills in Kisumu, their products served the needs of residents of Kakamega, Kisumu and other parts of the hinterland.²⁰⁶

Two other important Asians among the new industrialists were Devjibhai Karamshi Hindocha and Chotabhai Motibhai Patel. Hindocha²⁰⁷ became a partner in Vithaldas Haridas and Company. When the company was dissolved, Hindocha obtained some of the Kenya interest, and within a year, he purchased the Victoria Nyanza Sugar Co., from an Australian family based in Kisumu. Later, Hindocha renamed the company to the Miwani Sugar Mills Ltd. and expanded the cane acreage and modernized the factory, thereby raising the annual production tenfold by 1960. In that year, he added distillery to produce industrial methylated and rectified alcohol. The effect of these developments was that, Africans around Chemelil area were employed in the Industry but again, Africans were able to obtain sugar easily and readily within Nyanza and Western Kenya regions. Although few new ginneries were built, a number changed hands as traders with capital bought them from pre-war owners. Flour milling, oil production, soap manufacture, sisal cording, construction of motor vehicle bodies, shoemaking, sawmilling, and furniture making also continued as attractive industries to those who took up manufacturing. A number of ironworking or vehicle repair businesses also evolved into engineering works (Gregory, 1993:292). However, because of a dearth of published information and the lack of parallel records, it is impossible to assess the Asians' contribution with precision and to make meaningful territorial/regional comparison.

Among Indian factories operating in Kisumu in the 1950s was the Nyanza Soap Factory (Kasabun) on plot No.7, belonging to Mr Muthuradas Jamnadas. Bhagwanji Jamnadas owned

²⁰⁶Chatur, Salim O:I 2014 One of the Ismailia trader in Kisumu's Central Business District

²⁰⁷Devjibhai Karamshi Hindochacame from Modpar (in 1906), near Jamnagar. The Hindocha family, Hindus living in Uganda, were forced to leave the country in the early 1970s after ruler Idi Amin expelled all Asians. Hindocha is said to have been respected for many charities without discrimination of colour, creed or class. He contributed immensely to the Young Men Christian Association and Onjiko primary school all in Kisumu, for more details see Gregory, R. 1992, *The Rise of and Fall of Philanthropy in East Africa*, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers

this business. However, he later sold it to Rugnath Gokaldas and Company limited. The Soap factory was useful to the locals because it supplied them with detergents for bathing and cleaning utensils. It also offered employment to a number of natives²⁰⁸. On the same note, Messrs Dattani and Bros also showed interest and took up manufacturing of soap in Kakamega township with Mr Laji Nathubhai Dattani as his partner. Mr. Laji Nathubhai would later take over the long established business of Messrs Harisungh Gujabhai. In Malakisi, Valabhdas Vithaldas Broker & Company, which owned the Malakisi ginnery, also applied for permission to be allowed to install a soap factory at their Malakisi ginnery. At the time of application, there was no soap factory in the North Kavirondo District. The District Commissioner of Kakamega in consultation with the Medical Officer of Health would later approve their application to operate a manufacturing firm in Kakamega town. It is important to note that²⁰⁹ Nyanza Soap Factory provided African businessmen (especially women) with less income an opportunity to buy byproducts of the soap, which they sold to other Africans at a reduced price. These soap byproducts were referred to as *sabund achieth achieth* (a soap with characteristics of faeces or which looks like faeces in colour due to the fact that the soap was a mixture of different by products/rejects of the soaps manufactured) locally due to their dull colour.²¹⁰

It is worth noting also that, although soap manufacturing was useful to Africans, they decried about the quality of the soaps that were being produced by these Asian factories. Habil Ndogalu, the Secretary of the North Kavirondo Chambers of Commerce for instance raised concerns with the Provincial Commissioner, Nyanza, over the quality of soap that was being manufactured in the town. His concern was that the soap was of poor quality and expensive compared to the soap imported from adjacent territories of Uganda and Tanganyika, which were by far of better quality and cheaper. Therefore, his appeal to the PC was that, the authorities should allow soap from the adjacent territories to be imported to help in reducing the prices of the soap and to help in ensuring quality of the locally produced soap²¹¹.

²⁰⁸KNA, PC/NZA/2/17/3

²⁰⁹KNA, PC/NZA/2/17/3

²¹⁰Patel, O.I, 2013 Karim Patel, was one of the proprietors of the Sai supermarket in Kondele area of Kisumu

²¹¹KNA, PC/NZA/2/17/3

Probably, the largest Asian industrial complex in East Africa as a whole was that of the Madhvani group²¹². Unlike the Asian capital based in Kenya, the Madhvani group used agricultural production and processing of primary products as the basis for its accumulation. From 1955 onwards, Madhvani manufactured products had been marketed in Kenya through Muljibhai Madhvani Limited which had trading branches in Kisumu, Mombasa and Nairobi. The Madhvani group took the opportunity to extend their industrial production into Kenya during the 1960s, in order to preserve their markets for industrial products. The group also used the method of takeover, as did many foreign firms to expand their industrial empire in Kenya (Swainson, 1976:44).

In 1955, the District Commissioner of North Nyanza Mr Jones, P, raised concern that most African traders had been in the habit of buying their stocks from Indian retailers in Kakamega and other centres at a price very little lower than the retail price, and that their margin of profit was consequently extremely small. According to the District Commissioner, this was a major contributor in retarding the development of African trading. Certain wholesalers were willing to send their representatives round African markets or to appoint local sub agents to distribute goods on their behalf but which proved expensive due to the need to acquire a hawkers license or a manufacturers license²¹³. However, Asians ambitions in the manufacturing sector continued to manifest itself in the Nyanza region albeit with some control from the colonial government.

In Kisumu for instance, there was considerable oil milling and soap-making, which could have expanded when these activities were freed from control. Ghee was manufactured on a cooperative basis. Apart from the Miwani Sugar Factory and some canning in the settled areas, there was little industrial, as opposed to agricultural development. This was evident by the inquiry made by the Agricultural Officer, Kakamega, about the prices of locally made Jembes. In his response to the Agricultural Officer, Mr Ferguson, F, the Price Inspector

²¹²Madhvani Goup/family was one of the most dynamic pioneers of many manufacturing industries in East Africa. The group consisted of sixty-six commercial and industrial entrepreneurs operating throughout East Africa. The products included sugar, steel, metal containers, textile, beer, tea, oil, soap, confectionary and chain link fencing. Sugar manufacturing by the group was not limited to Uganda, however. An application by the group to erect a sugar refinery at their Ramisi estate in Kenya was granted in 1954; see Himbara, D. (1994) *Kenya Capitalists, the State and Development*, Nairobi: East African Education Publishers.

²¹³KNA, DC/KMG/2/29/1

Nyanza Province explained that these Jembes were made in Kisumu by a ironsmith called Jalal Din and that they were made from Motor car chassis which cost approximately 50/- per chassis. This Asian employed the services of 10 African boys and his wholesale price was 2/50²¹⁴. This confirms that a lot of agricultural production was going on especially in the Western region compared to industrial production.

Indians also ventured into the petroleum Industry during the postwar period. This was necessitated by the fact that by 1954, acquiring petrol especially within the western region was a serious issue/problem. In 1958, Bhimji Ramji of Maragoli, Kotecha Trading Company in Kakamega and Purshottam H.Pabari of Broderick Falls requested Jivraj Raishi & Bro, a local agent of the Ozo East African Petroleum Company Ltd to install kerosene, petrol and diesel tanks at their premises. This request was made after a number of African residents in Mumias drew the attention of the District Commissioner, Kakamega, to the troubles that they were going through in getting petrol within the area. The residents argued that there was only one petrol pump in Mumias trading centre belonging to M/s Noormohamed Valji & Co. However, the petrol pump did not have enough quantity. Sometimes, the petrol company would refuse to supply or sell petrol even if they had enough stock, a typical characteristic of Asian traders in the reserve. But almost the same time, Caltex (Africa) Limited also managed to get an approval to install a petrol pump to be operated by an Asian by the name Jetha Jiwa in Malakisi. A number of Asians continued to make applications so as to trade in petroleum products. This was evident when Abdulrasul Jaffer Valji applied to the District Officer, Bungoma, to put up a petrol station at the junction of Bungoma/Tororo/Broderick Falls road. By 1960, Asians were already entrenched in the petroleum Industry. This was exemplified by the fact that Haiderali Khanji & Co was already supplying petrol to the locals and officers from the Ministry of Tourism and Common services on Safari at Broderick falls at his garage.²¹⁵

The above trading activities notwithstanding, complaints of traders operating without licenses were a common issue which as raised by Hon Brown Tsuma, Member Western Regional Assembly (Lurambi South) in 1964. Some businesses were also being carried out on other peoples' licences. These complaints were also raised by Wilson Amolo with the clerk to the Council in Kakamega. Wilson complained that Mohamed Salim was carrying on trading at his

²¹⁴(KNA, DC/KMG/2/29/41

²¹⁵KNA, DC/KMG/1/20/21

Majengo shop, and had leased the new shop in Amalemba to Ali Alieri without council permission.²¹⁶ These were some of the characteristics of the traders within the plural economic spaces of Western and Nyanza provinces of Kenya.

5.4 Exploring the Sugar Industry in the Post War Period in Nyanza and Western Provinces.

Asian large scale industrial venture was so dynamic since it moved from one undertaking to the other. Being pioneers in the cultivation of sugarcane, they also ventured in Jaggery production. Sugarcane agriculture was introduced in Kenya at Kibos earlier by Indian settlers who used it to manufacture jaggery. Before independence, the sugar industry in Kenya was dominated by private entrepreneurs. Later, the Ministry of Agriculture conducted field experiments on farmers' fields in Kibos and Miwani, and laboratory investigations at the National Agricultural Laboratories – Kabete, in Nairobi. These activities by Asians laid the foundation upon which other sugar factories were to be established.

In 1948, J.M Patel, one of the owners of farms comprising of some 752 acres situated at Miwani, where they grew sugar cane which they supplied to Miwani Sugar Mills (Kenya) Ltd. raised concerns about the uneconomical prices for sugar paid by Miwani to the suppliers of sugarcane to the factory. Patel argued that the cost of growing sugar cane and maintaining the farms had gone up considerably due to the general rise in the wages of labour, posho, cattle as well as farming equipment and further due to deterioration in the quantity of work done by labour. Due to this, sugarcane growers were compelled to find out ways and means to realize the best price for their crops. Patel went on to state that

We have therefore, decided to manufacture jaggery out of the sugar cane grown by us on our farms and we have purchased the necessary machinery, pots and pans, and all other equipment required in the manufacture of jaggery. It would pay us better to make jaggery at the price allowed by the control and there is enough market in the country for the same²¹⁷.

In this state of hopelessness, J.M Patel requested the Chairman of the Supply Board in Nairobi to urgently give them (sugarcane growers) the necessary permission to manufacture jaggery. At the meeting of the Kibos/Muhoroni Production Committee held on 17th March 1950, the question of Jaggery exports was discussed and it was noted that Jaggery could not

²¹⁶KNA, DC/KMG/2/10/82

²¹⁷ KNA, AK/11/173

be exported at that time. However, the bulk of the first grade jaggery was disposed of locally as far as Mombasa, Kisumu, Thika Nairobi and Voi.²¹⁸

In a representative meeting of members of the Kibos Planters Association held on the 10th of July 1951, it was unanimously decided that in view of the very high cost of production, it was necessary for the sugar cane planters to get a fair price for sugarcane supplied to millers for the manufacture of white sugar. Moreover, it was noted that sugarcane growers were willing to increase sugar cane plantation provided that their demand of fair price was met by the government at the earliest opportunity, as any further delay in fixing the prices would retard the progress of sugarcane plantation. A working Committee comprising of Messrs Dr Bakhtawar Singh, R.B Patel, Sham Singh, Jagir Singh, Gurdial Singh Brar, Gurdial Singh Bhandal and Milwant Singh Sandhu was therefore elected to deal with matters concerning sugar growers in the name of Kibos Planters Association in Kisumu (Nyanza region).²¹⁹

5.4.1 Jaggery Production

Within the sugar Industry in the postwar period, the Indian farm areas in Kibos-Miwani region was the major sugar producing area in Kenya, and most of the cane growers were operating under the Nyanza Cane Farmers Cooperative Society whose main function by 1953 was to grade Jaggery. There was also the Kibos Planters Association²²⁰. Around 1958, an Asian Tenant farmer, Walji Hirji Estate Ltd sold some 3694 acres of land to other Asians at Kibos out of which 2,875 acres were put under cane plantation. The gross annual output by the tenants from the land they were occupying exceeded 58,000 tons of cane, part of which was delivered to Miwani Sugar Mills (Kenya) Ltd, Miwani, where it was converted into white sugar and the remaining balance was converted into jaggery (unrefined brown sugar in lumps), which was consumed by Asians and Africans.²²¹

According to the 1955 North Kavirondo Annual report, jaggery was not popular amongst Africans in spite of the shortage of sugar, and the Indian traders could only sell a limited amount of it. It was doubtful whether central refineries would prove economical, as sugar cane growers would not stand large transport costs. However, one Indian volunteered to start

²¹⁸KNA, AK/11/173

²¹⁹KNA, AK/4/22

²²⁰KNA, AK/13/13

²²¹KNA, BV/14/399

up a jaggery factory first and then possibly a refinery later²²². By 1958, the two Indian owned jaggery factories, which operated in the areas of Mumias and Butere, were finding difficulty in obtaining suitable sugar cane for production purposes for their factories. During the year, therefore, 55 acres of a better type of sugarcane were planted. Future policy was to bulk up these areas with better varieties of sugar cane while encouraging farmers to weed out the poor, thin red chewing variety. Although discussions continued throughout the year with regard to the White Sugar factory, hope receded at the end of the year, when the only Indian manufacturer who had shown interest to the suggestion, indicated that he would require at least 1,000 acres as a buffer area for any such factory in North Nyanza. However, the possibility of finding an area of such a size in any part of this district was remote.²²³

In the meantime, there was an increased planting of sugar, which took place between 1958 and 1960 within North Kavirondo especially in Shiamberere and Butere areas to compensate for the shortages experienced in the previous years. An Indian owned factory near Butere and the Shiambere Jaggery Society handled most of the cane. Shiambere Jaggery Society, however, had a difficult year owing to internal disagreements in the Society. Propaganda was instituted to increase the planting of sugar cane in the area, particularly of the more suitable varieties containing a higher sucrose value. The Indian owned factory at Mumias was closed down for the greater part of the year through lack of cane and due to the fact that the growers and owners of the factory could not agree on a satisfactory price. However, the Butere factory continued working. Towards the end of 1959, Shiamberere Society experienced a rather difficult year as the production at the factory fell off with only 23 tonnes of jaggery being produced. Various factors contributed to this decline; the main factor was the fact that the acreage had just not been planted and the estimated acreage figures on which the need for the factory was based were radically wrong. Additionally, the Indian owned factories in the Western part of the District sent their Lorries to Kabras to 'pirate' cane for spot cash²²⁴. Thus, given such background, Afro-Asian relations were not going to be harmonious especially among African cane growers and the Asian owners of the sugar factory especially in Mumias region of Western Kenya.

Nevertheless, one pleasing aspect of the year's activities was the growth of a spirit of understanding and cooperation between the Marketing Board and the Elgon Nyanza Chamber

²²²KNA, DC/NN/1/36

²²³KNA, DC/NN/1/39

²²⁴KNA, DC/NN/1/39

of Commerce. A meeting arranged between representatives of the Elgon Nyanza Farmers Cooperative Union Ltd., the Elgon Nyanza African Chambers of Commerce and Industry and of the Asian Chamber of Commerce and the Marketing Office, to discuss marketing of produce problems, proved an outstanding success in the betterment of relations between all the organizations concerned and their members²²⁵. By 1961, R.G Modi, a direct importer and General Merchant applied to be appointed as a sugar distributor agent in North Nyanza. He was also a distributor for Jaggery in Kakamega prior to his application as a Government sugar agent as well as a dealer in cotton piece goods, hardware, foodstuffs, barbed wire, cement and stationery. In Kisumu, sugar agents from Kakamega and Maseno were collecting their stock from M/s Devjibhai K. Hindocha Ltd. by 1960.

In Maragoli area, the Chief of North Maragoli, Tiriki location, recommended Sidibhai Govind, a hardware supplier of Maragoli trading centre, Lunyerere Market in 1962, to take up the work of sugar distribution in Vihiga division due to the inadequacy of the initial supplier, who was not able to satisfy the demands of the populace. Bhagawanji Mathuradas Kotecha, a wholesale and retail Merchant who was also interested in sugar distribution operated as the agent for East African Tobacco Company limited, Unga Limited and Allsopps East Africa Limited mostly in Maragoli area. These distributors were appointed as Government Agents as the country approached her independence. Kisumu and Kakamega Sugar Agents would always travel to Maragoli to sell their sugar once a week and sometimes African traders had to travel up to Kisumu or Kakamega from Maragoli, to get their sugar.²²⁶ It is important to note that jaggery production was a common feature in the Western region with the distribution of sugar being carried out by Asians as government agents. However, the Nyanza region continued to exist as a sugarbelt growing region with established companies such as Miwani Sugar Limited. It also had many acreage under sugarcane as compared to the Western region.

Gripped with the fear of insecurity, which engulfed the entire region towards independence in 1963, there was movement of Asians from the rural areas of Ndere, Yala and Kendu Bay to Kisumu. Some also left Kisumu for Britain. However, as Siddique (2004: 6) puts it, Africans who were genuinely upset by such developments were the poor, many of whom were employed in Asian businesses and homes. Not only would they be losing their jobs, but many

²²⁵KNA, DC/NN/1/39

²²⁶KNA, DC/KMG /2/29/29

had also formed close bonds with their employers. These economic developments also affected Afro-Asian social interactions in schools and in their households. Nonetheless, by this time, there was still some elements of differentiation and segregation in schools since the Asians and Africans continued to attend different schools.

5.5 Social Interactions and Afro-Asian Relations 1945-63

5.5.1 Education as a Means of Afro-Asian interaction in Western and Nyanza Regions

Indeed, by the end of the Second World War, many of the issues that had formed the 'Indian question' in East Africa had been resolved largely to the advantage of the Europeans as Indian opposition had proved of little avail. The emergence of the modern Asian population of East Africa can therefore be seen largely within the context of the three-tier system that was adopted in the territories during the later colonial period. Within this system, the Asian community was to make important social and economic progress in Kenya, while at the same time the community was increasingly isolated from the other races (Mangat, 1976:480). As in most such class systems, segregation by race was a part of the Kenyan social system. The result of legal mandates and colonial social practice, schools, hospitals, clubs and various restaurants and hotels reserved admittance to selected racially determined clientele (Maxon, 1995:110).

The progress in establishing a modern system of Asian education in East Africa, modeled on the English pattern, contributed significantly to the socio-economic improvement of the community. From the 1920s onwards, the question of government support for the various schools privately established by the community became a major political grievance of the Asians in view of the support to European education. A policy of extending government control and supervision over the Asian schools was subsequently initiated in the various East African territories in the late 1920s. An Indian education tax was levied and government grants-in-aid were made available to the various schools. In addition, provision was made for government capital expenditure on the basis of a 50 per cent contribution by the Asian community, to undertake the construction of modern schools in the various towns (Mangat, 1976:480).

Excluded from the European population by a policy of apartheid, which notably prohibited them from frequenting establishments of excellence frequented by the British (schools, clubs,

restaurants), Indians remained physically, socially and culturally separated from the African population. Hereafter excluded from land and therefore concentrated in the big and medium sized towns (some merchant families settled in rural towns), they settled in district areas, maintaining their schools, their temples, their food, shops, their hospitals as well as their clubs. They developed in concentrated areas, preserving all their customs and ways of life (Adam, 2010:220).

Asian children were never allowed to play with African children, and after school, Asian children went back to their houses. This exclusive tendency could be viewed as an attempt by Asians to prevent their children from acquiring some African cultural values, which they felt were not good to their children. This act formed the basis of Afro-Asian prejudices and stereotypes, which characterized Afro-Asian relations. These prejudices, authored by the West were passed on from one generation to another, given that Asian children were raised with knowledge that they were not supposed to mix with Africans (Omenya, 2010). 'We rarely shared and mixed with African children in school because African children were considered 'illiterate'²²⁷.

The resulting improvement in the facilities for education, especially in the standards of secondary schools, although not quite comparable to the progress made in Africa and European, education at this time helped to create a comprehensive modern Asian education system in East Africa. This had far reaching importance for the socio-economic progress of the Asian community (Mangat, 1976:481). The gradual educational and economic improvement of the Asian community during the colonial period contributed to a process of social change within their society, especially among the younger generation. Exposed to a highly urbanized environment (for the nature of Asian economic activity coupled with the racial restrictions against them had led to their settlement largely in the urban areas), to a system of education based on the English pattern, and to the higher standard of living in East Africa, this generation developed marked changes in food habits, mode of dress and language; the last being influenced by their greater fluency in both English and Swahili (Mangat, 1976:485).

In Ndere, the Asian community used a small plot (100x 50m) to construct a simple Indian Nursery school, which catered for the education of their children. This school was situated

²²⁷ Jagpal Singh O.I, 2013 An Asian teacher at Muslim Secondary School in Kisumu

within the compound of the current Oseno Komolo Primary School²²⁸. The Indian community was prepared to put up a suitable school building and went further to apply for the survey of a plot for the Indian public school site at Ndere trading centre²²⁹. In Yala also, racial segregation was evident in the Afro-Asian relations. The school built by the Asians there was purely for Asian children, where they were taught in their own mother tongue. This school is currently the Yala Township Primary School.²³⁰

Figure 13: Showing the sign post of Oseno Komolo Primary School in Ndere



Source: Picture taken by Gordon Omenya in Ndere (2012)

²²⁸Ondiallo, O.I., 2006, Mbeya, O.I., 2006, Ondiallo, Agina and Ochieng Mbeya are both old men doing farming in Yala area of Nyanza region

²²⁹KNA, PC/NZA/3/14/241, 1956-8, 4/10/58

²³⁰Odwa, O.I., 2012, Ravalia, O.I., 2006 Odwa John, is a vegetable and grocery vendor at Siaya Municipal Market. He sold vegetables and groceries to Asian living in Ndere and Yala. Ravalia Mayoor, an Oral Informant is a businessman and operated a hardware in Siaya town before moving to Kakamega

Figure 14: Showing pupils of Oseno Komolo Primary School



Source: Picture taken by Gordon Omenya (2012)

The process of social change among Asians was, however, partly checked by their growing isolation as a distinct racial and cultural minority in East Africa. This isolation owed its origins to two factors: firstly, to the religious and communal traditions of the Asian themselves, so that their society represented an aggregation of close knit communities; secondly, it derives its origin from what the East Africa Royal Commission described as the historical process in East Africa- based on racial segregation which ensured that the community lived separately from other races. The stratification of East African society on racial lines, the socio-economic discrimination inherent in the three tier system and the political vulnerability, presented a marked contrast to the progress made by the Asians and helped further to underline their separateness. Such conditions were hardly conducive to the social mobility of the community; indeed, they aroused European and African hostility towards the Asians, rendering them an ideal target as scapegoat. The resulting vicious circle

reinforced the general isolation of the Asians as a minority community, which was constantly under scrutiny by the other races (Mangat, 1976:485).

Moreover, as far as education was concerned, it must be noted that there was inadequate provision of schools for both communities. This led to a scramble for school places on a racial basis in the towns in which Asians were likely to suffer most under system of compulsory integration (Castle, 1966:50). Acutely aware of their shortcomings and of the advantages of education, they spared no expense in caring for their children, especially for their sons on whose shoulder, the burden of supporting the future families would fall. Where primary schools did not exist, Asians contributed generously to their establishment. When their children were ready for secondary school, they often moved back to the cities, even at considerable sacrifice, to ensure their children the best opportunities (Gregory, 1993:9).

Due to the shortage of schools offering upper primary education for their children in rural areas, a large number of Asians migrated from rural Nyanza to Kisumu in the 1950s. Some of the areas affected by the Asian migration included Ndere, Yala, Kendu Bay, Kibigori and Kisii. The Government Asian Schools Committee, therefore, recommended that Asian students be allowed to stay in Kisumu where municipal camps were available. Some children also moved to Kisumu to stay with their relatives so as to attend school (Omenya, 2010: 186). This directive initiated a process where ‘new’ migrants from the rural areas joined ‘old’ migrants in Kisumu for the sake of schooling.

However, some families also moved with their children and stayed in rented houses and shops in Kisumu so that their children could attend school. Most of the Asians who moved to Kisumu with their children stayed near the town centres²³¹. Kisumu also possessed boarding facilities, and since the Lohana community (a subset of Asians based on their religion) kept admissions open for other communities at the boarding facility, the committee had no objection to allowing such children to join the primary school²³². Indeed, racial prejudices characterized the education system and did a lot of damage to Afro-Asian relations in school. Similarly, the plurality of the Asian community also ensured that each community whether Arya Samaj, Khoja, Ismailia among others pursued their own education interests. This not

²³¹Ochieng’, O.I., 2005 and Mayoor, O.I 2013, Mayoor and Ochieng worked for the Asian owned Kisumu Bakery and are all residents of Kisumu

²³²KNA, DC/KSM/1/10/10, 1931-56

only made interaction among the various Asian communities difficult, but also made accessibility to these schools by Africans impossible.

In 1946, the Committee of the Indian School applied for a permit to build a new Indian school in Kakamega because of the indecent facility, which was overcrowded.²³³ By 1947, the Indian School Maragoli had only 13 pupils probably due to the movement of pupils to look for schools in Kisumu. However, it should be pointed out that the Ismailia community had a series of schools under their care in Western Kenya, which were registered by 1955 as H.H The Aga Khan School, Mumias, H.H The Agakhan School Nambare, H.H The Agakhan School Bungoma, H.H The Agakhan School Broderick Falls, H.H The Aga Khan School Kimilili, and H.H The Aga Khan School Kakamega;²³⁴ all these schools were attended by Asian pupils only.²³⁵

In 1947, Indian education was catered for through 14 Government Indian Schools, 42 Government-aided schools and through a number of unaided schools. There were also teacher-training centres at Nairobi for the Indian men and women willing to enter the teaching profession (Chattopadhyaya, 1970:413). By 1949, a new Indian school had been built in Kakamega to replace the Old Indian School which the Indian School Committee was considering to lease out.²³⁶ It was not until 1951 that post-secondary classes for the Asian children were opened in the Government Schools (Chattopadhyaya, 1970:409). In this situation, Afro-Asian relation and interactions in school was not possible.

In their quest for education for their children, the secretary of the Indian Public School in Western Kenya in 1950 applied for a plot for the purpose of building an Indian Public School in Broderick Falls. In a correspondence from the Provincial Education Nyanza (PEO) to the Education Department Nairobi in 1951, the PEO drew the attention of the Education Department that there was an Indian school (Broderick Falls Indian School) for all communities at Broderick Falls, but owing to local differences, the Ismailia withdrew their children from that school and went ahead to establish their own school in Broderick falls. As a matter of fact, the majority of children were in this later school, which however, had not

²³³KNA, DC/KMG/2/8/4

²³⁴KNA, DC/KMG/2/8/4

²³⁵Ajit, Mishra O.I, 2013 interviewed in Webuye and works at the defunct Panpaper Mills

²³⁶KNA, PC/NZA/3/6/34

been approved by the Director of Education and was therefore operating illegally²³⁷. There were two Indian schools at Broderick falls by 1953, which were very small and were sponsored by the Ismaili Community and the Hindu Community respectively. The Director of Education, Nairobi, considered such small schools as undesirable and argued that greater efficiency would be achieved by their amalgamation. The Director of Education therefore visited Broderick Falls on October 1, 1953 in the company of Hon J.S. Patel; the Chairman of the H.H. the Aga Khan Provincial Education Board Kisumu, and the Provincial Education Officer, Kisumu, to assess the situation. They were also accompanied by representatives from the school committees of the two Asian schools. It was agreed that the two schools amalgamate in 1954 and be accommodated in the Aga Khan School building.²³⁸

Initially in 1950, in his letter to the Provincial Education Officer, Nyanza, Mr S.P.Patel²³⁹ affirmed that ‘we the Hindus are prepared to send our children to the Ismaili school (combined) until a proposed common school comes up’. He also stated that they had already collected about 15,000 shillings for that purpose, and a balance of shs 20,000 remained to be collected’. Mr. Patel was hopeful that they would reach the target set very soon. The Ismaili group also agreed to send their children to the proposed school upon completion. However, this was subject to the approval of the Ismaili Education Board, Kisumu, from which the Ismailis received their aid.²⁴⁰ For political reasons, the Ismailia community felt that, the position of their children and of themselves (in the combined Indian School), was made difficult by the Hindu Community, and they wished to establish a second school to cater for their own children. By 1954, there was one combined school for the Ismailia and Hindu community members, and the Education Department was considering setting aside a plot occupied by the Maize Control, which was vacant by then for the proposed New Broderick Falls Asian Primary School to house their staff.²⁴¹ There were about 200 Asians in Bungoma Township as at 1958. About 45 children went to the Aga Khan School, while an all community Asian school had already been projected.²⁴²

²³⁷KNA, DC/KMG/2/8/4

²³⁸KNA, DC/KMG/2/8/4

²³⁹J.S Patel was one of the members appointed to the Advisory Council on Asian Education by the governor in 1952

²⁴⁰KNA, DC/KMG/2/8/4

²⁴¹KNA, DC/KMG/2/8/4

²⁴²KNA, AE/22/487

The movement of Asians from the rural areas to Kisumu to seek education marked the period of the development of Asian hostels. By 1958, the Aga Khan community seriously considered the issue of hostel accommodation for Asian children from remote areas of Nyanza Province, because the Aga Khan Mixed Primary School only catered for the education interests of Aga Khan (Ismailia) community.²⁴³ The issue of separate and segregated school system was sustained into the independence era before the African government came up with the policy of integration in public schools.²⁴⁴ Before then, the confinement of Asian children to their respective community boarding facilities affected their interaction with African children. The Indian segregation policy in schools was reinforced by the official colonial policy of separate development among races, in which even Indians never attended European schools. Segregation meant the races lived in perpetual suspicion of each other, thereby posing no threat to Europeans' colonialism. The same principle applied to housing.

In general, the Indian community developed its own communal schools with the increasing help of the government. Nevertheless, the missionaries and the government determined whatever was taught in the African schools. Culturally, colonialism operated from the racist principle that barbarism pervaded Africa, and there was no culture to be salvaged. Missionaries in their evangelical duties championed this outlook, and in some cases succeeded in replacing them with the European culture. This racial school system was, therefore, meant to serve a purpose of cultural imperialism. Even though colonialism laid the foundation of racial antagonism between Indians and Africans, it can also be argued that the caste prejudices among Indians also contributed to Asians' general unwillingness to mix with the African population, who were viewed as belonging to the lowest caste.

The District Education Board provided funds received from the African District Council to aid a certain number of African primary schools. In Western Kenya, there were 93 fully aided and 91 partially aided (selected) primary schools, functioning in the district. In these schools, approximately 700 trained teachers were employed and were paid by grants. These schools were all aided from the District Education Board and were under mission supervision, as were the unaided schools maintained by the communities. The only Government school in the district was at Kakamega, i.e. the Government African School. A government African

²⁴³AR 1958

²⁴⁴Omollo, Goerge O.I., 2005/12 Omollo George is a delegate of the Mwalimu (Teachers) Cooperative and teaches at Ahero Girls Secondary School in Nyanza region,

Inspector was appointed in July 1950 and worked in the northern locations from this date.²⁴⁵ In 1961; towards Independence, the Government Asian High School in Kisumu started admitting African boys as a policy of the Education Department to have multiracial secondary schools in Kenya. In the meantime, by 1963, the Indian School Management Committee, Kakamega, applied to the Regional Education Officer, Western Region, for the registration of the Indian Nursery School to cater for the interest of their children.²⁴⁶ It is therefore, evident that there was little Afro-Asian interaction in schools due to the existing colonial racial policy.

5.5.2 Afro-Asian Relations in the Housing Sector

Information on Asian housing in 1946 in Kisumu, indicates that Asian landlords were charging excessive rents to tenants- demanding cash payments and stating that they had information that the Rent Restriction Regulations were to be drawn in February; and if the tenants did not comply with the land lords' demands, the tenant would be evicted²⁴⁷. Similarly, housing in Kisumu was extremely inadequate. In a discussion between the P.C., Nyanza, and the Municipal Board, the P.C. was asked to request the Commissioner of Lands and Settlement to arrange for auction of more plots within the township, so that in case the Municipal Board was not able to construct more houses, then tenants would be allowed to erect temporary dwellings besides the houses that they were already occupying.²⁴⁸

By 1947, the position regarding housing of the African labourers in Kisumu was not satisfactory.²⁴⁹ The crisis of housing in areas like Ndere, Yala and Kibos was not very acute, given the nature of the centres in which they worked and resided. In Ndere for instance, the Asians acquired land and built a ginnery as well as shops within the trading centre. While some of them continued to stay within the ginnery area, others stayed at the backyard of their shops within the trading center while others stayed in residential houses built with with Indian architectural design as shown in figure 15 and 17 below. These shops were about six in number and each Asian trader exclusively stayed with their families. Such shops were in the neighborhood of African village homes; hence, there was no mixing up of accommodation.

²⁴⁵ KNA, DC/NN/1/32

²⁴⁶ KNA, DC/KMG/1/4/2

²⁴⁷ KNA, PC/NZA/2/16/45

²⁴⁸ KNA, PC/NZA/2/16/45

²⁴⁹ KNA, CS/8/11/134 1939-54, KNA, DC/KSM/1/30/53, 1957

Their point of interaction was in the shop when Africans came to buy items like clothes, blankets and soap.²⁵⁰

Figure 15: A picture of Asian residential houses in Ndere



Source: Picture taken by Gordon Omenya (2012)

²⁵⁰Ondiallo, O.I., 2013

Figure 16: A picture of a stalled cotton ginnery in Kibos



Source: Picture taken by John Msungu (A research Assistant in Kibos 2013)

Figure 17: An architectural design of an Indian residential house in the village (Ndere)



Source: Picture Taken by Gordon Omenya (2012)

By 1947, there was a shortage of houses in Kakamega and even the completion of an economy house and the building of two new class 4 houses did not fully solve the problem.²⁵¹ Despite a considerable amount of planning, there was little actual development in Kakamega Township. The Town Planning Advisor visited Kakamega twice during the year, and the future shape of the Township was by then more or less known. The problem of the provision of an area for Asian residential purposes had not been solved at the end of the year, owing to lack of surveyors, although the area to be set-aside for this purpose was known²⁵². The most important matter however, on which decision was being awaited for in 1948, was the method of disposal of the township plots as well as the survey of these plots. The latter was most important as living conditions in the Indian Bazaar were deplorable and a menace to public health and until a surveyor was made available to survey the proposed Asian residential area, no improvement could be expected²⁵³. Still, it was clear that housing pattern took a racial dimension. However, Afro-Asian social relations went beyond these forms of western knowledge as some of the Asians houses became sites of Afro-Asian interactions.

The Indian Association of Kakamega through their secretary continuously raised the issue of housing shortage in Kakamega, with the DC arguing that the position of housing for Indians in Kakamega was growing worse. In his response, the DC Mr. C.H. Williams stated that the Town Planning Committee, in which the Indian Association was represented, was unanimously in favour of land being set aside in the township for Asian residential plots. This piece of land was identified and its location was between the Public Works Department yard and the business area. The recommendations to utilize this piece of land was forwarded to the Hon. Commissioner of Lands, Mines and Surveys on the 29th of October 1948 for his action and approval.²⁵⁴ Furthermore, another meeting was held between the DC, North Kavirondo and the Departmental Officers regarding African Housing. In this meeting, it was suggested that money should be allocated for the construction of bachelors' quarters following the Vihiga plan. Meanwhile, the Asian business area continued to get overcrowded due to limited housing facilities. Although it became imperative that more plots were to be opened up for the

²⁵¹KNA, DC/NN/1/29

²⁵²KNA, DC/NN/1/29

²⁵³KNA, DN/NN/1/30

²⁵⁴KNA, PC/NZA/3/1/346

purposes of house construction, there was no positive response from the colonial government.²⁵⁵

By 1951, there was a continued renewal of plot lease for Asians in Maragoli trading centre especially for schools, individuals and traders. For instance, the DC North Kavirondo renewed the lease for Indian School Maragoli, Bhanubhai Premji and Companyas well as Sidi Govindis.²⁵⁶ Although overcrowding in Asian plots continued to persist, in some cases, distribution of plots for settlement had to wait for the decisions from the officials of the Lands Office. Delays in making decision on the distribution of plots in this district were attributed to the absence of a surveyor of land. Lack of a land surveyor to demarcate land also contributed partly to people trespassing on private land leading to conflicts as evident in Maragoli area of Western Kenya.²⁵⁷

Shortage of land also led to encroachment on African plots by Asians and this led to conflictual relations between the two races. A case in point is that of Mr. Abisalom Sagala Musivoge of Maragoli reserve, who claimed that Indians illegally occupied portions of land with neither his grandfather's nor his father's permission. In his correspondence to the Chief Secretary (CS), Abisalom stated that both his father and himself on several occasions asked the said Indians to quit the shamba (farm), but they responded that, that land had been officially given to them by the District Commissioner Kakamega, Provincial Commissioner, Nyanza Province and the Ex- Chief Paulo Agoi. Mr Absolom states

We were not informed at all when this *shamba* was given to them. I, with my father have repeatedly requested them to quit that place as there was no agreement or written memorandum showing when they took over this land and accordingly, they abuse us when asked. On or before January 1950, I left my village coming to work, and after my arrival, I was informed that these Indians have now erected permanent buildings. I went to see these Indians again asking them why they have erected permanent buildings while I have told them not to do so. They answered me that 'if you come to ask us again, we shall inform the police to prosecute you including your father...and moreover the police will evict you from the other part of our shamba'²⁵⁸.

²⁵⁵KNA, DC/NN/1/30

²⁵⁶KNA, PC/NZA/2/2/120

²⁵⁷KNA, DC/NN/1/34

²⁵⁸KNA, PC/NZA/2/2/120

Abisalom thus appealed to the Chief Secretary by requesting him to recommend to the government to evict those Indians who were illegally occupying his land. According to the Acting Provincial Commissioner, this conflict arose due to the fact that, apart from occupying Absalom's farm, accessing water from the riverside situated next to Absalom's farm by the Indian Traders in Maragoli was not easy since they had to trespass on Abisalom's farm without his consent.

In 1951, the Kenya government report described the appalling condition of Asians overcrowding in some of the smaller towns. Similarly, The East Africa Royal Commission of 1955 noted that, conditions of life for the poor Asians and the majority of Africans in the towns had been deteriorating over a considerable period. It also noted that the acute shortage of living space and employment opportunities were not only due to the increased population, but also as a result of restrictive policies (Delf, 1963:47). These restrictive policies dealt a major blow to the Afro-Asian interaction in residential areas. It is due to these restrictive policies accompanied by an increased demand for Asian housing, that regional Asian organizations such as the Kisumu Asian Housing Committee were formed to help address the problem of housing shortage for Asians in collaboration with the colonial government.

The Kisumu Asian Housing Committee was responsible for the housing needs of Asian government workers. It was a purely an ad hoc instrument appointed by the PC to assist in the allocation of houses. Similarly, the Kisumu European Housing Committee was established to help Europeans access good housing²⁵⁹. In 1956, the Kisumu Ismailia Housing Society Limited built sixteen more flats for Asians; referred to as the Aga Khan flats near the new Goan school. The directors of the Kisumu Ismaili Housing Society were also members of the Patel Samaj family, whose name was given to the famous Patel flats in Kisumu.²⁶⁰ Later, some Africans within the same economic class started staying in these flats.²⁶¹ Majority of Africans staying at the Patels flat took their children to Arya primary school owned by Asians.

²⁵⁹ KNA, PC/NZA/2/16/60, 1946-51 10/2/1947

²⁶⁰ KNA, PC/NZA/3/1/404,

²⁶¹ Olingo, O.I, 2012 Olingo, Joseph (RIP) was an old mzee who worked for the Municipal Council of Kisumu as an Inspector. He lived in Tieng're near Otonglo Market in Kisumu

Apart from the formal housing schemes that the government came up with to solve the problem of housing in Kisumu, Asian *dukawallas* who were not government employees resided in the trading centres where they operated their businesses. According to Obudho (1976), most of the commercial land in Kisumu was owned by non-Africans. Because the Asians had the money, most of them rented business premises, which they also used as residential houses within the town centre. This was the characteristic of the Kisumu Indian bazaar as well as other shopping centres, from where the Asians operated. See figure 18 below.

Figure 18: An Old Picture of Kisumu Town Showing Old Indian Shops with Their Residence



Source: Picture Taken by Rajan Arun Tank ()

Chatur²⁶² states that Asians had to stay near government institutions such as police stations, where their security was assured. Peri-Urban areas like Kaloleni and Manyatta in Kisumu did

²⁶²Chatur, Aslam, O.I., 2005 an oral informant who worked in the Asian owned Tivoli Cinema in Kisumu. He was re-interviewed on the 10th of August, 2012

not attract Asian settlement. Besides, segregation policies did not permit Africans to stay with the Asians within their houses, except for their househelps or *jopidi* (baby sitters). Any other person could not be allowed to enter these premises, not even the immediate neighbours. This made the African neighbours to develop a negative attitude towards Asians.²⁶³

As pointed out earlier, the segregation policy was implemented through a variety of by-laws, including those which prohibited Africans from leaving residential areas at night, and those which compelled the local authorities to erect housing in African locations (Olumwullah, 1986:186). In 1958, the Municipal Board of Kisumu succeeded in alleviating the shortage of African housing when it constructed sixteen new tenant purchase houses under the Kisumu African Tenant Purchase Scheme. Although this move helped in reducing housing problems in Kisumu, it enhanced Afro-Asian racial segregation, which affected the relations between the two communities.

Under the African Tenant Purchase Scheme, plots were made available to Africans in Kaloleni, Kibuye and near the Jubilee market next to the current Kisumu bus park.²⁶⁴ The plots near the jubilee market attracted Asians, and this influenced their interaction with Africans since these plots were also used for commercial purposes. In these plots, Asians were able to establish shops from where they sold items to Africans. In Bungoma, the government approved the construction of Asian houses for the Asian government workers.²⁶⁵ This increased shortage of housing as well as the rising demand for housing was attributed to the rise in the Asian population in places like Kisumu and Kakamega.

Towards the last phase of colonial urbanization, 1947-1962, an accurate analysis of urban development in Kenya was possible only after the 1948 population census, which was the first countrywide census of its kind in Kenya. It was only at this time that a town and a trading centre were defined officially and for statistical purposes. According to the 1948 census, an urban centre was any compact and gazetted town with a population of 2,000 and above inhabitants, where the residents engaged in non-agricultural dealings. Kisumu was one of the urban centres with the highest percentage of non-African population alongside Nairobi,

²⁶³Sidera, Joel O.I., 2011 is an oral informant and a retired Children's Officer. He worked as a District Children's Officer in Kakamega, Kisumu and Homabay. He was a neighbor to the Asians –Munar family in Milimani estate of Kisumu

²⁶⁴KNA, HT/17/16 AR Central Nyanza 1955-9 KNA, PC/NZA/4/4/105 AR 1958, KNA, /DC/KSM/1/30/53 1957

²⁶⁵ AE/22/487

Mombasa and Nakuru. The land where trading centres were built belonged to individual Africans, and since the Asians were the only people who initially developed the trading centres, most of the land they had was on annual lease. Because of this lack of land security, they constructed temporary structures (Ochieng and Aching 1992:152). The tables below (Table 5 and 6) show Kenya towns' population distribution by race in 1948 and 1962.

Table 5: Kenya Towns Population Distribution by Race In 1948

Town	Asians	% Asians/population	Europeans	Arabs	African	Others
Nairobi	41,810	35.07	10,830	626	64,392	1636
Mombasa	25,580	30.1	2,027	13,485	42, 853	970
Kisumu	4,973	45.4	374	186	5,336	83
Nakuru	3,247	18.4	1,159	173	12,845	194
Eldoret	1,945	30.3	888	31	5,408	86
Kakamega	604		-	-	-	-

Source: Ochieng and Maxon (1992)

In terms of population distribution during the 1962 census, it was estimated that Western Kenya had the largest population concentration in Kenya. It had a population of just over 3 million people in some 23, 309 sq. Km (9000 sq. miles) or approximately 36 per cent of the population of Kenya on 4 per cent of its area. Total population adjusted for 1963 boundary changes indicated that Nyanza and Western provinces accounted for 2, 648,600 people or just over 30 per cent of the total population of Kenya. Of this, 18.90 per cent was to be found in the New Nyanza province and 11.70 in the Western province. Prior to the boundary changes, the old districts which now constitute the greater part of the new provinces had the racial composition shown in the table 6 below:

Table 6: Population by Race in the Main Towns 1962

	Kisumu	Data 1948	Kisii	Kakamega
Africans and Somali	14,119	5,336	3,726	3,155
Asians	8,355	4,973	673	601
Europeans	598	374	108	84
Arabs	371	186	8	91
Others	83	83	27	8
Total non-Africans	9,407		816	784
Total Population	23,526	10,952	4,542	3,939

Source: Ominde (1971)

Table 7: Nyanza Population (excluding Kericho) 1962

District	African and Somali	Asians	Europeans	Arabs	Others	Total
Central Nyanza	652,768	10,101	768	408	88	664,133
Elgon Nyanza	347,231	738	81	29	13	348,092
Kisii	518,226	729	148	18	27	519,148
North Nyanza	606,798	976	273	134	16	608,197
South Nyanza	480,785	522	167	97	64	481,635

Source: Ominde, 1971

From these figures, it is clear that the present Western and Nyanza province had very small numbers of non-African people. These were highly concentrated in the main regional centres of Kisumu as shown in table 7 above.

Ominde (1971:212) argues that some 82.8 per cent of the total non-African population of the old Central Nyanza was resident in Kisumu. Between the 1948 and 1962 censuses, the Asian population of Kisumu had increased by 68 per cent. But figures for Kakamega show a decrease of 0.5 per cent. The small percentage of the non-African population and its concentration in the few urban centres underlines the predominantly rural character of the population, and the undeveloped nature of the economy of the area. Intercensal growth comparisons show that the African population for the main urban centre of Kisumu recorded an average annual growth rate of 7.2 per cent. This is largely explained by rural to urban migration.

Between 1961 and 1962, the Municipal Council of Kisumu devised ways of alleviating the Asian housing problem within the town. Through the Commissioner of Lands, the Municipal Council of Kisumu negotiated for a site, which it considered suitable for building some cheap but standardized Asian houses under the Asian Tenant Purchase Housing scheme. Additionally, the Kisumu Town Council Treasurer also proposed that twenty houses similar to those constructed under the existing African Tenant Purchase scheme, should be built and rented out to Asians.²⁶⁶ Housing development was, therefore, done along racial lines by the colonial government, which affected Afro-Asian relations because it reduced their interaction to areas of economic exchange like the trading centres.

However, it is true as Mamdani (1996) observes that in societies organized around thick markers of identity, like race, the presence of these markers and the political, social and economic differentiation as well as discrimination that they support, provide forms of familiarity and security for negotiating and consummating various forms of human interactions. These were some of the reflections on late colonialism in Africa which were replicated in Western and Nyanza Provinces of Kenya.

²⁶⁶ KNA, NHC/1/152, 1961

5.6 Comparative analysis of Afro Asian Interactions in the Post war Period

The post war period witnessed a number of changes in the socio-economic undertakings of the Asians, not only in Kenya, but also in Nyanza and Western provinces respectively. The commercial prominence they attained enabled them to remain the dominant force within the economic sector in Nyanza and Western provinces of Kenya. In all cases, Africans were not happy with the fact that Asians were still being given licences to do the same business in areas where Africans tended to enjoy dominance. This was witnessed in Kendu, Kakamega and Kisumu. The Africans had a joint forum for challenging Asian dominance in trade through the Nyanza Soldiers Association, which comprised of the ex-servicemen with reasonable capital resources. These ex-servicemen were recommended for trade licences. The demographic distribution of Asians within Nyanza and Western provinces of Kenya was also comparatively different. Nyanza had a high number of Asians compared to Western province; this could be attributed to the high demand of housing and schools, especially in Kisumu. It is apparent that the institutions of higher learning in Western province to cater for Asian education were not sufficient. This prompted the Asians to move to Kisumu thereby putting pressure on the housing facilities.

Unlike Western province, skill acquisition in the automotive industry was much more entrenched in Nyanza as compared to Western province of Kenya. This could be explained by the fact that a number of Asians who worked in the railway and the transport industry interacted first with Africans before employing them as trainees in their garages within Kisumu. Having acquired skills from their Asian masters, these skilled Africans moved to Luanda, Kakamega and Bungoma where they worked as mechanics. Asian acumen in the automotive industry was also evident through the numerous Asian shops (owned by Sikhs) dealing in spare parts of motor vehicles in Kisumu. Furthermore, both members of the Luyia and Luo communities in Western and Nyanza regions respectively acquired the skill of making tin lamps from the Asians. It is important to note that Asian merchants living in Kakamega preferred buying their goods and accessing banking and postal services from Kisumu suggesting that Nyanza had more institutions to cater for the needs of Asians compared to the Western region. In both regions, cases of lawlessness and crime targeting some members of the Asian community were rampant.

It is worth noting that in both Northern and Central Kavirondo, Africans engaged more with Asians in the transport Industry albeit stiff competition within the sector where Africans

offered a stiff challenge to the Asian transporters. In both areas, there was an increased demand by Africans for transport licences. Within the produce sector, Western region, especially Bungoma area produced a lot of maize compared to Nyanza region, and its distribution became a bone of contention between Africans and Asians, leading to a strained Afro-Asian economic relation. Although industrial production was scaled up in the post war period, 1945-63, it was evident that sugar, soap and ghee manufacturing continued to dominate as the major Asian industrial ventures in the Nyanza region. This was in sharp contrast to the Western region, which relied on jaggery factories. Similarly, Western region also relied on the Asian agents for sugar supplies which these agents got from Kisumu before distributing the sugar to other areas of Western Kenya such as Maragoli, Kakamega, Luanda and Malakisi.

On the other hand, incidences of illicit partnership between Africans and Asians, which varied from one business to the other, also characterized the Nyanza and Western postcolony as witnessed in the transport and the gold Industry, with Nyanza recording the highest number of cases. For instance, cases of Afro-Asian illicit partnership appeared in the ghee, transport and the gold industries, whereas in Western province illicit partnership was witnessed in the gold industry. These partnerships were mutually beneficial arrangements, which not only ensured and enhanced Afro-Asian relations and interactions, but also guaranteed the sustainability in the ghee and transport Industry. The Luo Thrift and Trading Corporation a key economic institution was established as a response to Asian dominance in trade in the Nyanza region.. Such a corporation was lacking in the Western region.

As compared to Kisumu in the 1950s, apart from the rural industries and the gold mining industry, which by 1953 had receded in economic importance, the area of Kakamega did not progress much industrially with Indian owned industries.²⁶⁷ On the contrary, there was oil milling factory, soap making industry in Kisumu; while ghee was manufactured on a cooperative basis and the Miwani Sugar Factory continued to keep industrial production of Nyanza region alive. Nevertheless, Afro-Asian engagement in the petroleum sector was more evident in Western Kenya than in Nyanza province. Within the same period, it is demonstrated that there was more nexus between the political leadership in Nyanza and Asians as compared to the Western region, as evident by the relationship between Pranel Sheth and Jaramogi Oginga Odinga. This relationship would be of help to both Asians and

²⁶⁷ KNA, DC/NN/KMG/2/29/41

Africans involved in the sugar cane Industry. Sheth Pranel would take the lead in bargaining with Hindocha, the owner of the Miwani Sugar Mills for good cane prices on behalf the African Sugarcane Planters. Being the president of the Nyanza Cooperative Society, Sheth allowed for multiracial membership. These Afro-economic ventures were only visible in Nyanza and not in the Western region.

Although Miwani Sugar Company handled and manufactured most of the cane in Nyanza province, Shiamberere Jaggery Society and Butere Jaggery handled most of the cane in Western Kenya. Although the African sugarcane growers in Nyanza complained to the Asian owners of Miwani Sugar Company for low pay per tonnage of sugarcane delivered to the factory, in Western Kenya, Indian owned jaggery factory in Shiambere sent their lorries from Mumias to Kabras to 'pirate cane for spot cash, which was apparently cheaper at the expense of the canegrowers around the factory²⁶⁸. This act therefore affected Afro-Asian economic relations within Shiamberere area of Western Kenya. It was also apparent that the acreage of farm under sugarcane cultivation in Shiambere was smaller compared to the sugarbelt region of Nyanza province.

It is apparent that most of the sugar agents from Kakamega, and Maragoli collected their stock from M/s Devjibhai K. Hindocha limited of Kisumu by 1960. Conversely, Kisumu sugar agents would move to areas of Maragoli to sell their sugar, thereby competing for the same market. Unlike Kisumu and Nyanza in general, government officials, for instance, the Chief of Maragoli played a role in recommending to the government some Asian trader(s) who were interested in operating as a sugar distributor. This could be viewed as a tactical and ambivalent economic strategy for survival in the post Independent African economic space, which was imminent immediately after the postwar period.

Socially, a number of similarities and difference can be deduced from the Afro-Asian social relations in the postwar periods as both Asians and Africans continued to operate within segregated residential areas. Schools were also segregated and Indians continued to open their own community schools while African education continued to be in the hands of the mission. Unlike Kakamega, Bungoma and Webuye, many Indian children moved to Kisumu for higher education, which necessitated the Indian committee in Kisumu to start thinking about hostels and accommodation facilities for their children who were coming to study in Kisumu. In both

²⁶⁸ KNA, DC/NN/1/39

Nyanza and Western Kenya, the Asians continued to experience acute housing problems, but unlike in Western Kenya, the Kisumu Asian Housing Committee managed to cater for the housing interest of the Asians who were posted in Kisumu to work for the government. Similarly, the Kisumu Ismailia Society limited managed to put up some sixteen flats namely the Agakhan flats near the new Goan School.²⁶⁹ Although this initiative in one way or the other helped in alleviating housing problems for the Asians, it also enhanced Afro-Asian isolation from each other thereby affecting their relations.

Conclusion

Afro-Asian relations in the Western and Nyanza provinces of Kenya during the decolonization period were examined and it has been pointed out that a number of socio-economic changes shaped up Afro-Asian relations within the two regions. There was continued rivalry between Asians and Africans while at the same time there were illegal Afro-Asian partnerships that the Asians used to circumvent colonial policies especially in the transport and the mining sector. These activities demonstrated the resilient nature of the Asians within the two regions of study.

It has been noted that apart from the sugar and soap industry, large-scale industrial production did not perform well and most of the industries were basically agricultural. Similarly, the chapter has pointed out that the Asian owned Miwani Sugar Company played a significant role in the production of sugar, which was widely distributed to consumers within Nyanza and Western provinces. It has also been demonstrated that Africans acquired certain skills from the Asians and domesticated the Indian technology that they learnt especially with regard to automotive repair and making of the tin lamps. Tin lamps were widely used in the rural areas of Kisumu, Ndere, Bungoma and Kakamega, an indication of the Asian contribution to the social and economic development of the regions. Nevertheless, the sugar and transport industry continued to remain areas of economic contestations as Africans complained of low pay for tonnage of sugarcane supplied to the Asian owned sugar factories. In the transport industry, the contestation was witnessed when Africans went out to outdo Asians in the transport industry. These contestations were a source of hostility and conflict between Asians and Africans.

²⁶⁹ KNA, PC/NZA/3/1/404

Although there was an acute shortage of houses for Asians in Kisumu and Kakamega, efforts were made through the Kisumu Ismailia Housing limited, Kisumu Asian Housing Committee, Asian Tenant Purchase Scheme, African Tenant Purchase Housing Scheme and the Municipal Council of Kisumu to address the problem. This combined effort was lacking in Western province. It is concluded that socially, colonialism was racist since racial segregation was witnessed in the housing and education sectors. However, domestic servants in the dynamics of Afro-Asian relations were a vital link in the whole scheme of things. Their hard work and total dedication contributed to the idyllic lifestyles of Asian women, who sometimes helped them during crisis. The next chapter examines Afro-Asian socio-economic relations in the independent state of Kenya, from 1963-2002.

CHAPTER SIX

COMPARATIVE ASPECTS OF AFRO-ASIAN SOCIO-ECONOMIC RELATIONS IN THE POST INDEPENDENT PERIOD 1963-1978

Abstract

In this chapter, the social and economic relations between the African and the Asians is examined and compared within Western and Nyanza provinces of Kenya during President Kenyatta's era. It is argued that before independence, large-scale agriculture, industry and commerce were dominated by non-Kenyans. Europeans controlled agriculture and industry while commerce and trade was dominated by Asians. After independence, one of the most urgent and pressing problems was to break foreigners' dominance of the Kenyan economy and transfer it to black Kenyans. This objective was tackled through the mechanism of legislation and licensing (Ochieng', 1995:85). The tasks before the independent African governments were thus clear- greater control and ownership of the economy and increased African participation in the modern society and the economy. For these tasks to be undertaken, the governments had to play a more active and wider role in the management of social and economic affairs. The 1960s therefore witnessed an unparalleled expansion in the size and functions of the public sector in the country. The first priorities were Africanization of public services and the economies, and greater local and state control and ownership of key enterprises in the modern sector of the economy (Ghai, 1974:374). The first fifteen years of Independence, Kenya was characterized by Jomo Kenyatta era which began in 1963 and came to an end in 1978. This period points to the importance of the president's influence on the 'pragmatic blend of *laissez faire* capitalism and African socialism which characterized Kenyan economic policy (Hazelwood, 1979: ix).

6.1 The Political Economy of Africanization Process and Afro-Asian Relations in Western and Nyanza Provinces of Kenya

The government of Jomo Kenyatta introduced various indigenization policies and programmes. Among these were quit notices served to non-citizen Asians in the distributive trade that enabled Africans to acquire their shops in the main shopping areas in the urban areas (Finance, May 13, 1997:7). In other words, the Kenya government introduced Africanization as an economic policy, which to some extent was important as far as ownership of the economy by the locals was concerned. In addition to such direct measures like the quit notices, the government introduced statutory institutions to encourage and

support African participation in the economy such as the Industrial and Commercial Development Corporation (henceforth ICDC), Kenya National Trading Company (henceforth KNTC), Industrial Development Bank (IDB) Kenya Industrial Estate (KIE), Development Finance Company of Kenya (DFCK) as well as commercial banks with deliberate bias towards financing African businesses and individuals (Ochieng, 1995:86; Finance, May 13, 1997:7). It is suffice it to say that Africanization helped to encourage industrialization process.

These institutions were created in order to incorporate the Kenyan businessmen such as small retail traders and transporters within the capitalist mode of production; a process which had already been introduced during colonialism. The aim of KNTC for instance, was to assist and encourage African traders to participate in commerce. And to achieve this aim, the middleman had to be eliminated in as far as handling of essential commodities was concerned. Because of rising demand and the need to bring commodities to the proximity of the traders, the corporation opened a depot in Kakamega Township to serve the agents in the Province. Requests were received for another depot to be located in Bungoma Township to serve both Bungoma and Busia Districts, since agents from the two districts obtained their commodities from either Kitale, Eldoret or Kakamega.²⁷⁰ This move meant that Africans were simply replacing whites as new capitalists. This was basically a colonial legacy in the post-independent Kenya. All these developments were part of the Africanization programme. The post-colony in its post-independence dispensation was now practicing racism and segregation in reverse. Independence did not mark the beginning of a postcolony but it constituted a mere transition from the dominant phase of colonialism to the hegemonic phase of colonialism (Jan Mohammed, 1985). The politics of Africanization was simultaneously unifying and fragmenting. But, Mamdani (1996:20) argues that its first moment involved the dismantling of racially inherited privilege. The effect was to unify the victims of colonial racism. The second moment turned around the question of redistribution and divided the same majority, both Asians and Africans, along racial lines that reflected the actual process of redistribution: ethnic and regional.

After Independence in 1963, the general opinion of the Asians towards the new government was negative. Their main fear was that Africans would retaliate and mistreat them, and indeed later, the African thugs started raiding them. They, therefore, decided to leave interior parts of

²⁷⁰Western Province Annual Report 1971

Nyanza region such as Nderein order to be secure and save their wealth. Theft was then common in Ndere, and this made the Asians to become fearful and suspicious of Africans. This fear was also increased by the fact that the colonial administration which offered Asians adequate security was not in control. This, therefore, affected their relations with Africans immensely.²⁷¹

With the ‘end’ of colonialism and the departure of the British, political relationships that existed between Asians and Europeans were reversed and decision-making was in the ‘hands’ of Africans for the first time (Latimore, 1964:6). However, some decisions had to be made in consultation with the former colonial masters thus introducing the issue of neo-colonialism into the system of the newly formed African government. Because of the Asian dominance in commerce and trade, a lot of ideological labour went into the creation of fixed image of the East African Asian subject and more so Asians in the Nyanza area of study. Within the Western knowledge regimes, Asians and Africans had been allocated certain social identities and constructions. Much of the early colonial complaints about the ‘Asian menace,’ for instance, established a trend in which the nuances of Asian identities would be flattened out to create an image of the Asian as a uniformly rapacious and duplicitous character.

This observation then raises the question of Asianness. As Cheng (2013:148) avers, is it possible to conceive of ‘Asianness’ like blackness, as an ontological totality (a kind of collective racial ‘being’ that is both defined by and subsumes a particular relation to capitalism)? Asians represented a compelling problem when considering Robinson’s (2000) notion of ontological totality, since out of the crucible European imperialism and racial capitalism, diasporic Asians have consistently acted as ‘both labor and capital’ in the emergence of transnational economies (Lowe, 2001:273). Considering a wide panoply of Asian groups in colonial societies from Southeast Asia to the Caribbean to the America and East Africa, from ‘coolies’ and sharecroppers to shopkeepers, merchants and entrepreneurs, it becomes apparent that Asians had more often than not occupied intermediary strat- in many cases consciously constructed and maintained by European imperialist powers between a white ruling class and other subordinated non white groups (Cheng, 2013:149).

At Independence, Industrial enterprises in Kenya presented a threefold division of jobs by status, not much less offensive to local eyes than the rigid residential classification of Nairobi

²⁷¹Wambia, Alfred O.I., 2006/12, an Oral informant and works with Kenya Power and Lighting Company in Siaya and stays in Siaya Town/

into African, Indian and European areas. These included; European as managers and engineers, Indian monopoly of technicians and skilled artisans; and Africans in all semi-skilled, unskilled and casual classifications. This pattern had to some extent begun to be breached in the late colonial period by the emergence of Indian management in a growing number of industrial and commercial enterprises, but the composition of the lower two echelons remained substantially the same. Additionally, there was no radical alterations in the early years of independence after December 1963; the pre-occupation was very much with the *Africanization* of the public and agricultural sector, and there was a desire to avoid a repetition of that insecurity and flight of capital which had characterized the private sector in the immediate pre-independence period (King, 1977:67). This was done through compulsory and voluntary retirement of officers. Kenya like other ex-British African colonies paid a half of the very generous compensation to retiring expatriate officers up to 1970 (Kamau, 1972:9).

The emphasis was, therefore, not so much to alter the structure of the existing firms, but to encourage the development of African businessmen through small Industrial loans. To realize this goal, a number of loans board were established in Western Kenya to help spur economic growth among Africans. These included: Busia Trade Development Joint Loans Board, Kakamega Trade Development Joint Loans Board and Bungoma Trade Development Joint Loans Board (Western Province Annual Report 1965). There had admittedly been exhortation in the well-known Sessional Paper No.10 of 1965 for foreign firms to 'initiate or accelerate training and apprenticeship programmes' but it was hoped that the racial imbalances in Industrial employment could be changed without legal sanctions. By 1965, O.H Vithlani, a direct importer and wholesale merchant in collaboration with the Industrial Development Corporation, indicated his intention and plans to establish two woodwork factories in Kakamega.²⁷²

In a circular from the Permanent Secretary (PS) in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to the Permanent Secretary (PS) in the Office of the President dated 14/4/1965, it was stated that in the near future, the KNTC would be taking over the distribution of sugar. However, in order to carry out these duties, it was obligatory for the KNTC to appoint agents all over the country. The KNTC would also be taking over the Directorate of Trade and Supplies, but in order to further the cause of African participation in commerce, it had to appoint new African agents to replace non-African agents who were mostly Asians. The PS, Ministry of

²⁷²KNA, AE/22/512

Commerce and Industry, further indicated that this policy was undertaken in the past with the close co-operation of the District Commissioners with a lot of success. The PS (Ministry of Commerce and Trade), therefore, requested if KNTC could be given permission to liaise with District Commissioners and seek for the same assistance that had been extended to the Director of Trade and Supplies in this respect.²⁷³

On the 29th June, 1965, the General Manager of the Kenya KNTC, Mr P.K Kinyanjui, notified the District Commissioner, Kakamega, that KNTC had been appointed by the Minister for Commerce and Industry, as the sole agent for the distribution of sugar in Kenya and that the corporation had also obtained permission from the Office of the President to indulge the co-operation of the DCs in the same manner that the Director of Trade and Supplies had done on matters connected to sugar distribution, for the sake of keeping the corporation constantly up to date with sugar requirements in Kakamega. As KNTC was rolling up its activities in Kakamega, Maganlal Gordhandas Modi, the only government appointed Asian sugar agent for Kakamega township and Lurambi division, made a request to the DC-Kakamega to increase his quota of sugar distribution of between 150 to 200 bags to between 250 and 300 bags of sugar. By increasing his quota, Maganlal was confident that this would help him meet and satisfy the increasing demand of sugar by African traders in Lurambi division.²⁷⁴ Although a number of Africans were appointed as agents, there were conflicts arising between them regarding their areas of operation. For instance, Edward Ohare and H.W Nambute partners, a government appointed sugar agent of Maseno complained and reported to the DC, Kakamega that Mr Silvano I. Muchilwa was interfering with his business by selling sugar illegally in their area of operation. According to Mr Ohare, Mr Muchilwa was a recognized wholesaler of B.A.T cigarettes in their area and was not licensed to sell sugar. Mr Ohare, therefore, called upon the DC to intervene and stop Muchilwa from hawking sugar. It is important to note that, Ohare and Harrison rented a store for their operation at the Asian Trading Centre Plot no 17, which was mutually beneficial to the Asians and the Africans. Later on, other organisations such as the Kenya African National Traders and farmers Union also applied to be considered as Government Sugar Agents.²⁷⁵

In a letter written by Jairo Obonyo of the African Trade Union to the DC Vihiga, it was clear that Afro-Asian relations to some extent was ambivalent. In this correspondence, Obonyo

²⁷³DC/KMG/2/29/29

²⁷⁴DC/KMG/2/29/29

²⁷⁵DC/KMG/2/29/29

argued that the Union regretted to understand that Messrs Edward Ohare and Harison Nambute had been jointly approved as Sugar Agents. Jairo Obonyo argued that the African Trade Union did not consider Messrs Edward Ohare and Harrison Nambute as fit for the post of Sugar Agency. Obonyo further stated that there were other Africans who, according to the state of their business in the same area, would have deserved this post compared to Ohare and Nambute. According to Obonyo, the African Trade Union considered the two men as incapable due to the six reasons as follows:

“They were lent money by Indians to make up the sum worth of buying sufficient sugar as Agents. 2; Automatically, Indians have become the owners of the sugar and the two men work for them as servants. In fact, the sugar is stored by the Indians i.e., Jivraj Gokaldas& Sons, Lwanda, who appear to be the general sellers of the sugar at a price of 137.81 per bag. 3; they have no transport means for the sugar, as they own only a small car a half ton capacity. 4; the quantity of their sugar is insufficient for the people in the area. 5; the supply of sugar was granted to them by the government with a view to promote the African trade and not the Asians; why then should they join with Indians? 6; Mr Ohare has never been a businessman but a teacher and hence a Regional Assembly representative and hence he should not receive preference to long experienced traders in Bunyore²⁷⁶. “In the circumstances, we conclude that the two men are far much unfit for the post and they should be deprived of it soon. The chance should then be given to a suitable African trader in East or West Bunyore.”²⁷⁷

Although Mr Ohare in his response to the DC, Kakamega agreed with point number 3 and 4, he argued that Mr Obonyo’s letter was full of *fitina* (witch hunting), which did not bring any progress hence unhelpful.

The same complaint of businessmen encroaching on their competitors’ areas of operation was also reported by Silvano Muchilwa of Wekhomo Market Maseno against M/s Kakamega Stores owned by an Asian whose area of operation was Bunyore location in the Western region. Although M/s Kakamega Stores was legally allowed to sell sugar within the local markets in Bunyore, it extended its area of operation to Wekhomo market in Maseno area thereby eating into Silvano Muchilwa’s market. Muchilwa’s fear was that if M/s Kakamega Stores was not restricted to operate in Bunyore, then his business would collapse and he

²⁷⁶DC/KMG/2/29/29

²⁷⁷DC/KMG/2/29/29

would not be in a position to repay his loan from the Agricultural Development Corporation in Kakamega within the stipulated time.²⁷⁸

Although there was Afro-Asian contestation over the distribution of sugar, there were also mutual Afro-Asian collaborations and collusions as far as sugar distribution was concerned. This was demonstrated when Mr Ghelani of Messrs Ghelani Industries- Kisumu, conspired with Mr Lawrence, an African Director of Vihiga Divisional Central Store in Vihiga (Western region). According to Mr E.A Bridgen (the Director of Trade and Supplies), Vihiga Divisional Central Stores was an extension of Messrs Ghelani's business and Mr Lawrence was only being used as a figure head in order to obtain the allocation for sugar distribution in Maragoli. Additionally, Vihiga Divisional Central Store was also not registered confirming the fact that Mr Lawrence was not the owner or the sole proprietor, but Messrs Ghelani's agent.²⁷⁹ Nevertheless, the Ministry of Trade and Commerce, went further to recommend a number of African traders as sugar agents and distributors. For example, Baraka Lwoya Transporters was appointed as a sugar agent and given an allocation of 100 bags of sugar for distribution in Majengo, Vihiga division. Other African traders who were appointed as sugar agents included, Harrison Nambute of Butere, Mr William Ligabo of Khayega market, and Romanus Kigami, whose allocation was 200 bags of sugar with Kakamega town and Central Lurambi as his areas of operation.²⁸⁰ Due to Afro-Asian business malpractices between Messrs Ghelani and Mr Lawrence of Vihiga Divisional Central Store, the District Commissioner, Kakamega recommended the cancellation of the appointment of Vihiga Divisional Central Store after noting that it had become more of an Asian concern, which was not the original intention of the agency as a sugar distributing agency. This practice was against the spirit of Africanization.²⁸¹

In the spirit of Afro-Asian partnership, Mr William Ligabo also applied to be considered as a sugar agent in Kakamega and hoped to work jointly with M/s Bhanubhai Premji Pau who was a renowned businessman in Kakamega. In this partnership, M/s Bhanubhai Premji would provide financial assistance as well as storage facilities for storing sugar.²⁸² Other merchants who applied to be considered as sugar distributors for the government in Kakamega this time

²⁷⁸DC/KMG/2/29/29

²⁷⁹DC/KMG/2/29/29

²⁸⁰DC/KMG/2/29/29

²⁸¹DX/21/7/15

²⁸²DC/KMG/2/29/29

included Haridas Valabhdas and Company, Bhagwanji Mathuradas, Kotecha, as well as Midland Emporium which was a leading wholesaler for African trade goods. Midland Emporium served over 1000 Africans retail traders scattered across Kakamega district. In Bungoma, Messrs Din's Trading Store collected sugar from Kisumu which it distributed to retailers within the district.²⁸³

With the publication of the White Paper on the Kenyanization of Personnel in the Private sector in 1967, it was clear that mere encouragement had failed to radically alter the general employment structure of Nairobi and Mombasa's Industrial areas, even though a number of individual firms had for many years been strongly committed to changing the complexion of their intermediate and higher level workforce. To achieve her objective of Africanization, the government changed her approach from persuasion to controls through the Trade Licencing Act of 1967, the Immigration Act of the same year, together with its corollary of a system of work permits.

These measures were designed to put certain trade areas and specific products exclusively in the hands of Africans while work permits could be restricted for particular occupations where it was felt that Africanization could proceed with justice (King, 1977:68). Under the Trade Licencing Acts of Kenya, certain areas, which in effect included all areas outside main shopping centres of a few large cities, were reserved exclusively for citizens. Non-citizen traders were allowed to operate there only if they were granted a licence, which was given for one year at a time. It is only in the non-scheduled areas, which had been steadily shrinking, that non-citizens were allowed to carry on their trade. The second provision of the Acts restricted trade in certain commodities to its citizens only, irrespective of their location (Ghai, 1974:377).

Competition and contestation over space created antagonism between Indians and Africans in a number of areas including employment, trade and housing. This translated the Indian into the hurdle blocking the aspirant African, with the expulsion of the Indian being seen as the solution to this perceived obstruction. This was to be achieved through various economic policies that were put in place in the postcolonial era (Thiara, 2001:142).

²⁸³DC/KMG/2/29/29

6.2 Impact of the Africanization Policy in Western and Nyanza Provinces of Kenya

The impact of Africanization was felt both in the rural and the urban areas. Mr Aslam Khan,²⁸⁴ a nominated member of the Kisumu county assembly, states that the government implemented a policy that forced many Sikhs and other people of Asian descent to leave the property they had developed in the rural areas. The government executed a policy of Africanizing villages and most of the Asians who had businesses in the rural areas had to move to urban areas. With the Africanization policy, non-Kenyans became the subject of increasing discrimination by the ruling government. For example, Sikhs and other Asians in the civil service were sacked in favour of Africans. With independence, the new African government gave Asians an option to take Kenyan citizenship and only few Asians decided to take Kenyan citizenship. Asians loathed the Africanization policy because it destabilized their businesses.²⁸⁵ Nevertheless, their departure from the rural areas was received with mixed reactions.

In Yala trading centre, for instance, the departure of Asians was celebrated by the Africans but shortly after, they began regretting when they could not get goods stocked by the Asians in their shops. Africans who were employed in their shops as tailors and shop attendants, however felt bad because of loss of jobs and other gifts, which they were used to receiving from the Asians. Most of the Yala Asians moved to Kisumu, while others went back to India, except A. Asif, son to one of the earlier Yala Asian called Kaka, who continued to operate in Yala in a plot which his late father bought during the colonial times.²⁸⁶ Within the cotton sector, the owners of Ndere ginnery sold their ginnery to the Siaya Cotton Cooperative Union.

The number of Asians who declined to become Kenya citizens by December 1965 was in the vicinity of 100,000 and their jobs fell in jeopardy (Amsden 1971:130). Mr Guy Hunter writes:

The other main grudge of Africans against Asians is that Asians, with a longer tradition of craft, commercial and clerical skills, have

²⁸⁴Aslam Khan: Is one of the assimilated Asians in Kisumu. He is locally referred to Jakisumu and Jamigori (a person from Kisumu and Migori in Luo dialect). He is married to a Luo woman and also a nominated member of the Kisumu County Assembly. Aslam Khan was also the chairman of Kisumu Muslim Forum and an active member of the Orange Democratic Party led by Raila Odinga. His last son is named Raila Odinga after the ODM party leader

²⁸⁵Kassam, O.I., 2006, 2013, an Oral interviewee who worked in Kisumu as a building constructor but later on relocated to Kakamega in the year 2013

²⁸⁶Kabong' Alfred, O.I., 2006 An oral interviewee working as a cobbler in Yala trading centre has a good account of Asians who lived in Yala and Ndere areas of Nyanza region

occupied just that middle level of technical, clerical and administrative posts to which tens of thousands of African school leavers now aspires. In a word, there is jealousy which can be focused on 'an other' group which is distinguishable by physique and culture; a culture not native to the African continent. This is plain straightforward racialism, however, it is disguised or rationalized (Hunter 1963:xvi).

In their work as artisans and contractors, the Asians made a twofold contribution to economic development. They provided an essential service as skilled workers in masonry, carpentry, blacksmithing, and other crafts and as contractors in organizing both skilled and unskilled workers for various types of construction. In these endeavors, they also provided valuable training for Africans. The knowledge and skills that the Africans learned from the Asians in this informal, on the job experience, proved in the long run far more useful and rewarding than the formal education they received in governments' technical schools (Gregory, 1993:159). From the whole range of Indian small enterprise (garages, blacksmithing, tinsmithing, tailoring, furniture, and building), there began to emerge Africans who had slowly acquired elements of Indian skill. For instance, areas like Kamas in Kisumu can be described as areas in which Africans and Asians worked not only in close association, but also in competition. Anyone working along these roads would notice that practically every Indian spare part shop had a number of Africans learning or doing work. Several African carpenters and smiths later on started their workshops side by side with Indians. No ill feeling or lack of cooperation appeared to have cropped up in these areas (Gregory, 1993:171).

Meanwhile, the governments of all the three territories sought to curb the informal apprentice system of the Asian artisan on the ground that it represented an exploitation of African labour. They issued regulations requiring the payment of at least the minimum wage. For a time, the Asian craftsmen and African trainees, both of whom gained from the informal system, circumvented the official restrictions by signing legal letters to the effect that the Africans were receiving wage payments, although in reality they were making payments. Many of these false contracts were soon perceived by diligent labour inspectors with the result that several Asian firms were prosecuted and forced to pay several thousand shillings of back pay to their apprentices. Soon, only a few Asians dared to accept payment in return for training. Africans alleged that the skills and training, which Africans had acquired from Indian business firms, had been the by-product of their employment with the latter rather than the result of a conscious attempt to promote the economic position of Africans (Suraiya, 2006:88).

In August 1966, president Kenyatta himself took up the theme of Africanization when addressing the Kenya African National Union branch at Nyali Beach Hotel in Mombasa, by sternly urging the 'immigrant communities' to either identify themselves with the aspirations of the people of Kenya, or pack up and leave (Rattansi, 2004:25). These statements were not favourable in harnessing Afro-Asian relations as they showed the ambivalent nature of the state towards Asians after Independence. In fact, it heightened tension and suspicion which already existed in the run-up towards independence. On Madaraka Day, 1967, President Kenyatta gave another stern warning to non-Africans who abused Africans and the government because of their wealth. Kenyatta said;

But I have got information that some Europeans and Asians in Kenya have not realized that this country is independent and go on abusing.. He attacked some Asian shopkeepers who because of wealth showed no respect to the ordinary Africans saying *Uhuru (Independence)* was nothing. Some of these people have not even realized that there is now an about turn. This is a final warning to them and unless they change their ways, they should not blame the government for any measure that they may take to deal with their nonsense (Theroux, 1967:4).

Such warnings laid the foundation upon which Afro-Asian hostilities were laid during the Kenyatta era.

As a result of the slow progress of Kenyanization in the private sector, the Kenya government introduced new legislation in 1967; the Immigration Act (Kamau, 1972:16). The 1967 Immigration Act required all non-citizens to apply for special entry permits if they were willing to begin or continue working or engaging in their own business of profession in Kenya. The intention of the Act was to enable the government grant permits to non-citizens only when qualified Kenyans were not available. A Kenyanization of personnel bureau was established to appraise the government of all local manpower and to survey the training facilities that the employers were expected to provide. On November 30th 1967, the government made the first move towards implementing the Immigration Act. It called on non-citizens in the following categories to apply for permits: clerical, sales, skilled and semi-skilled wage or salary earners (other than technicians, works managers, shop foremen, shop assistants, secretaries, book keepers and typists and other supervisory tradesmen). Every company was required to submit the number of non-citizens it employed in these categories in order to enable the government to keep an eye on the pace of Africanization in each firm.

By 1967, it was discouraging to note that while African traders could easily establish small-scale industries such as dressmaking, woodwork, shoemaking, garages, blacksmith among others, the response was still negligible. The African businessmen still thought that the mere owning of a shop was prestigious. The implementation of the Licensing Act, appointment to distribute KNTC commodities by Africans and acquisition of small and large scale loans would depend entirely on the initiative of the African trader. Although, there were good signs in forming companies and partnerships, there was still little or no initiative shown by the African traders in this field. So far, traders still tended to believe that individualism in commercial sector was the only way they could become successful, at the same, time their businesses lacked specialization. This was a shortcoming which Africans inherited from old Asian *dukawallas* but which did not appear to help the African traders.²⁸⁷

On January, 13th 1968, the Kenya Government passed a Trade Licensing Act which severely restricted the commercial activities of non-citizens. With trade and employment opportunities cut off, Asians holding British passports began to leave Kenya for the United Kingdom (Amsden, 1971:130). Most of the Indians did not opt for citizenship of countries of their origin or settlement, but instead chose to be British subjects. They were blamed for showing lack of respect for the newly independent countries by seeking British nationality. But as Premdas (2004:545) observes, citizenship deals with inclusion and exclusion as well as with boundary maintenance. He further points out that the “word ‘citizenship’ serves as the verbal cutting edge in a wide ranging transnational discourse around issues of inclusion and exclusion, participation and inequality, identity and alienation”. Citizenship has thus emerged as a symbolic site in which rewriting of the rules of the game in the distribution of power and privilege, rights and recognition, is at stake. Citizenship in the post-independent Kenyan state was based on colour/ race, which was a colonial legacy. The division between the citizen and the subject, the non-native and the native, was characteristic of all colonial situations. However, this perception continued even after Independence to some extent (Mamdani, 1996:48).

Though it was a purely internal policy measure of Kenyan government, India advised them (Indians) to surrender British passports and get local citizenship. Indian diplomats mobilized People of Indian Origin (PIOs) in favour of this move but not many responded to it. For PIOs, accepting the advice to mix with Africans meant giving their daughters in marriage to local

²⁸⁷Western Province Annual Report, 1967

Africans. Some PIOs were not willing to migrate to England because of social insecurity and degeneration of their children into western culture. Going back to India and being trapped in vicious trap of poverty, filth and unemployment was out of question (Dubey, 2010:10; Gupta, 1975:130) This dilemma demonstrated an hybrid and an ambivalent situation which the PIOs found themselves in. However, it is also important to note that majority of Indians applied for British citizenship, and few of them applied for Kenya citizenship. But those Indians who applied for Kenyan citizenship faced a deep silence of the government over their applications for citizenship. At the same time, the government gave the impression that the Indians were unwilling to accept their citizenship. Instead of looking at the root cause of such mindset and trying to sort out grievances of Indians, African leaders utilized this opportunity to spread racial hatred (Gupta, 2010:72).

In Western Kenya, the impact of the implementation of the Trade Licensing Act of 1967 continued to be felt through 1969 in most trading centres, where non-citizens of Asian origin had previously dominated business. The Act brought a number of African Traders into these centres to take over and run business previously operated by the Asians. The Industrial and Commercial Development Corporation (ICDC) did assist the African traders by way of loans in this takeover bid, and the KNTC effectively played its role in controlling and regulating the distribution of commodities to its appointed agents. The promotion of African business in the Western region was achieved through grants made by the District Trade Development Joint Boards and the Industrial and Commercial Development Corporation. In 1969 for instance, Kakamega Trade Development Joint Board granted 26 traders loans amounting to Ksh 93,000 while Bungoma Trade Development Joint Board granted loans to 19 traders amounting to Ksh 72,000. The ICDC continued to grant loans to enterprising African businessmen in order to either increase their stocks in shops, to buy trading premises, to establish small industries orto construct new premises.²⁸⁸ Similar boards were also established in Nyanza region under the name Kisumu Trade Development Joint Board charged with the same responsibility of promoting African trade.

The KNTC as a subsidiary of the ICDC continued to play its role of a middle-man in the business sphere by controlling and regulating certain commodities within the confines of citizen entrepreneurs. The KNTC achieved this in the Western region by appointing African traders to distribute certain specified commodities. During the year 1969, 7 provisions, 2

²⁸⁸Western Province Annual Report 1969

textile, 2 hardware agents were appointed as distributors. Besides, the corporation appointed one wines and spirit distributor, as well as a bicycle and bicycle spare parts agent. The KNTC continued to urge and encourage African business people to specialize in certain business lines and to take up specific agencies in such enterprises as textile, hardware, and confectionary among others. The implementation of the Trade Licencing Act 1967 took place in the early months of 1969 in Western province, resulting in 43 non-citizen traders being served with quit notices. However, the process of Africanising the trade in the province continued slowly.²⁸⁹ Although it was a government initiative to issue Africans with Trade License under the Trade Licensing Act of 1967, many citizen traders, particularly Africans, never bothered to take their licences leading to their prosecution by, the Provincial Revenue Enforcement officer based in Kisumu²⁹⁰

Main streets in Kenya's big towns were restricted to citizen traders from the beginning of 1970 when the Minister for Commerce and Industry, Mr Mwai Kibaki, announced a significant increase of urban trading areas earmarked for 'citizens only' through a gazette notice. Non-citizens required special permission to trade outside the General Business Areas and were warned that they would only be allowed to remain in areas reserved for citizens if Africans conducting businesses in those areas proved to be small or inadequate in numbers (*East Africa Standard* 10/10/69). In Nyanza and specifically Kisumu, the boundary of areas set aside for 'citizens only' were Accra Street, Otieno Oyoo Street, Joshi Avenue, Achieng' Oneko Street and new station road. Others included Kibuye Estate, Mosque Estate, Makasembo, Shaurimoyo, Ondiek, Kaloleni, Lumumba, Nyalenda, Omino Crescent and Pembe Tatu estates surrounded by the Nairobi road, Street, Sailors Close, Karachi Road and Kakamega Road (*East Africa Standard* October 10, 1969). With this development, it became so difficult for Asians, including those who had acquired Kenyan citizenship, to own houses in places like Nyalenda, Shaurimoyo and Manyatta, because they feared staying in the midst of Africans²⁹¹. But this could have also been due to the fact that some of the Asians felt that they would not be accepted within the African society.

²⁸⁹ Ibid

²⁹⁰ Bungoma District Annual Report 1970

²⁹¹ Aguya, Patrobas O.I., 2012 Aguya is a village elder in Manyatta area of Kisumu in Nyanza region precise

Another important aspect of Africanization was felt in the cooperative societies. Over the years, cooperatives tended to control an increasing share of processing and marketing of agricultural products and the government aided this process by providing cheap credit, training facilities and generally preferential treatment for the cooperatives (Ghai, 1974:376).

A largely unforeseen result of this Africanization campaign in the trading sector was the movement of Indian capital out of trade into construction companies; and this in turn was facilitated by the government's introduction of a work permit system for certain categories of skilled personnel, whose Africanization it desired to accelerate. One of these groups was the skilled supervisory element in the building industry, the foreman cum supervisor, referred to locally by the Indian term '*mistri*'. Prior to government intervention, most British and the few established Indian construction companies had a very generous ratio of *mistris* to general labour and the intention of the work permit system was not so much to reduce this ratio but to encourage the creation of African '*mistris*' to replace gradually this entirely Indian category (King, 1975:66).

What in fact happened, however, in the period 1966 to 1972, was not this substitution process but the transformation of a large number of the formerly employed Indian *mistris* into self-employed contractors, financed by the capital released from the Indian trading sector. The larger of these *mistri*-ex trader combinations had the ability to compete almost immediately in tendering for the large housing schemes, office blocks and other government contracts, and the formerly substantial profit margins of the older construction companies were dramatically reduced. The work permit restriction on non-citizen *mistris* certainly encouraged the growth of a parallel African group, but it was presumably not intended that the process would involve an overall fall in the wages of casual labour on some of the main site (King, 1975:68).

As Africanisation increased government activities, more jobs and more property became available to Kenyan Africans who always demanded more of Kenyanization/Africanization. There was, however, competition among Africans for the benefit of this process. Representatives from various districts and ethnic groups complained that they were not getting their 'fair share' of the benefits. Therefore, the continuing process of Africanization, by creating more benefits, increased intra-African competition and complaints, while it enlarged the group of citizens who, as property owners, were expected to support the existing socio-economic structure (Kamau, 1972:22). In Kakamega district, there was a notable improvement in businesses run by African citizens, and the takeover of businesses formerly in

the hands of Asian traders continued in 1970. The only snag in this takeover was the lure of some African traders to join in partnership with non-citizen traders, which was contrary to the spirit of the Trade Licensing Act of 1967. However, debating about the issue of African-Asian partnership in parliament, Hon Jahazi argued that any partnership should be genuine with the understanding that the non-Africans had the experience, the know-how, money and that they would train the African to rise up in business (Hansard, 1969:765). African traders continued to receive fair amount of loans from the ICDC for industrial and commercial purposes, and for purchase of property. The implementation of the Trade Licensing Act of 1967 threw thirty six non-citizen traders out of business and twenty eight business premises were purchased and taken over by citizens of African origin in Western Province (Western Province Annual Report, 1970).

In the transport sector, the Asians' role in road transport rapidly diminished in the postcolonial years, and by the late 1960s, it was insignificant. It paralleled the Asians' declining role in commerce. In Kenya, the Asians were increasingly driven from the position of ownership and management in road transport by the regulatory and Africanization policies of the immediate post war years. The Kenya legislation, which tied the renewal of licenses to citizenship and subsequent discrimination against Asians in all forms of commerce and artisan, resulted in the displacement of the remaining Asian transporters (Gregory, 1993:150).

The Trade Licensing Act of 1969 established guidelines of the Africanization policy as it affected the commercial sector, by excluding non-citizens from trade in certain areas. By the early 1970s, many non-citizens were still present in the small-scale commercial sector. The next stage in the move against these traders was to use the Provincial Trade Officers of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to introduce more stringent procedures for the renewal of trade licences. During the year 1971, only one non-citizen trader in Bungoma Township was given a quit notice and vacated in October 1971 (Bungoma District Annual Report, 1971). During the same year, the number of specified goods was increased. The non-General Business Areas were also increased resulting in the decrease in the size of the General Business Area and all non-citizen traders' shops were checked for compliance with the Act. As a result, seven non-citizen traders were prosecuted for dealing in specified goods and for failing to conspicuously display their licenses (Western Province Annual Report 1971). Meanwhile, there were still complaints about some Asian traders mistreating Africans. Nicholas Juma, an African in Western Kenya, observed that certain Asian traders in

Kakamega were mistreating Africans and these Indians had the habit of telling their customers that even if they were mistreated, they had nowhere to report because all the Western region leaders, including civil servants were in their pockets. Mr Nicholas Juma himself experienced mistreatment in the hands of Indian traders and proprietors of Midland Emporium in Kakamega, when they refused to sell to him empty old drums and diesel oil because he wanted to pay part of the money by cheque. When Juma finally decided to go and get some more money from the bank in order to enable him pay in cash, he found, in his return that the initial price of the empty drums had been changed from Ksh 25 to Ksh 30 within a span of 30 minutes.²⁹²

The District Officer for Lurambi Mr J.E Chinyezi also raised concerns about the attitude of certain Asian personality towards the government. Mr. Chinyezi argued that Mr Bachus' (an Indian) attitude towards the government was very bad and getting worse. According to Mr Chinyezi, Mr Bachu was disrespectful to government officers and had one time made a statement that he (Bachu) could get whatever he wanted from any government office with a little bribe. In one incident, the District Officer, requested him to wait for the District Commissioner at his jaggery and he deliberately kept away saying that 'he was not prepared to waste his time waiting for a District Commissioner.'²⁹³ It was these sorts of feelings towards Africans by Asian, which fuelled hostilities between Africans and Asians.

Hon. Mr Ochieng Mbeo from Nyanza also raised complaints in Parliament that although African agents were appointed by the KNTC, especially the textile agents, there were some Asians who still brought textiles in the country without the knowledge of the KNTC, all the way from Jinja in Uganda. They got these textile materials and goods without the knowledge of the KNTC. These complaints were very much widespread in Kisumu, thereby making many of the African agents not to sell their goods (Hansard, 1969:53).

Between 1972 and 1975, in all the central trading areas in Kenya's largest towns, Kisumu, Kakamega, Mombasa, Nairobi, Kisumu, and Eldoret, a large number of non-citizen businesses were served with notices to quit their premises by the Provincial Trade Officers. This forced non-citizen owners to sell their shops to citizens. In many cases, there were not enough African traders with sufficient capital to purchase the businesses. In such cases, those businesses would sometimes be taken over by either an Asian with Kenyan citizenship or

²⁹²KNA, DX/21/8/7

²⁹³KNA, DX/21/7/11

owned through a partnership between the original owner and an African Kenyan. However, the Provincial Trade Officers, who held files on every business in their areas, gradually imposed more stringent conditions on the disposal of business licences of the former non-citizen premises (Swainson, 1980:192-3).

6.3 The Industrial Sector and Africanisation

In the Industrial field, Bungoma district was fairly advancing by 1973 in comparison to Kakamega. By the close of 1973, there were several minor Industries especially posho mills and coffee factories. The Soap and Produce Factory of Malakisi was also advancing tremendously alongside cotton ginnery. The soap factory, owned by a Kenyan citizen of Asiatic extraction manufactured soap, edible oil and cattle feeds. Although this was a private company, there was a move by already Africanized Cotton Societies to buy and put it under African ownership. Similarly, the most remarkable industrial project in the district was the Pan African Paper Mills at Webuye. This was a joint venture of the Kenya government and the Birla Brothers of India, which would later provide employment for both Africans and Asians (Bungoma District Annual report 1972, Bungoma District Annual Report 1973). Among the industrial entrepreneurs like the Chandarias, Mehtas and Madhvanis, L.R Shah was unique in attracting investments from Japan and India. This was demonstrated when Shah came up with the idea of constructing the Pan African Paper Mills in Broderick falls in conjunction with the Birla group of India. A huge project involving an investment of £ 15 million and employment of 4000 Africans, the factory was to be financed jointly by Shah, Birla, the Kenya government and the World Bank (Gregory, 1993:303).

Instances of takeovers continued in earnest in Kakamega as demonstrated by the fact that businesses owned by O.H Vithlani (outgoing trader) was taken over by and allocated to Mr Sale Musungu (incoming trader); business owned by Lalji Govind and sons was taken over by a Mr Kamau Murage while M.G Modi and Sons business was allocated to Mr Brown Kisiang'ani. In Bungoma District, business owned by Mandalia Drapers was allocated to Mr Francis Asikoyo while business enterprise owned by C.N Mistry was allocated to Mr Thomasa Muraya Gitare (Western Province Annual Report; 1973). It is important to note that Africanization process went beyond ethnicity as Africans from different ethnic background were allocated businesses irrespective of their ethnic background.

The issue of training opportunities and wages offered to Africans by Indian businessmen in Kenya was one, which aroused strong comments in many circles. It was still in fact widely alleged in the 1970s that the Indian skilled class had little intention of transferring their specialist knowledge voluntarily to the Africans, and that the Africans they employed were kept on low wages. Particularly, as attempts were being made to raise the level of African participation in those skills traditionally associated with the Indian community in East Africa, it may be worthwhile to examine precisely how Indian patterns of labour training differed from that model which the Kenya government would have liked to see (King, 1975:65). The Indian training as mentioned earlier was based on the job kind of apprenticeship.

A largely unforeseen result of this Africanization was that, when the would be African traders floundered, Indians, former traders turned industrialists, gradually returned to reclaim the trading sector; this time as part of a strategy of integration with their new more sophisticated activities. In this way, another peak in industrialization in Kenya occurred, rendering Kenyan Indian capitalists even more important (Himbara, 1994:59). In practice, the term citizen was often equated with 'African,' and not only noncitizens, but also nonblack citizens were given quit notices. For example, leading ministers such as Mwai Kibaki could say that shops left by Indian traders 'must be reserved for the exclusive use of Africans...The owners of the business premises affected were expected to let them out to citizens and particularly to Africans who in the past had been discriminated against. The climate in which the Africanisation program was attempted was obviously hostile and this hostile environment, impacted negatively on Afro-Asian relations within Nyanza and Western regions of Kenya (Himbara, 1994:60; *Daily Nation* 1/1/1969).

Apart from its overtly racist tone, the above statement by Mr. Kibaki confirmed that there was no enough pool of African traders to replace all the local Indian businessmen, especially in the more sophisticated segment of the retail sector. In fact, the Africanization drive not only undermined local Indian businessmen, but African communities as well (Himbara, 1994:60).

The alternatives facing local Indians in the 1970s were in effect either to leave Kenya or move from trade into another sector. As was stated by Mr. Kibaki, Kenya Minister for Commerce 'the government expects that the majority of the affected non-citizens will either leave Kenya or move into other sectors where their contribution is required such as the manufacturing industries' (*Daily Nation* 1/1/1969). However, the Africanization of commerce and industry was flawed from the beginning. The Kenyan state soon realized that attempting

to dislodge defenseless *dukawallah* merchants was one thing; taking on large manufacturing industries was quite another. Due to the scale of the managerial skills and capital involved in the latter, and more importantly to the effective intervention of their collective organizations such as the Kenya Association of Manufacturers, industrialists successfully deflected takeovers of their businesses. They used three main means i.e. legal arguments, the international implications of racial harassment, and remainders of Kenya's stated objectives of encouraging local and international private investment. Meanwhile, the state continued to engage in a make-believe exercise that gave the impression that the Africanization of commerce and industry was still being implemented. For example, in 1980, the state issued yet another 'threat' to Kenyan based manufacturers:

As you are well aware, the government has decided that the distribution of essential commodities will in future be done through citizen distributors only. In the exercise of appointing their distributors... manufacturers are expected to work in close liaison and consultation with this ministry (Himbara, 1994:64).

The theme of longing for belonging was particularly germane in this diaspora as "India" occupied an inaccessible space; the old diaspora recognized that 'physical return was virtually impossible. Therefore, an emotional or spiritual renewal was an ongoing necessity (Rastogi, 2008:10).

In the following year, however, the government appeared finally to accept defeat gracefully, appealing to manufacturers through Mr E. Mwamunga of the Ministry of Commerce, in the following terms:

The slow tempo with which Kenyanization/Africanisation of trade and commerce has been implemented has, to a large extent, proved to be disappointing.... I wish to appeal to the entire business community to support government measures in earnest (Himbara, 1994:64).

The effective defeat of the Africanization of the manufacturing industry through state intervention, combined with the law that forced local Indian traders into other sectors, accelerated another round of locally propelled industrial development. The number of local Indian companies entering the manufacturing sector after the 1960s and 70s was striking. More revealing was the fact that of manufacturing enterprises established in the 1960s, local Indians were responsible for establishing 79 percent of them. This compares with 70 percent of enterprises established by Kenya Indians in the 1970s and 85 percent later on in the 1980s.

These manufacturing companies were in textiles, pharmaceutical and chemical industries, plastics, steel and equipment manufacturers, and specialized engineering firms. This confirms the Asian dominance and hold in the manufacturing sector of the economy, despite the evidently poor investment climate during the 1970s. Some of the industrial projects started in this period represented some of the largest and sophisticated enterprises in Kenya, and more so in Western and Nyanza provinces e.g. Panpaper, Kenya Matches, KICOMI, Victoria Furnitures manufacturing office as well as industrial furniture for domestic and export markets among others (Himbara, 1994:64).

The Pan African Paper mill became operational at the end of November 1974, and was employed 700 people by then. Within Western Province, apart from the soap and oil factory in Malakisi, there were also minor factories including: cotton ginneries at Nambale and Luanda in Busia, timber mills, bakeries, block-making and jaggeries. Most of these were cooperative or privately owned. Two traders of Asian origin also left Nambale, Busia where they were trading and went to Kisumu as their business was taken over by Africans (Western Province Annual Report, 1974).

In Bungoma district for instance, by 1974, only two businesses were in the hands of non-Kenyan citizens. These two businesses were the Patel Bakery at Kimilili and the workshop belonging to Banta Singh in Bungoma. These two were permitted to operate because no suitable citizens applied to take them over (Bungoma District Annual Report, 1974). It is therefore suffice it to say that although mimicry of what the Asian business people were doing was a sign of resistance to Asian dominance over the economy of Africans; there were certain skills and values that were good to Africans, which they allowed non-citizens to do. This demonstrates how hybrid the postcolonial space was, especially within the western post-colony.

In a public statement, Kenya's Minister for Commerce and Industry, Dr. Gikonyo Kiano, once told non-citizen traders that 'their days are numbered' and promised that total Africanization of the country's retail and wholesale trade would be completed by the end of 1974 (African Development, 1974:137). Not that the minister had got his facts wrong; it had been evident for some years then that Kenya had been pursuing a policy of Africanization since independence for over a decade. But at the close of 1974, this policy of placing the country's economy in the hands of the Africans had succeeded to only a very small degree. According to Dr Kiano, the government's efforts to wholly Africanise the commercial sector

of Kenya's economy had been thwarted by a few unscrupulous Africans in collaboration with non-citizens traders (African Development, May 1975).

Ghai (1966:22) however, argues that an African coming in as a partner did not as a rule bring capital, experience or skill with him, but probably some political security; a consideration which was much more important for the big commercial and industrial firms than the small *dukawallas*. The big firm thus bought political goodwill by taking on Africans as directors. One other aspect of economic relations was trade unionism. Growing numbers of Asians were becoming workers and would continue to do so. Their effective entry into the trade union movement thus helped in enhancing racial integration at lower levels of society- in contrast to cocktail integration (Ghai, 1966:23).

The Asian factories, unlike the European, were labour intensive. After independence, the Asians refrained from automating their factories because of the consequent displacement of the African workers. In this, they were motivated partly by the governments' interest in maintaining high employment, and partly by humanitarian concern. Another important consideration was that the Asians' mode of Industrialization, unlike the Europeans' significantly fostered the rise of African industry. After the World WarII, the colonial governments adopted educational and financial-aid programs for the training of Africans in small-scale industry as well as commerce and artisanry, but these programs were surprisingly unsuccessful. However, the most successful Africans in trade and artisanry invested their accumulated capital in manufacturing. They were in effect; emulating the Asians; their former employers and others with whom, in many instances, they were in close association (Gregory, 1993:317). It is thus in three ways: the employment of African labour and the investment of earnings in local industry in the years since independence, the stimulation of African manufacturing then and earlier, that the Asian industrial investment, even in Kenya seemed especially pertinent to African development (Preton, 1977: 318)

Kenya's principal manufacturing development after independence was in textiles. Local Asians developed six of the main firms: Midco textiles (East Africa) Ltd, of Nairobi, Kisumu Cotton Mills Ltd., and Raymond Woolen Mills (Kenya) Ltd. The firms were established by Tanco Khatau and J.K. groups from India respectively. (Gregory, 1993:314). By 1975, an Asian industrial undertaking, the Kisumu Cotton Mills (KICOMI) came into the scene as a textile industry (*Weekly Review*, 21/1/1983). Contrary to the ginning factories in Ndere, Yala and Kendu Bay, this was a more advanced industry where Asians manufactured ready-made

clothes, bed sheets, and curtains for both local and international markets. The Asian owners employed a number of African workers whom they trained on how to operate the weaving machines. This was done under the supervision of the Asians. However, there were complaints over low wages paid to African workers as compared to their Asian counterparts in the same company.²⁹⁴ The establishment of this industry was to form the basis of conflict between African second-hand traders and the KICOMI products later in the Moi era. KICOMI survived Africanization because it was a joint venture between the Kenya government and the Asians.

Africanization policy and the Citizenship Act of 1969 thus dealt a major blow to Afro-Asian engagement, not only in Nyanza, but also in the entire country (Daily Nation 10th October 1969). But viewed from a different point of view, this policy was to help the government in entrenching capitalism, which was a neo-colonial means of administering the colony. The changing nature of engagement was, therefore, neo-colonial in nature. The African government, unlike the colonial government therefore had a chance to engage with the Asians as far as controlling the economy was concerned. The end result of the Africanization policy was mass exodus of Asians out of Kenya and also from the rural areas of Kendu Bay, Ndere, Malakisi, Kakamega, Bungoma and Yala. It also affected the transport industry while at the same time it forced Africans to work in partnership whether formally or informally with Asians.

6.4 Afro-Asian Relations in the Sugar Industry: Developments in the Sugar Industry in Nyanza and Western Province

The post-independence period saw the post-colonial state begin to participate directly in the sugar industry with the government aggressively boosting sugar production with the aim of making the country self-sufficient in sugar production. To this end the state's strategy to develop the sugar industry was guided by two policy documents. The first was the Swynnerton Plan of 1954 and the second was Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965 a policy document in which the government stated its version of African Socialism. It has remained the country's development "bible" since its adoption. The full title of the document is 'African Socialism and its Application to Planning in Kenya'. These two policy documents provided the broad framework within which the state was to revolutionize its agricultural sector including sugar-cane farming (Wanyande, 2001:124).

²⁹⁴ Bodo, O.I., 2006

The Swynnerton Plan provided a land tenure policy that represented a new phase in Kenya's agricultural development as far as land utilization was concerned. The Swynnerton Plan introduced for the first time in this country, individual land tenure system and the registration of land including the provision of land title deeds. Prior to this land was communally owned. The plan is, however, best remembered for allowing Africans to cultivate profitable export crops hitherto an exclusive monopoly of white settlers and Asians (Migot Adholla; 1984:203).

The post-colonial state echoed the Swynnerton policy by stating that one of the requisites for successful farming is a system of land tenure that encourages investment in the land and enables it to be used as a negotiable asset for obtaining credit. The net effect of such a policy was that it enabled smallholders acquire land and use it for cane growing and more so changed the traditional land tenure system thereby creating individual private property in land. The aim of the government as already stated was to make Kenya self-sufficient in sugar-cane production and to meet both domestic needs and if possible export (Wanyande, 2001:125).

The involvement of the state in the sugar industry must, however, also be seen in another light, namely the desire to be seen to provide citizens with the opportunity to improve their income in line with the government's stated commitment to improving the living standards of the people. This was politically important as a way of enhancing the legitimacy of the government in view of the many promises the nationalist leaders had made to the citizens during the struggle for independence. Kenyans had been denied a chance to grow cash crops until the Swynnerton Plan of 1954 already referred to. In addition, the state felt it was necessary to introduce sugar-cane production in Western Kenya because by 1966 this part of the country was already feeling that the government was not taking care of their interests. This followed the resignation of Oginga Odinga from the government after disagreeing with Kenyatta. Kenyatta was Kenya's first president and Odinga was at that time the country's vice president. Indeed there were already signs of growing ethnic tensions in the country with a feeling that Kenyatta's ethnic group was being favoured in the development process. The Luo community who reside in the present sugar belt was particularly unhappy since many of them were feeling marginalized politically and economically. The introduction of sugar-cane farming in this region was therefore partly aimed at giving the people of the region an assurance that the government was still ready to take care of their economic interests even if Odinga, the undisputed leader of the community, had fallen out with the government. The

industry was also important because it would provide employment to local people as well as generate income (Wanyande, 2001:125).

To encourage sugar-cane farming on a commercial scale, the state acquired a large area of land towards north and east of Muhoroni in present day Nyanza province. The state went on to establish sugar settlement schemes in 1966 under which a portion of land was allotted to each settler. The Sugar Settlement Organization (SSO) in the Ministry of Lands and Settlement was created and given the responsibility of managing the settlements with a commensurate milling plant capacity of East African Sugar Industry (EASI) now Muhoroni Sugar Company (Wanyande, 2001: 125).

Since the first two sugar factories established in the 1920s at Miwani in Nyanza and Ramisi at the coast were privately owned and managed by Asians, the post-independence state, as a major shareholder in the industry decided to set up five sugar factories. This marked the beginning of direct participation of the state in the sugar industry in the form of ownership. Toward this end the state established the East African Sugar Industries Limited at Muhoroni in 1966 with a rated capacity of 1,200 tonnes of cane per day (TCD) and later on Chemelil Sugar Company Limited with a rated capacity of 3,000 tonnes of cane per day (TCD). The establishment of Muhoroni and Chemelil marked the introduction of monopoly capital into the sugar industry. The management of Muhoroni Sugar Company was entrusted to the Mehta Group International which was an Asian firm, thereby confirming the fact that the Asians were not only key players in the sugar industry in Nyanza province but were also major stakeholders in the economy of Nyanza region in general.

Although Miwani and Muhoroni sugar factories were already established in Nyanza Province, by 1964, a group of Asian financiers (Messrs Noor Mohamed Valji and Sons Ltd) from Kenya and Uganda met with the Regional Government Agent in Kakamega to discuss the possibility of setting up a White Sugar Industry.²⁹⁵ Many of the newly appointed African Agencies for sugar distribution had experienced difficulties, where Asian distributors and Asian traders engaged themselves in the process of undercutting them in business. But also, although Asian agencies in various parts of the country were terminated in 1966, reports from various DCs and African distributors indicated that these former Asian sugar distributors were

²⁹⁵KNA, AE/22/625

still carrying large stock of sugar.²⁹⁶ In 1967, it was indicated that jaggery factories were springing up in Western Kenya at an enormous rate (from Nyanza). About six jaggery factories were under construction. Some of the factories were operated by Asian traders from Kisumu, Kitale, and Eldoret and by traders who were within Kakamega District. These Asian traders financed the factories and placed in an African manager and a few other people as partners in the business. Many factories, however, had Asian managers and technicians working in shifts. Several other jaggeries were also under construction in Lurambi Division.²⁹⁷ Other Jaggeries in Western province included: West Kenya Jaggery Producers Limited (Mumias) owned by Mr Amir Jamal²⁹⁸ of Kisumu (Member of Parliament for Kisumu), Lusumu Flour Mill and Jaggery Factory owned by Noor Mohamed Valji of Kisumu, Noor Mohamed Valji also owned Victoria Flour Mill and Jaggery factory based in Butere. Webuye Highway Jaggery Factory (Webuye) was owned by Phakar Singh²⁹⁹, H.M Mabunde Limited in Yala was owned by Mabunde³⁰⁰ and two other Asian partners Similarly, Masinde Murunga owned Malakisi Jaggery Factory in Bungoma.³⁰¹

Since 1967, jaggeries had been mushrooming everywhere in Kakamega District (from Nyanza) and as a result, many were operating uneconomically or economically at the expense of the poor cane growers. Although these Asian owned Jaggeries provided employment to Africans, Mr Noor Mohamed Valji was accused by the Kenya Union of Sugar Plantation Workers, Kakamega branch of humiliating both farmers and workers.³⁰² More than twenty two (about 85%) of all existing factories were owned by non-citizen Asians. Although, African names appeared on the Certificates of Registration, real ownership and business financial returns (profits) were in the hands of non-citizens. The capital costs for putting-up these factories were only known to the non-citizens thereby exposing the lack of knowledge that the so-called citizen partners had in the management of factories. In terms of management, it is important to note that out of twenty six factories, twenty two of them were

²⁹⁶KNA, DX/21/7/15

²⁹⁷KNA, DX/21/7/15

²⁹⁸Amir Jamal was the first Asian Member of Parliament for Kisumu in 1963. See Maganda W.O, 2012 *Political Participation and Alienation of Racial Minorities in Africa; The Kenyan Asian Community Experience* (1963-2010), M.A Thesis University of Nairobi

²⁹⁹Pakhar Singh- Was the son of Bawa Singh a sole proprietor of Webuye Highway Jaggery

³⁰⁰Mabunde, H.M owned a jiggery factory and operatd both in Yala (Nyanza) and Kakamega (Western) see *Kenya Gazette Notice No 3997*, of 4 Sept 1985

³⁰¹KNA DX/21/7/15

³⁰²KNA, DX/21/7/11

managed by non-citizen Asians. African managers were at times placed within the factory yard merely for ‘window-dressing’. The “African manager” did not handle anything on price structure (wholesale), marketing, accounting or banking.³⁰³ Their responsibility was to supervise labour at the factory, keep record of incoming cane and jaggery produced and to inform factory owners on payments due to cane growers and labourers. Only two factories were managed by a farmers’ cooperative society. Every Jaggery factory employed an average of two regular employees (an African and Asian) at a salary of Shs 375-400 (for African) and Shs 975-1000 (for Asian) per month. By average also, 35-40 casual labourers were engaged in every factory on a daily and/or a weekly basis at Shs 1.50- 2.50 per day. Cheap labour did exist and there were no proper conditions and terms of service for employment in the Jaggery Industry. The marketing outlets for products of Jaggery factories in Western Province were in Nyanza province with Kisumu taking the largest share at 23%, Nzoia and Ndere 13%, Homabay, Migori and Alego 8%, Yala 5% Kakamega and local areas 14%, among other areas.³⁰⁴ Main jaggery buyers in Kisumu were Mr Kotecha (owner of Tip Top Store) and Mahesh and Company.³⁰⁵

Conflict over cane prices was a common feature between sugarcane farmers and jaggery factory owners. According to a monthly report on Kakamega District for March 1971, Mr Peter Wanyonyi, the Provincial Cooperative Officer, Western Province, had to resolve conflict arising between Mumias Cooperative Society and Jaggery Factory owners. The dispute started when members of the Mumias Cooperative Society demanded for higher prices for their cane. However, the Jaggery factory owners could not agree to raise the price since it was uneconomical to pay high prices and keep the factory running. With this stalemate, members of the Mumias Cooperative Society decided to hold a general meeting, where it was resolved that all members should not deliver their sugarcane to the Jaggery Factory. This resolution was successful since the Asian owners of the Jaggery factory agreed to hand over the factory to the Mumias Cooperative Society at a monthly rent of shs 3,500/- payable in advance.³⁰⁶ With this agreement, the society took on the running of the factory with effect from 1st August 1969. However, by 10th October 1969, the society was in arrears of Shs 6,740 owed to the Asian factory owners. In an attempt to solve the financial crisis that had bedeviled the Jaggery factory, several meetings were held attended by the Asian factory

³⁰³Jagpal, Singh O.I, 2013. Opcit

³⁰⁴KNA, DX/21/7/15, 1971

³⁰⁵KNA, DX/21/7/15, KNA, DX/21/7/11

³⁰⁶TR/19/278

owners, the M.Ps of the area including Hon Martin Shikuku, the Assistant Minister for Home Affairs and Mr Wanyonyi. Nonetheless, no workable solution was found prompting for another general meeting in April 1971 to try and solve the problem. In the meantime Mumias Cooperative Society became dormant.³⁰⁷ Such were the conflicts which Africans and Asians were engaged in within the sugar industry in the western region of Kenya. These conflicts affected their economic relations within the region.

Although there were plans to establish a white sugar Industry in 1971, Afro-Asian relation within the Jaggery production sector continued to be fraught with tension and exploitation in the subsequent years. This was demonstrated by Mr James Onyango, an Acting Provincial Director of Social Services, Western region. In his letter to the DC Kakamega, Mr. Onyango wondered why a seven-ton lorry filled and loaded completely with raw sugar cane could cost two hundred and ten shillings only. His concern came when African sugarcane growers complained after delivering their sugarcane at an Asian owned Jaggery factory near Lubao market in Kakamega. Mr Onyango further complained that weighing machine was not available to help the cane growers to weigh their produce. As a result, the miller exploited African sugar cane growers at will.³⁰⁸

Similarly Webuye Highway Jaggery factory had no weighing machine and used a lorry, which they claimed to have been marked, and that they knew the tonnage from the marks made. Although the factory did not grow its own sugarcane, they intended to give credit facilities to some farmers around the factory to enable them grow cane for the factory. This factory was one of the well organized and managed factories in Western Province by 1974.³⁰⁹

Towards the end of Kenyatta era, a number of jaggeries operating illegally were closed down until they renewed their licences. Although other jaggeries were constructed, conditions for putting up new jaggeries were strict and to some extent depended on the distance between the site of construction and the Mumias White Sugar Factory. The distance in any new jaggery factory and the Mumias white sugar was supposed to be more than 8 miles.³¹⁰ It is important to note that, even after the Africanisation policy, Asians still applied for licenses to put up jaggery factories alongside Africans. Some also applied for renewal of their jaggery licences.

³⁰⁷TR/19/278

³⁰⁸KNA, DX/21/8/7

³⁰⁹KNA, DX/21/7/11

³¹⁰KNA, DX/21/7/11

Related to the sugar industry in Nyanza was the Kisumu Molasses plant, which utilized by products from the sugar industry. The Molasses plant project was initiated in 1977 as a joint venture between the government and the Madhvani family. It was capitalized at Shs 170 million, of which the government invested Shs 86.7 million, making it the majority shareholder with 51 per cent shareholding (*Weekly Review* May, 12 1989:15).³¹¹ The government, in partnership with the Madhvani family worked out a joint agreement towards the revival of the plant. The Kenya government and the Madhvani family, co-sponsors of the project, had provided for a phenomenally high level of government subsidy and the agreement stated that the government would provide, at no cost, a wide range of facilities, including electrical power, water effluent disposal, rail access, telephone services and relevant government licences. Also included were the provision, at no cost, of port facilities for the import and export of materials required at the plant. There were also stipulations to the effect that the government would undertake all necessary measures to guarantee the availability of raw materials at reasonable prices and arrange for the sale of power alcohol to oil companies. The latter requirement placed the burden of acquiring blending facilities and related capital costs squarely on the government (*Weekly Review*, June 16, 1989:26).

³¹¹Originally proposed in 1977 by the Madhvani Group as a joint venture with the Kenyan government to create jobs and generate revenue in a poor area, the Molasses Project looked to build a plant near Kisumu to produce alcohol and other products from raw molasses. Work on the project began in 1981 but by 1983 the Kenyan Chemical and Food Corporation, the government's special purpose vehicle set up to partner the Madhvani Group was insolvent and the Kenyan government was forced to stand by loan guarantees made. By then the cost of the project had reached \$119 million against the original total project projected cost of \$61.4 million. Over the next four years various proposals were put forward to revive the project but all required funding from the Kenyan government which had adopted the firm policy that no funds were to be made available and any future revival of the project would have to obtain external financial support. Former commissioner of Lands Sammy Mwaita offered to sell the 240 acres on which the Kisumu Molasses Plant is built to Spectre International on January 11, 2001 at a price of Kshs 3.6 million at a time when Odinga started working closely with Moi. By June of the same year, Raila was appointed to the cabinet and made Energy Minister. Significantly, Spectre International had applied for the same land in a letter of February 18, 1999, but the request had been rejected by the government at the time. Titles were prepared in favour of Spectre International (Owned by Odinga family) on February 3, 2002 for a 99-year lease backdated to September 1, 2001 and the Odinga family acquire the Kisumu Molasses Plant. (www.kenyaunsolved.com, The Kisumu Molasses plant accessed on 13/7/2015).

Although the government was a key stakeholder in the sugar industry holding shares in Muhoroni, Chemelil and SONY sugar in Nyanza, the state went ahead to have claim some stake in the sugar industry in Western Kenya. For instance, having established another factory at Mumias in Kakamega district in 1973 with a capacity of 2,000 TCD and whose management was entrusted to Bookers and Tate International, in 1978, a French company Techniscare established a factory at Nzoia in Bungoma district with a rated capacity of 2,000 expandable to 3,000 TCD. Its management was left to French Techniscare with the state being the major shareholder.

Despite the potential recognized by writers, such as Colin Leys, of Asian Industrialists becoming an 'industrial bourgeoisie' of a classic type, it is clear that the expansion of Asian capital in Kenya was strictly limited by political considerations. The reasons for the failure of this group to fulfill its potential as a domestic industrial class are to be located in the historical conjuncture of Asian capital in colonial Kenya. Asians in Kenya were never able to exercise political power, under either the colonial or postcolonial regimes, which would have sustained their accumulation. Their relative isolation gave rise to the emergence of family-business groupings, which were reluctant to bring in outside capital management. Many Asians, therefore, remained at the merchant level. These contradictions culminated in the gradual withdrawal of trading licenses from non-citizen Asians from 1967 onwards, in Kenya. The more powerful section of the Asian industrial class, however, were able to deal with these problems by 'internalizing' their operations and making political alliances at the local level. The largest industrial groups were also able to compensate for the threat posed by the 'economic nationalism' of the 1970s by transferring their headquarters outside Kenya while remaining in the capacity of financiers and managing agents (Swainson, 1980:130). This is how the whole idea of Joint ventures between the Kenyan government and Asian businessmen in putting up industrial projects in Western and Nyanza province such as Pan Paper, Kisumu Cotton Mills (Kicomi), Muhoroni sugar, SONY sugar and Kisumu Molasses plant emerged.

The government thus participated in the sugar industry by owning shares in these companies in collaboration with the foreign capital. The state also dominated them in the sense that it took control of the distribution of sugar after the processing had been done. The state did this through the now defunct KNTC. The KNTC was a parastatal organization used by the state to distribute not just sugar but just about every commodity in which the state had an interest.

Indeed the KNTC monopolized the purchase of sugar from the factories at a price determined by the state. The result of this was that farmers, both in the nucleus estates and the outgrowers had no incentive to increase production (Wanyande, 2001:127).

It is well known that many popular African impressions of local 'Asians' (as Kenyans of South Asian origin were simplistically known) were fundamentally homogenizing, with almost no disaggregation of diverse South Asian regional, religious or caste origins for instance. Many, if not most, African impressions dwelt on sentiments of Asian exploitation rather than friendship (Theroux 1967; Furedi 1974). This tension, which exists to some extent today, has deep structural roots based on the position of Asians (especially as traders) within the colonial economy, and the sites of Afro-Asian contact that this created (McCann, 2011:115). Moreover, at the height of anti-Asianism in 1968, B.R Bhagat, the then India minister of external affairs, was denied an audience with Kenyatta on the grounds that India was interfering with Kenyan affairs (McCann, 2011:116; Daily Nation 1968). Such events, contingent on changing socio-economic and political moods in Kenya, provided more complicated pictures of historical Afro-Asian relations than are often expounded. These had implications on Afro-Asian relations at the local regions of Nyanza and Western Kenya.

Many Africans belonging to different walks of life i.e. university teachers, government officers, ministers, businessmen and even street vendors; when contacted, strongly viewed that such distinct differences in the standard of living between Africans and Asians pinched an African mind the most as, according to them, the Asian neither belonged to the ruling class, nor were their academic accomplishment always comparable to that of the European community. It is not surprising, therefore, if the Africans widely resented this sort of an economic order in which they were placed at the lowest rung of the economic ladder. The bazaars in cities and towns were lined with Asian shops. Asians and Europeans mainly occupied the fashionable residential localities. Most of the privately owned buildings belonged to the Asians, and Asians held commanding positions in the entire commercial set up. This is what had come by the Africans when the colonial rule was lifted. The racial friction was organically a build up from such mounting tensions (Ramchandani, 1976:247).

6.5 Afro-Asian Social Relations in Western and Nyanza Provinces: Social Dynamics in the Housing and the Education Sectors

A part from Africanization, another change that affected the non-African and African communities alike was the scrapping of segregation at Independence. No longer would

schools, hospitals, or residential areas be reserved exclusively for whites or Asians. Segregationist regulations relating to public facilities were also dropped, and the government pressured formerly exclusive clubs to revise membership requirements to allow affiliation from all racial groups. Along with these measures, the government sought also a change in non-African attitudes towards the majority of the population. On many occasions, President Kenyatta, attacked the colonial idea of African inferiority and warned non-Africans (Asians and European) against *Ubwana*³¹²(Maxon, 1995:115). It is out of this racial segregation that Ashcroft (1989:6) questioned why post-colonial societies should continue to engage with the colonial imperial experience.

6.5.1 Afro-Asian Relations within the Housing Sector: Afro-Asian Dynamics in the Households

Generally, Asians chose to be confined within their business premises, which they used as commercial and residential quarters. The scrapping of racial segregation in residential areas was not felt much in the rural areas of Ndere, Yala and Kendu Bay because as Asians had massively withdrawn from these areas, they sold off their shops to Africans which hitherto served as their residences. Towards the end of Kenyatta rule, such structures were occupied by Africans who bought them from the Asians. This was evident both in Nyanza and Western Province (Omenya, 2010:216).

Afro-Asian interaction within the residential areas even after independence was not common as such. The Africans who neighboured Asians complained of inaccessibility to their houses and isolationism. But also, Africans were not able to pay high rents for some houses within the town centre. In Webuye, Wekhomba,³¹³ an employee with the PanPaper states that the first crop of Indians working for panpaper stayed at the Panpaper Guest House. Other Indian traders were staying in the shops within the town from where they operated their business. They sold miscellaneous, blankets, sufurias, clothes and hardwares among other items but did not sell perishable goods. He further argues that the initial crop of Asians who came through the railway construction and settled in Broderick falls were not the mixing type. They kept to themselves and they worshipped in their temples.

³¹²*Ubwana* is a Kiswahili word for a bossy mentality

³¹³Edwin Wekhomba, O.I, 2013 is an Oral Informant and a former employee of Panpaper Mills. He lives in Webuye in the same estate with Asians working at Panpaper Mills

Shivachi Richard³¹⁴ observed that many Asians did not live in Kakamega. Most of the Asians who owned shops in Kakamega stayed in Kisumu. They commuted daily from Kisumu to Kakamega, but returned to Kisumu for the night. It was not until the 1970s that some of them settled in Kakamega to do business as residents of the town. Many of them however stayed within the town centres, behind their shops, while some acquired plots and built their houses.

In Kisumu, because of their (Asian) favorable economic status, the majority of Asians bought houses in the high class Milimani area while others occupied houses belonging to the East African Railways and Harbours at the lower railway quarters near the current Kisumu railway station. Thus, although the Asians and Africans lived in the same towns and localities, initially, segregation militated against their interaction, but later, it is their wealth that gave them a higher class and therefore, an edge above the Africans (Omenya, 2010:217). Shivachi,³¹⁵ of Kakamega supports the above argument and states that, generally, Indians in Kakamega lived in isolation from other communities. They mainly lived in family groups within the town centre and in upper class estates such as Milimani and Kenjinco. There may be several reasons why Indians tend to settle in isolation from Africans. One reason is that the Indians treat Africans as second class citizens. They hardly allow Africans except their domestic workers to visit their homes and even enter their houses. Secondly, they tend to treat Africans with suspicion in that they suspect Africans to be thieves; people who would easily steal their property; both in their business premises and homes.³¹⁶

With the realization effect of Africanization, many Asians relocated from the reserves and towns such as Bungoma, Malakisi, Webuye and partly Kakamega to Kisumu. Most of them sold their premises to Africans. In Yala town, Asians relocated to Kisumu and sold their premises to the Africans. It could thus be stated that real integration was never achieved within the housing sector. Integration would mean Africans renting and staying with Asians within the same compound or *landhies* and sharing other housing facilities together. Asians might have probably wished to integrate with Africans in Webuye, Kakamega, Bungoma, Yala, Mumias and Ndere, but the government policies forced them out.

³¹⁴Richard Shivachi, O.I, 2013 is a retired high school teacher. He taught at Kakamega High School in the Western region of Kenya. He is currently a dairy farmer at Sigalala in Western region

³¹⁵Richard Shivachi O.I, 2013 Opcit

³¹⁶Masese, O.I, 2012, Masese is an oral interviewee and a water vendor in Kakamega town of Western of Kenya

Like in Kakamega, housing shortage in Kisumu persisted into the post-independence period. Initially, most Asians were concentrated in the town centre where they conducted business and resided. Typically, former residential spaces in the upper floors of these structures were converted into small office spaces (Anyumba, 1995). Afro-Asian interaction within the residential areas even after independence was not common as such. The Africans who neighboured them complained of inaccessibility to their houses and isolationism. But also, Africans were not able to pay high rents for some houses within the town centre. Mr Pandya,³¹⁷ a former teacher at Kakamega High School argues that what their community believes to be close, involves one being close to his wife or husband and child, and that is why sometimes it was always difficult for Asians to help or assist any person in need. They are therefore individualistic and capitalist.

It is important to note that within these houses, some Afro-Asian intermarriages had started to be witnessed. These Afro-Asian marriages were mostly common among the Muslim Asians and African women. Muslim Asians were more social with Africans than those who practised Hinduism. Either way, if a man or a woman was non-Muslim and got married to a Muslim partner, the non-Muslim partner had to change his/her religion. This depicted constant negotiations and change of identities by Asians. However, the Asian community is strongly opposed to inter-marriage with outsiders, and remains a close-knit unit.³¹⁸ But again, not all members of the Asiatic community are opposed to inter-marriage. It depends on a person's predisposition. For instance, a number of Asians like Rehmat Khan,³¹⁹ have been married to Africans and they are doing well up to date.³²⁰

In Kendu Bay (Nyanza region) for instance, very few Asians remained especially after the Africanization process and this was due to reasons such as being married to African ladies. For example, Abdul Kassam (Khoja) married a local lady hence he became an in-law to the

³¹⁷Pandya Panesar O.I, 2013, is an Asian oral informant involved in construction works in Kisumu town

³¹⁸Rehmat, Khan, O.I, 2013 is an oral interviewee and a great grandson to the Rehmat Khan family in Kisumu.

³¹⁹Rehmat Khan Kherdin was a pioneer entrepreneur and a social worker in Kisumu. He was also a partner in the transport business. He was elected Councillor of Kisumu Town, Milimani Ward in 1963 and served for five years before unsuccessfully contesting the Kisumu Town parliamentary seat in the 1969 elections. *see Maganda (2012)*

³²⁰ Rehmat Khan, O.I 2014 Opcit

Luo of the area. Faraji³²¹ says that *en orwa* (he is our in-law). Marriage was thus a tool of compromise and negotiation on the post-colony. Due to his marriage to a local African woman, Abdul Kassam was forced by the locals (as a condition for marriage) to change his religion from Hindu to Islam since the woman he married was a Muslim; and, Kendu Bay generally was predominated by Luo Muslims. This further depicted constant negotiations and change of identities by Asians and the dynamics of Afro-Asian social relation. In Kisumu, a local resident (living in sigalagala estate) known as mama Kaka had her daughter married to a Sikh.³²² On many occasions, the Sikh would come and visit his mother in law around Sigalagala estate in Kisumu situated along Kisumu Kakamega road.

Muslim Asians were more social with Africans than those who practised Hinduism. For instance, Mohammud Khan, Ogola Malikhan, and Pheroze Khan who were Muslims, attended and prayed together with the locals in their mosque. This is because the Islamic faith preaches the brotherhood of all adherents.³²³ The Muslim Indians who left Kendu Bay gave their houses to the Muslim community so that the money accrued from rent could be used to help in the mosque. However, some of the plots which they owned were sold back to the locals and especially those Africans who worked for them. It is also important to note that the hybridization of Ogola Malikhan's name was a demonstration of the extent to which some of the Asians were integrated and domesticated. Ogola is a Luo name while Malikhan is an Asian name.

6.5.2 Afro-Asian Relations within the Education Sector: Social Integration in the Education Sector

Kenyatta's government was committed to removing inequalities inherited from the colonial period. These were outlined in the Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965 on African Socialism and its Application to Planning in Kenya. It argued that the state had an obligation to ensure equal opportunities to all citizens, and to eliminate all forms of exploitation and discrimination. The state too, must provide needed social services such as education, medical care and social security (Maxon, 1995:126).

³²¹ Faraji, O.I 2012 is an old residents of Kendu bay and stays behind the famous Big Five Hotel in Kendu bay

³²² Odhiambo, George O.I 2015, is a resident of Nairobi Area in Kisumu and a neighbor to Mama Kaka whose daughter was married to a Sikh

³²³ Faraji, O.I., 2006 Opcit (lives in Kendu)

Within one week of independence, the government appointed the Kenya Education Commission, under the chairmanship of Professor S.H. Ominde, to survey the country's existing educational resources and advise the government on future strategy. The commission endorsed integration, with a single curriculum but different fee structures, for Kenya's racially divided school system among other recommendations (Ministry of Education, 1967).

The policy of integration in schools almost bore fruits in Ndere as some of the Asians took their children to Oseno Komolo Primary School in the early periods of independence. These Asian children were taught together with the African children. In the lower classes, African children related well with their Asian counterparts as they went about their classwork and shared items such as pencils and textbooks. Asian children who attended such schools as Oseno Komolo Primary belonged to low/middle class Asians who could not afford to take their children to better Asian schools in Kisumu.³²⁴

In Western Kenya, about five schools opened doors for both African and Indian pupils. Namulata³²⁵ observed that some children of top management Indians working for Panpaper who were past nursery and primary school going age went to Lugulu and Kamusinga High School. After high school, they would travel abroad to pursue further studies. A few of them came back after studies and took up jobs at PanPaper. Most of them would later on be promoted to the position of a superintendent at the expense of Africans who also worked there. Socially, they would take their children to Webuye falls, Kisumu or Kakamega, where they would socialize with other Asians, a very ambivalent situation which characterized the post-colony.

As Adam (2010:251) observed, in a typical Indo-Kenyan company, the management cadres belong to the family circles or people from the same community in a restricted manner (same religious affiliation, same sub-caste, same region of origin), whereas the subordinate managers and intermediate level staff are recruited from wider community circles (belonging to other sub castes but from same regional origin for instance). Though the Indo-Kenyan companies largely employ Africans, they are generally confined to functions of a subordinate nature. With a notable exception of certain Ismaili companies (press or hospitals), it was very

³²⁴Peter Odhiambo, O.I., 2012 An oral informant based in Siaya town and attended Oseno Komolo Primary School in the 1970s

³²⁵Namulata Ben, O.I 2013 Namulata Comes from Webuye and he attended nursery and primary school with some Asian children at panpaper primary school

rare to find Africans recruited to management positions or to a position, which was bound to lead to promotion to a managerial post (Adam, 2010:251). Although Adams observation is true in most of the situations, however, in some professional jobs like banking, a number of Africans have risen to managerial positions, but these are in exclusive cases. The case of Ismaili companies could be explained in terms of Islam as a faith which is anchored on brotherhood and equal treatment to a fellow Muslim.

Kabiru (1982:20) observes that the legacy of the racial differentiation of school opportunities was to be found mainly in the large urban centers, where the former European schools became integrated to cater for the children of the national bourgeoisie, and the former Asian schools to cater for the children of the petit-bourgeoisie. The colonial African schools became schools for the working class and urban poor. In the countryside, the schools were not all that well differentiated, but each district, particularly the rich ones, had three or four schools which catered for the children of the rich peasants, rural merchants and bureaucrats.

In the educational sector, the African children were admitted into the former European and Asian schools, thereby altering the racial composition of schools without fundamental change to the structure of the educational system. This structure has persisted, and has come to reflect class structure of the post-colonial urban Kenya, which would later lead to the production of the new elites of the 1980s and 1990s. Further, the emerging social differentiation in the countryside found its manifestation in the educational system, through different rates of participation and in emergence of different types of schools for different segments of the peasantry. The process of social differentiation of schools is now observable all over the country, at both pre-school, primary and secondary school levels (Kabiru, 1982).

In Kakamega, Asians took their children to both private and public schools. For instance, their children especially boys learnt at Kakamega High School as day scholars, whereas the rest of the African students resided in the school as boarders. Some of the Indian girls also went to Lugulu Girls High School as day scholars. Most successful Indian students joined foreign universities in countries such as India, England and Australia. Just like in Kisumu, some few Indian professional teachers for example, Mr H.M Vaghela, taught economics at Kakamega High School in the 1970s to 80s when he resigned to set up a hardware shop in Kakamega town. Similarly, Mr Patel taught Chemistry at Msingu High School from the 1960s to 1980s,

before retiring to set up a bookshop in the town.³²⁶ Other Indian schools such as the Agakhan Indian Schools in Kakamega, Butere, Mumias and Webuye also opened their doors for African students. Although this open door policy allowed for Afro-Asian mixing and interaction in schools, full Afro-Asian integration was not achieved.

The relocation of the Asians from rural areas of Ndere, Yala, Mumias, Butere and Kendu Bay to Kisumu was an obvious indication of a crisis within the education sector in those areas. However, most important is the fact that apart from the government schools which were inherited from the colonial system, Asians in Kisumu had their own schools managed by various Asian communities. Communities such as Arya Samaj, Ismailia and Sikh owned the Arya group of schools, Aga Khan Primary School and Siri Guru Singh Sabha schools, respectively. In these schools, Asians employed African teachers to teach their children. The Asians' relations with the African teachers depended on the performance of their children and this either enhanced it or diminished the relationship. When their children performed well, Asians would reward the teachers and sometimes a teacher would be allowed to give extra tuition to the Asian children in their houses.³²⁷

The Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965³²⁸ compelled many Asian schools to open up their doors to Africans. The Asian government school, later Kisumu Boys started admitting Africans. In the 1970s, Africans who attended this school were usually bright students. In class, they intermingled with their Asian counterparts and helped each other to solve complex problems in any subject. Some Asians also brought Asian food to their African friends in school.³²⁹ Towards the end of the Kenyatta era, Asians who had acquired Kenyan citizenship started building schools for commercial purposes.

In these schools, they employed Africans as teachers, secretaries and general workers. For instance DHT Secondary School, Siri Guru Singh Sabha Secondary School currently New

³²⁶Mwinamu Jared, O.I, 2013 is an oral Interviewee based in Kakamega district of Western Kenya. He is a retired police officer

³²⁷Tieni, O.I., 2007, Tieni, O.I 2012, Tieni Achieng is a nursery school teacher at Arya samaj Primary School in Kisumu, town

³²⁸The Sessional Paper no 10 of 1965 was a government policy paper prepared in 1965. In This paper, the government of Kenya decided to adopt African Socialism as an ideology and examine its application to Planning in Kenya. African Socialism is a term describing an African political and economic system that is positively African, not being imported from any country or being a blueprint of any foreign ideology

³²⁹Obeid Olingo, O.I., 2006 is a former student of Kisumu Boys High School and schooled with a number of Asian children in the same school.

Kisumu High School and Muslim Secondary School are some of the schools which were started by Asians in Kisumu and which admit both Asians and Africans. A number of Asians as well as Africans work in these schools as teachers imparting knowledge to both Asian and African students. Asians liked in-door games such as table tennis, scrabble and other games such as hockey, lawn tennis and swimming and, therefore, interaction with Africans in such schools also revolved around these sports (Omenya, 2010:220).

Unlike in politics Afro-Asian relations in education and housing in Kakamega, Webuye, Bungoma, Ndere, Yala and Kisumu were mutually beneficial. This is because schools such as Yala Township, New Kisumu High School, DHT Secondary School, Kisumu Boys High School, Agakhan Primary Schools in Kakamega, Rotary High School in Kakamega among others, came through the initiative of the Asian communities wherever they were, but later, the schools opened their doors to Africans. But more important is the fact that almost all the Asian schools in Yala, Kisumu and Ndere were later owned by Africans under the new political dispensation. Integration in schools was therefore partly achieved during the Kenyatta era. Allowing Africans to learn alongside Asian children marked another phase of dismantling the legacy of colonial racial structures and barriers, which characterized Afro-Asian relations before independence (Omenya, 2010: 221).

Conceptualizing migrants' identities as constantly negotiated in relation to multiple societies and places enable us according to Ehrkamp (2005:348), to think beyond dichotomies and mutually exclusive notions of local and transnational ties, and to recognize immigrants as agents who are able to forge their belonging and multiple attachments. Van Hear (1998) similarly argues that diasporic identities are not deterritorialized, but they are connected with multiple allegiances to place. According to him, an individual's migratory biography or a community's collective migration history is likely to include quite a number of different kinds of movement. Cultural capital is always embodied, whereas social capital is locally embedded. People are positioned according to their accumulated capital. Pretton, (1977:167) avers that identities and boundary maintenance are social constructions with consequences of inclusion and exclusion, but identity will continue to be a matter of local (the place where people live), network (the ways people interact) and memory (the understandings which are sustained and re-created over time). This process of inclusion and exclusion are based on power relations, which are explained by different forms of capital. This power relation is what

characterized Afro-Asian relations in the post Independent Kenya, and which helped in defining whether that relation was conflictual or mutually beneficial.

The Kenyatta government was not so much accommodative to the Asians. This could be explained through the various policies (Africanisation policy and the Sessional paper no 10 1965) which the new post-independent Kenyan state put in place in order empower Africans economically. This approach heightened the Afro-Asian contestations over the plural economic spaces, which emerged after independence. It is true, that Asians detested Africanization policy and a number of them also refused to take Kenyan citizenship. It is therefore important to see how their relationship with Africans under the new leadership of president Moi unfolded from 1978 up to the year 20002.

6.6. Comparative Aspects of Afro-Asians Relations in the Kenyatta Era: Socio-Economic Contestations within the Chaotic Plural Spaces of Western and Nyanza Regions.

The Africanization process brought a number of changes as far as Afro-Asian relation was concerned in the post independent Kenya state. First and foremost, the Africanization process distorted the commercial monopoly of Asians both in Nyanza and Western provinces of Kenya. This undertaking did not go down well with the Asians and it aroused conflict and tension between Asian owners of properties that were earmarked for Africanization. In Western Kenya, unlike in Nyanza Province, very few streets were earmarked as non-citizen area. This could be attributed to the different nature of the town physical planning, since Kisumu was administratively well planned compared to Kakamega, Webuye and Bungoma. Mbembe (2001:108) argues that conflict arises from the fact that the postcolony is chaotically pluralistic, and that it is in practice impossible to create a single, permanently stable system out of all the signs, images and markers current in the postcolony; this is why they are constantly being shaped and reshaped as much by the rulers as by the ruled, in attempts to rewrite mythologies of power.

In both the provinces, instances of takeovers of Asian businesses were witnessed. For instance, in Kakamega, businesses owned by O.H Vithlani (outgoing trader) were taken over and allocated to Mr Sale Musungu (incoming trader). Similarly, business owned by Lalji Govind and sons was taken over by a Mr Kamau Murage, while M.G Modi and Sons business was allocated to Mr Brown Kisiang'ani. In Bungoma District, business owned by Mandalia Drapers was allocated to Mr Francis Asikoyo while business enterprise owned by C.N Mistry was allocated to Mr Thomasa Muraya Gitare (Western Province Annual Report 1973). In

Nyanza too, apart from Asian traders being denied access and doing business in the citizen only areas, some of their businesses were given to Africans through the Trade Licensing Act. In Nyanza, especially in areas of Ndere, Yala and Kendu, there was a high movement of Asians from these rural areas as compared to the Western region. Although there were cases of takeovers in Western province, in some places like Ndere and Kendu Bay in the Nyanza region, some Asians voluntarily decided to give out their properties to Africans whom they had closely worked with.

It should be noted that industrial production was in the hands of Asians. However, there was a marked variance between what was manufactured in Western Kenya and Nyanza Province. For instance, towards the end of the first decade of Kenyatta era, Western province continued with the production of sugar through Asian owned Jaggery factories while in Nyanza, established sugarcane factories like Miwani was already in existence. But again, major sugar agents were Asians. Many of them stayed in Kisumu even though they had their businesses located in Kakamega. Contrary to Nyanza province, a number of African sugar agents in Western Kenya worked as proxies of the Asians. Jaggery factories sprung up at an enormous rate in the Western region compared to the Nyanza region with Asians taking the management role. Although jaggery was highly produced in Western Kenya, the marketing outlet for the products of jaggery factories were in Nyanza province with Kisumu taking the largest share at 23%.

It is also important to note that illegal Afro-Asian business partnerships that were witnessed in the transport sector in Nyanza province during the postwar period repeated itself in the Western region, where African sugar agents worked in cohort with the Indians against the government policy. Although this illegal partnership happened, there were clear cases where Africans and Asians collaborated in the distribution of sugar. Kenyatta era was characterized by a number of similarities in the two regions of study. For instance, in an attempt to uplift the economic wellbeing and development of African traders, certain boards such as the Kakamega Trade Development Joint Board and the Kisumu Trade Development Joint Board were formed in Western and Nyanza regions respectively. Similarly, Asians in both Western and Nyanza regions were served with quit notices. Overall, the process of Africanization was slow in Western province as compared to the Nyanza region.

While paper production was the climax of industrial production in Western Kenya, in Nyanza province, textile industry thrived alongside sugar industries. However, later on, cooperative

societies like Shiambere and Mumias Cooperative Union would briefly own and manage the sugar industries in Western Kenya. This was not the case in Nyanza province. However, when the state decided to claim a stake in the sugar industry after independence, it went ahead and jointly established Muhoroni and SONY sugar in Nyanza province and entrusted their management to an Asian firm called Mehta Group International. Comparatively, the state encouraged the establishment of a sugar factory in Mumias and Nzoia in Bungoma. The management of these sugar factories was left in the hands of Bookers and Tate International, as well as, the French Techniscare respectively. Bookers and Tate International, as well as, French Techniscare are European companies based in the UK and France respectively. Although these European based companies were responsible in managing the two sugar firms (Mumias and Nzoia sugar), the Kenya government remained the major shareholder.

The process of Africanization took away ownership of businesses and control of the economy from the hands of the Asians. However, it is apparent to note that Asians renegotiated their presence within the economic spaces of Nyanza and Western Kenya by engaging the Kenyan government into joint industrial ventures. It is through these ventures that companies such as PanPaper Mills in Webuye, Muhoroni sugar, SONY sugar, the Molasses Plant and the Kisumu Cotton Mills came to occupy the postcolonial economic spaces of Western and Nyanza Provinces respectively.

In terms of housing, a certain pattern emerged where a number of Asians working in Kakamega opted to stay in Kisumu probably due to shortage of housing for Asians in the region. In schools, the process of racial integration was prioritized and enforced in both Western and Nyanza regions. A number of schools both in Western and Nyanza regions opened up their admission to Asians and Africans. For instance, Kisumu Boy, Lugulu Girls and Kamusinga High School in Nyanza and Western regions respectively both Africans and Asians were admitted. Similarly, in these schools, Asian and African were employed as teachers.

Conclusion

This chapter examined comparative aspects of Afro-Asian relations in the post independent Kenyatta era. It was observed that during this period, 1963- 1978, nothing much changed in terms of structures as European colonialism was Africanized, making Kenyatta the first black governor (East Africa Standard, 14/12/ 2008). This ‘independence’ was actually the

Africanization of colonialism. The Africans, as Mbembe (2001:103) puts it, sought to institutionalize themselves and to achieve legitimation and domination.

It has been argued that the central focus of Kenyatta era was on the Africanization process as an economic policy and a massive expansion of educational facilities that went beyond racial segregation, which the government was keen on eradicating. This was enforced through the KNTC and the ICDC through their local branches in Western and Nyanza regions. Other boards such the Kakamega Trade Development Joint Board and the Kisumu Trade Development Joint Board were also formed in Western and Nyanza regions respectively, to improve African trade in the two regions. Although the Africanization policy was meant to achieve the objective of putting ownership of trade and commerce in the hands of Africans, the policy failed to realize this goal as Asians circumvent the laid down legislations and operated under the cover of Africans through illegal partnerships. Nevertheless, in some areas like in Kisumu, there were cases of formal joint Afro-Asian ventures like witnessed in the banking sector. Despite the fact that the government was keen in Africanizing all sectors of the economy, the Asians managed to come back to take hold of the economy of the two region through joint ventures by the Kenya government. This is how Industries such as the PanPaper, Muhoroni sugar, SONY sugar and KICOMI came into focus in Western and Nyanza provinces respectively. Many other undertakings were done by both Africans and Asians together; some legally and others illegally, especially the distribution of sugar and management of jaggeries.

Socially, in the Kenyatta era, the process of Afro-Asian social integration was encouraged in schools and residential places. However, this was not fully achieved as anticipated. This could be attributed to the racial notion that the colonial government had placed with regards to some residential areas since many poor Africans could not afford the rents paid to occupy such houses. It has been concluded that, although the Kenyatta era emphasized and encouraged Africanization policy, this policy became a source of conflict and tension among Africans and Asians, which it intended to integrate, leading to a situation where Asians became a source of resentment. The more they were resented, the more they became isolated and the more they became isolated the more they were resented. This act was coupled with the fear of class dispossession, which characterized Afro-Asian relations during this period. In the next chapter, the changing trend of Asian identity and migration to Kenya in the post Kenyatta era is examined.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE CHANGING TREND OF ASIAN IDENTITY AND MIGRATION TO KENYA IN THE MOI ERA 1978-2002

Abstract

This chapter explores the changing nature of Indian migration into Kenya and how it has shaped Afro-Asian relations in the Moi era. It argues that a new generation of Asians, commonly referred to as “rockets”, took a centre stage putting them in conflict with the older Asian generation in Kenya. This scenario also took a centre stage in the neighbouring state of Uganda where Asians were given an amnesty after their expulsion in the 1970s. Although this group of Asian ‘rockets’ represented an emergence of a transnational identity, it also depicted the dynamics of Afro-Asian relations as a result of globalization. It is argued that the political nexus between president Moi and the Asians after President Kenyatta’s rule gave them an opportunity to carry out their business without fear. This nexus also positioned and influenced Asians political participation in the political spaces of Nyanza. The Moi era thus witnessed major investments by Asian families within the economy of Nyanza and Western provinces of Kenya. However, the level of economic investment was greater in Nyanza as compared to Western province. Conclusively, it is evident that there was an emergence of a group of Asian and African elite who benefited from an integrated education system after independence.

7.1 The Transnational Identity (ies) of the Asian New Generation: A Regional Context of Uganda

New landscapes of recognition for South Asians rely on both old and new problems. First, renewed South Asian migration and re-integration into Uganda is a result of emerging geopolitical dynamics such as South-South economic cooperation between African and Asian countries. The re-integration of South Asians in Ugandan national territory is characterized by securitization practices that animate state governance and circulate within and among Ugandan Asian and new South Asian communities. As the state seeks to maximize foreign investment from “Asian” investors, it also promises bodily (corporeal) security to racialized South Asian minorities, who wish to minimize their economic and social risks and maximize their benefits under the current regime of governance (Hundle, 2013:3). Thus, borrowing from Aihwa Ong’s scholarship (1996), it suffices it to demonstrate that South Asians are engaged in “flexible citizenship” practices, in which their choices and strategies to settle in or

move on from Uganda are largely determined by global and economic criteria in which migrants maintain transnational networks of affiliation. In the Ugandan context, however, flexible citizenship practices among Ugandan Asians and new migrants were inflected by the historical politics of insecurity. Ugandan Asian and South Asian community builders attempted to balance their own interests of long-term settlement in the country with the motivations of more transient migrants—all the while attempting to re-construct harmonious African-Asian relations in a post-expulsion context (Hundle, 2013:2).

The status of Ugandan Asians and South Asians in President Yoweri Museveni's Uganda remains ambiguous. Although Museveni officially invited displaced Ugandan Asians to return to the country in 1994, he did so without an official restitution of formal and national citizenship. Rather, the President asked former Ugandan Asians to retrieve their assets—the homes, businesses, commercial estates and farms, and religious and communal sites—that had been possessed from them by Idi Amin's government in 1973. Most Ugandan Asians in the diaspora did not come back. Some individuals who remained were able to repossess their properties on their behalf, becoming major real estate tycoons in the city. However, many Ugandans continue to live in, own, or rent former Ugandan Indian properties; some were given homes and managed to retain them over years of political instability and violence (Hundle, 2013:12).

In contemporary Uganda, the re-integration of South Asians in the country is intimately connected to a discursive construction of new African-Asian relationships that are part of an ideological project of South-Southism in Uganda. For example, by re-signifying the South Asian body politic as a historical and national good to Ugandans, the 21st century Ugandan State recasts the Africanization policies of Idi Amin and his 1970s Economic war against South Asians as impediments to an explicit program of multi-racial and (neo) liberal economic progress, modernity, and freedom. Significantly, Ugandan Asian business families who returned were able to legitimize themselves as contributors to the nation through discourses of shared colonial oppression with Ugandan Africans, the experience of the expulsion, and claims to an Asian-African (East African Asian) and Ugandan identity. Economic claims about their role in Ugandan national development and high proportion of tax contribution to the state allowed them to further legitimize their presence via their economic activities. In sum, Ugandan Asians who remained, and those who returned, view themselves as a distinct class of African entrepreneurs markedly different from new Indian

businessmen and other migrants from the South Asian subcontinent (Hundle, 2013:31).

Community leaders estimate that between 20-25,000 “new” South Asian migrants (traders, laborers, expatriate employees and their “dependent” Indian wives and children) live and work in and around Kampala and in small towns across the country. Leaders have petitioned the government to conduct a census of “People of Indian Origin” (P.I.O.) for several years without success. Significantly, migrant Indian and Pakistani nationals outnumber Ugandan Asian returnees, who number around two thousand individuals.

Thus, the demographic composition of today’s South Asians include a small and wealthy class of “returnees” and a predominantly lower-class population of South Asian economic migrants. Class divisions and labor occupation hierarchies are strongly pronounced among new South Asian communities. Ugandan Asians often refer to them as the “first generation” in order to signify the reconstruction of Asian social, political, and economic life after the events of the Ugandan Indian expulsion in 1972. Formal and informal traders, petty entrepreneurs, and the unemployed are regarded as “newcomers” or “fortune-seekers.” In an even more colloquial (and perhaps pejorative) manner, “newcomers” are described as “rockets,” “parachuters” or “astronauts” because they are migrants from the South Asian subcontinent who “land” in East Africa by chance or choice, often “flying off” to other (final) destinations. This evocative terminology of space-age travel signifies the intense mobility and flexibility of migrants. Indeed, the figure of the “rocket” is central to East African Asian folk models of South Asian presence in East Africa (Hundle, 2013:254). This mobility justifies the need to examine the demographic structure of Asians in Kenya during the Moi era.

In overall, inhabitants of Asian origin, Kenyan or otherwise amounted to a total of 89,185 in 1989, i.e. 0.42% of the total population of Kenya. The population was about 2.14 million at the time of the census. Considering a growth rate of 2.5% per year (possibly an inflated rate), the Asians should be at most 114,000 living in Kenya in 1999 and 120,000 in 2001. This was against a total population of 876,491 Africans in Bungoma, 603, 422 Africans in Kakamega (Western region) and 504, 359 Africans in Kisumu and 480,184 Africans in Siaya (Nyanza region) as per the 1999 census. According to the 1989 Census, most of the Asians (53000, i.e. 59%) were Kenyans. The largest number of Asian foreigners was the Indians (29000, i.e. 33%). There were 112 males for 100 females among Asians, the figure being lower for Indians (105%) than for Kenyan Asians (113%), Pakistanis (115%) and other Asians (137%)

see (Bocquire and Central Bureau of Statistics, 2002). Most Asians living in urban districts resided in the two main cities of Kenya; Nairobi (45000, i.e. 3.4% of the total population of the city) or Mombasa (25000, i.e. 5.3% of the total population, the highest percentage in Kenya). Only 6,000 lived in other urban districts (Kisumu, Nakuru). The structure by nationality in Nairobi and Nakuru was comparable to that of the entire country, whereas in Mombasa, most Asians were Kenyans (76%), as was the case in Kisumu (70%).

7.2 The Moi-Era and the Dynamics of Afro-Asian Relations

The Moi era began in earnest from 1978 up to the year 2002 after the death of Kenyatta in 1978. During this era, a new type of South Asian migrant population emerged especially in the late 1970s and 1980s composed of well educated, highly professional and affluent South Asians who made their ways to United States, Canada and Australia. These highly educated migrants were able to maintain extensive ties with South Asia (or East Africa) such as marriage arrangements, kinship networks, property and religious affiliations. Transnational linkages therefore played an increasing role in Kenyan Asian everyday life (Herzig, 2006:9). These populations formed the second, third and even the fourth generation of the Asian population in Kenya. Since the rise of globalization, Kenyan Asians have increasingly become a transnational community. As Rasna Warah (1998) puts it, a unique feature is their 'triple heritage'; they are connected not only with East Africa and India as their ancestral places of origin, but also with Western countries, particularly Britain through colonial connections. These links result in facilitating further migration. Transnational networks have aided the movement of many Kenyan Asians to Canada, USA and the UK.

Moliner, (2007:21) argues that a South Asian identity has emerged forcefully among the second and third generation of Asians that transcends religious, ethnic or national boundaries. As in the case with most minority identity constructions, the South Asians (or Asians) label is in Kenya as much an ascribed as an asserted one. Indeed, Kenyan Asian 'identity' as experienced especially by the youth, is a product of racism, and of their reactions to it. But beside this reactive aspect, there is a positive identification to this category between the second and third generation, based on the socio-economic commonalities alluded to above, on the rejection of the cleavages of the parent generation, seen as irrelevant and on the perception of cultural similarities. These cultural similarities (food, dress, and social norms) are given a new transnational dimension by the commoditization and diffusion of a diasporic culture, through the media of cinema, television and music (Moliner, 2007:17). In the diaspora,

particularly for the youth, the borders and cleavages inherited from partition of India are increasingly meaningless, and are being superseded by a common South Asian identity, produced by migration, or more regional ones such as Panjabyat- A name of the language revitalization movement of the Punjab language. These transnational cultural flows became a foil against which postcolonial identity could be fashioned, critiqued and debated.

In undetermined proportions, the volume of the diaspora would likely increase in time by recent immigration of young Indians who, adding to the normal flow of spouses ‘recruited’ in India, manage to escape border restrictions.

Coming more often from families far related to Asians, these new arrivals belonged for the most part to that big generation of educated but unemployed youth from a part of the world that has multiplied by ten its university training capacity. Benefiting from a higher level of qualification than their African counterparts (particularly in computer science and technical, techno-commercial and management training), they came to somehow ‘replace’ the young Asian elites who opted to emigrate from Africa. Their presence was notable in the banking, communication, international hoteliering and import-export sectors. These expatriates of the new economy were ready to accept lower salaries from employers and were rather badly received by the older lineage. They didn’t seem, according to their detractors, to have had plans to settle in Kenya. It is however, impossible to prejudice the future of this new immigration wave, half way between cooperation and immigration. If it is certain that some of them considered Kenya as a step in their eventual international career, others (having learnt the Swahili language and sometimes even married locally) seemed to be undecided (Adams, 2010:222). In Kisumu, anxiety characterized the disposition of a “rocket.” Rockets, like other African migrants and refugees in Kisumu, passed through temporalities of legality and illegality. A number of them struggled to acquire work permits and long stay visas. However, the main difference between them and other illegal African migrants was that they were racialized as “Asians” and foreigners thus perfecting Afro-Asian tension within the Nyanza region (Hundle, 2013).

The emergence of this second and now third generation has given rise to a composite and hybrid type of identification as Kenyan Asian. This identity label which transcends the ethno-religious and national boundaries associated with home societies and the parents’ generation has become a category ascribed by the dominant society. It is reappropriated by the youth through the creation and consumption of a common diasporic culture (Patel, 1979:20). These

new South Asian migrants are not just occupying positions of administrators, clerks and educators, as was the norm for such ethnic groups during the British Empire. Today, a sizeable number of Indian expatriate professionals render highly useful services in various sectors of the economy. For example, they often take up management positions in a range of industries from car-manufacturing to pharmaceuticals.

With this new wave of Asian immigrants, community structures were additionally weakened by social relations increasingly being taken up between people of the same occupational or educational background and thus, the 'established' Asians in general and particularly the 'professionals' formed their social relations and networks in social clubs. The 'established' Asians developed a specific East African identity and they tended to dissociate themselves from recent South Asian immigrants who are derogatorily called 'rockets' (Herzig, 2006:xi). This identity has produced new spaces of identification and belonging which Herzig (2006:262) calls the shifting boundary of generation. The boundary 'generation' implies differences in many aspects. However, this is a boundary, which has been maintained for a long time for more or less passively: the boundary of generation has produced insiders and outsiders; for example, with regard to citizenship. It reflects in many aspects the degree of integration to Kenyan society. That the Kenyan Asians have integrated to a large extent becomes obvious with the recently emerging boundary between the 'rockets' and the 'established' Kenyan Asians. The 'established' Kenyan Asians are not willing to share everything they have achieved with the recent immigrants. Since Kenyan Asians have placed their identities over the generations in Africa, they have developed a distinct Kenyan Asian identity.

Since the 1980s, migration to Kenya started again from both South Asia and the West (i.e. the UK or North America). While the latter are considered as 'home comers' by the 'established' Kenyan Asians, the former are ascribed as outsiders. As stated earlier, the recent immigrants from India are abusively called 'rockets' (Rocket phenomenon), due to their speed, and un-Africanized ways of life. They speak and walk too fast and only want to make money in Kenya. Therefore, a new boundary has risen and is now drawn within the [Asian] communities (Herzig, 2006:180). By 1997, about 40,000 of Asian immigrants had entered Kenya and this category of people came on temporary work permit and did not seek permanent citizenship (Gupta, 2010:43). They thus constituted a new crop of emerging Asian families in the 21st Century.

7.3 The Moi Regime and Afro-Asian Economic Relations in Nyanza and Western Kenya

The Moi administration allowed Kenyan Asians to be at the leading edge of the economy (Himbara, 1994). Some Kenyan Asians did spectacularly well with government favours and partnerships with well-placed politicians close to Moi. Asian wealth was visible and it aroused growing popular resentment because the wealth of some Asians was suspected to have been acquired dubiously through cooperation with some functionaries of the Moi regime. A variety of factors drew many Kenyan Asians close to the regime. Their historical sense of political vulnerability and their general absence of political allies led many of them to believe that they must support whatever regime that was in power for reasons of protection and advance (Holmquist, 2002:10). Under this circumstance, the Asian elite found themselves closer to Moi not only as a way of assuring him of their political support, but as a means of gaining protection from the Moi regime in case of their conflict with Africans. Although this patronage by Moi over Asians was for self-interest, however, it was important since it spurred industrialization in areas of Western and Nyanza provinces as Asian elite and businessmen got licenses and protection to operate industries and other businesses within the two regions under study. The Moi-Asian nexus was important to his leadership, since President Moi's relationship with the Nyanza political leadership was marred with suspicion.

During the Moi era, Asians continued to extend their supremacy not only in the retail and distributive sectors, but also in practically every aspect of the economy (Finance, May 1997:7). Their investment thrived in manufacturing and the service sector (hotels, banks, wholesale trade and construction). This was driven by local demand originating from the cash crop boom from African smallholdings in the 1960s to the 1980s (Chege, 2004:17).

McCann's (2011:117) observation of the Moi-Asian Nexus within the postcolonial economic space of Kenya is however different. He argues that the ethnicisation of Kenya's political economy (built on its colonial predecessor and post-war development foundations) gained momentum immediately after Kenyan independence, with Jomo Kenyatta being accused of patronizing his Kikuyu support base with land and advantage in industrializing the economy. Kenyatta's presidential successor, Daniel Arap Moi, despite early rhetoric to the contrary, set about dismantling Kikuyu dominance to shore up his own political base (especially following the 1982 coup attempt) and boost material opportunities. In this transition, Moi skillfully mobilized certain Kenyan Asian (and some Indian) capitalists to his ends within a political economy, in which Asians and emergent Kikuyu capitalists sat uneasily together. For

example, Kenyatta had attempted to protect ‘indigenous’ (largely Kikuyu) business concerns from competitors by forcing Asians out of trade (read Africanization) in certain commodities and into manufacturing. Given the relative paucity of non-Kikuyu capital in the same environments as elite Kikuyu business, it seemed that utilization of a historically unpopular, but economically astute minority (Asians) provided Moi with a means for personal aggrandizement and ostracized certain competitors, while cleverly diverting blame for economic failure and graft from himself and his cadres. Nevertheless, in general sense, Kenyan Asians certainly became typecast as close to Moi and were perceived to impede the advance of Kikuyu capital in the 1980s-90s (McCann, 2011:117).

In spite of living for so long in Africa, indigenous population often considered Indians as aliens from racial, political and economic point of view. They were targeted by populist black politicians for their alleged disloyalty to the countries of their adoption and fell victim to ethnic motivated crimes and harassment. However, the degree of animosity was mutual. This mutual perception of Africans and Indians was to a great extent tangled with prejudices and distrust. From the late 1980s, the government abandoned its early policy of clamping down on ‘Asian’ business. A new more liberal and encouraging economic policy impacted a lot on a relatively successful economic development of Kenya. Asians exploited this liberal economic space by establishing a series of businesses within Nyanza and Western regions of Kenya (Vyacheslav, 2010:260/1). In these liberal, chaotic and plural spaces of Nyanza and Western regions, all sorts of business activities and practices were undertaken.

Asians were known to hoard goods in anticipation of increase of prices of goods during the Moi era. Although hoarding of goods was a feature of the Asian trade practices, it was also a reflection of Moi’s failing economic policies, which undermined production and distribution of essential commodities. Such malpractices increased hostility between the Asians and Africans to an extent that, whenever a riot erupted in the towns, Asian shops suffered great loss as a result of looting by Africans. This was, for instance, evidenced in Kisumu during the 1982 attempted coup when Asian shops were the main targets of looting along the Oginga Odinga Street in Kisumu³³⁰ (*The Weekly Review* 26, 1982:11). This pogrom targeting Asian shops by Africans was a protest to the exploitative and speculative tendencies that were

³³⁰Odongo, Philip, O.I., 2013, is one of the oral interviewees who witnessed the looting of Asian shops in Kisumu. This looting was a sign of bad emotions that Africans had on Asians whom they perceived as exploiters. The attempted coup was organized by a section of Air force Officers in collaboration with some civilians.

practised by Asians. But they also depicted African resistance to Asian domination in trade, which continued to flourish during the Moi era. The Indian community was more exposed because of its location in the centre of the town. Since they happened to have more shops in the town centre, they suffered the most because they became victims not because of religion, background or creed, but because they epitomized highest level of economic inequality within the Nyanza region at a time when the rate of unemployment and poverty levels was high (Prakash, 1990:171).

Such hatred and hostility prompted the Asian community to organize for a delegation to meet the president. In 1982, a delegation drawn from all Asians in Kenya's major towns made a courtesy call on President Moi. Aware of the unease which had developed among the Asian community, the President assured the delegation that his government appreciated that the Asians, along with other investors had played a critical role in the country's economy and assured them that Kenya was committed to the constitutional safeguards which protected private property as well as the ideals of a plural society in which there was no discrimination of any kind (Omenya, 2010:223).

Moi reminded them that the government was doing everything to encourage investment and business confidence in the country (*The Weekly Review*, August 1983). The statement by the Head of State reassured Asians of the security of their investment. It also strengthened Moi-Asian nexus as Asians started to identify strongly with the President and the ruling party, KANU.

During the period of Moi's rule, 1978-2002, many Asians were no longer living in Ndere, Kendu Bay and Yala. In Kendu Bay, the only Indian doing business there apart from Kassam Abdul, did not stay there but commuted from Oyugis where he resided. The Asian community reasserted themselves by investing in Nyanza and more so in Kisumu in areas such as construction, real estate and outlets including supermarkets, banks, hotels, housing and the manufacturing sector. Nearly all the local entrepreneurs within the town belonged to the Asian community (Olima, 1993, Anyumba, 1995). Apart from textiles, metal works, engineering, weaving, spinning and soap making, which were of Asian interest, among the first large-scale manufacturing to be established in Nyanza Province, many more Asian industrial interests continued to emerge (Omenya 2010:224).

In Western Kenya, by 1979, an Asian investment, West Kenya Sugar Company Ltd. (WEKSOL) was incorporated with an Open Pan Boiling System (OPS) for producing Mill White Sugar. The technology was chosen in line with government policy for the creation of rural employment and development. The company is specialized in food manufacturing, sugar craft supplies, farming, sugar estates, industrial services and business activities. West Kenya Sugar Company worked extremely closely with the local community, employing 900 members of staff and supporting over 53,000 farmers. It relied and continued to rely on its partnership with local farmers to produce the raw materials and in turn, provided them with support. The company had a very transparent pricing formula, which encouraged a lot of local farmers to work with them as they got a fair return on their labour. As Rai³³¹ explained; “Our price is based on the actual price of the sugar and the farmers receive 51 percent of the sugar price. This bolsters our relationship with the African farmers because, as the prices increase, they feel a direct benefit. Similarly, when the price of sugar falls, we share the cost between us and that develops a solid business relationship and mutual understanding; we are a partnership” (*African Business Review*, 2011).

Despite the fact that West Kenya is a heavily populated region, it was impossible for West Kenya Sugar Company to develop its own nucleus farm. Consequently, the company sourced 100 per cent of its sugar cane from small scale African out-growers living in Kakamega and its environs. The company provided them with the know-how, the tools and supported them to make the most of the land they cultivated. Rai³³² further states that “Owing to the high levels of poverty in the country, a lot of farmers would be unable to invest in sugar cane without our assistance, so we work together. All the farmers need to do is provide the land and we will provide the rest of the services, including ploughing, harrowing, furrowing, provision of the sugar cane seed, provision of fertilizers, and all the technical help required to yield a successful crop. The company also provided all the cane development services and deducted their service cost at the time of harvest.” It is the farmer’s responsibility to develop a credible labour force; however West Kenya Sugar Company provided financial advances to those who could not afford to pay wages in advance of harvest (*African Business Review*, 2011). This undertaking provided an avenue for mutual Afro-Asian relations, which was beneficial to both Africans and Asians. The company is very proactive in terms of staff training and

³³¹ Rai, is one of the managers at West Kenya Sugar Company

³³² Rai, Ibid

development and as part of its staff development, it took some African staff to India for further training considering the fact that India is more advanced in terms of sugar production.

West Kenya Sugar Company also committed a lot of resources to educating local African farmers about best business practice, equipping them with the skills to turn over greater profit. Although majority of farmers in West Kenya region were afraid to take loans, the company provided them with the knowledge and confidence to take on a manageable amount of loans to enable them increase their long-term profitability and business prospects (*African Business Review*, 2011). This move was both beneficial to the Asian owners of the factory and the African sugar growers in Western Kenya.

As part of the company's corporate social responsibility, the company was involved in road development, totaling about 300km of rural roads within its zone which allowed it to manage its supply chain more successfully. The development of local infrastructure also provided the company and the local community as a whole with greater business opportunities as it made the area more accessible. The company injects Kshs 30 million (\$366,000) into the local communities' economy every week from sugar cane purchase alone, not taking into consideration wages, contracts and other multiplier business. The above foregoing is an evidence of Afro-Asian economic relationship and integration at a local level. It is evident that the sugar sector provided an economic space, where both Asians and Africans negotiated for their economic interest. Together with the Butali Sugar Company, also managed by Asians, the two companies contributed immensely to the economy of western province with high African population (*African Business Review*, 2011).

Afro-Asian relations in the Moi era were unique in the sense that many Africans had acquired education and professional skills compared to the colonial and Kenyatta periods when most of them were employed as domestic servants and unskilled labourers. This educational background made Africans to be employed in Asian firms as professionals such as doctors, engineers, mechanics, teachers and accountants among others. Afro-Asian relations within these categories of people were, therefore, different from the Afro-Asian relations that existed between the Asian *dukawallahs* and the local Africans in the village. This is because the Asians recognised the professionalism of the people they employed (Omenya, 2010:225). In most cases, relations between African professionals and their Asian employers were often more or less equal since African professionals knew their rights and would always negotiate

for pay commensurate to the services offered.³³³ The Moi-Asian nexus also partly contributed to the rising demography of Asians in Kenya.

Indian population having fallen to 78,600 in 1979 and still declining following the Asian pogrom in 1982, the number of the Indian population later rose to stabilize at about 120,000 of which, probably two thirds acquired Kenyan citizenship. This demographic increase was greatly due to the favour that the former president Daniel Arap Moi accorded Indians, who encouraged the tacit alliance and meant to put an end to the financial power of the Gikuyu neo-bourgeoisie. That is how in 1986, a number of Indian merchants who had been dispossessed, converted to industry by acquiring various subsidiaries of multinationals established in Kenya at the beginning of the 1960s, and sold cheaply by their owners due to the bad political situation in Africa. The kindness and generosity of the new power towards Indian economic interests was also the opportunity for non-scrupulous financiers to undertake fraudulent banking operations. Marked by some shocking scandals, this period of recent history seriously tainted the reputation of the Asian community as a whole, as far as their relation was concerned (Adams, 2010:211). This would later on increase Afro-Asian hatred and tension between the two communities.

The figures (see table 8 and 9 below) indicate that Asians were still a minority compared to Africans in terms of their population. However, there was a tremendous increase in the number of Asians in Kenya towards the end of the Moi era. However, due to lack of categorization of the population census by race in different regions by the the Central Bureau of Statistics in the 1989 and 1999 census, it was difficult to make a comparison between say the total number of Asians in Nyanza against the total number of Africans. Nevertheless, demographers argue that the smaller the number of a minority group, the higher the chances of integration and vice versa. However, this was not fully achieved in Nyanza and the Western regions considering the fact that there are other variables such religion, language and culture, which also contribute to the process of integration. Such variables cannot be underestimated.

³³³ Odhiambo, O.I., 2012

Table 8 Showing the Total Population of Kenyans by Race in Census Years as at 1989

	1948	1962	1969	1979	1989	
African	5,251,120	8,365,942	10,733,202	15,101,540	21,252,861	
Asian	97,687	176,613	139,037	78,600	89,185	
European	29,660	55,759	40,593	39,901	34,560	
Arab	24,174	34,048	27,886	39,146	41,595	
Other	3,325	3,901	1,987	67,874	25,435	
Total Non-Africans	154,846	270,321	209,503	225,521	190,775	
Total	5,405,966	8,636,263	10,942,705	15,327,061	21,443,636	

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics (1995)

Table 9: An extract showing Population by Area and Density by Province and Districts

Kenya Population Census, 1999

NYANZA PROVINCE	MALES	FEMALES	TOTALS	No HHs	Land Area	Density (Person per sq.Km)
Rachuonyo/Kendu	145,793	161,333	307,126	68,152	945	325
Kisumu	248,735	255,624	504,359	123,341	919	549
Siaya	220,997	259,187	480,184	117,955	1,520	316
WESTERN PROVINCE						
Bungoma	425,957	450,534	876,491	174,838	2,069	424
Kakamega	290,343	313,079	603,422	125,901	1,395	433
Butere/Mumias	227,043	249,885	476,928	107,563	939	508

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics (2002)

In Western province especially in the 1980s, there emerged a group of Asian supermarkets, which added to the socio-economic development of the region. Shariffs supermarket and Khetias were the pioneer supermarkets in Western Kenya. Having started their business in the

1980's, the Khetias group of supermarkets of Western Kenya bought Shariffs supermarket as it prepared to compete with newcomers in the region. Khetias managing director, Ashok Khetia, states that they had purchased all previous stock from Shariffs Supermarkets in Bungoma and Mumias, and subsequently leased all their outlets (*The Star Newspaper*, 23/1/2012).

In the 1990s, the number of supermarkets in Kisumu and other businesses owned by Asians increased remarkably and these included Ebrahims, Yatin, Sai and Ukwala supermarkets. Some of these supermarkets emerged from what was initially the wholesale trade which Asians upgraded and expanded to supermarket status. Other businesses which Asians engaged in were social pubs like *Monami*, *Club Kiboko* and *Tivoli Cinema*.³³⁴

However, it is also at these business avenues that one could clearly see the glaring economic differences between Asians and Africans. In many ways, these economic disparities were a critical feature of the postcolonial space. In these places, close Afro-Asian relations emerged to an extent that Asians would entrust some Africans with their business money. They could give such Africans money belonging to their business to take to the bank without any security escort.

When asked about the safety of their money in the hands of these Africans, an Asian oral informant remarked that '*yeye pana weza kupotea, tumefanya kazi miaka mingi* (we have worked with him for many years and he cannot get lost). These close individual relations were developed after a long time of working together.³³⁵ Such relations made some Africans not to seek for alternative employment despite the poor pay at the Asian firms. It is also important to note that these businesses could not thrive on Asian clientele alone. The business depended on the purchasing power of Africans. In the end, interaction was inevitable.

Afro-Asian relations, therefore, depended on the trust and what one had in common with the other. If there was nothing in common to share, then one could not freely relate or interact with Asians and vice versa. These interactions were mostly at the level of business since the

³³⁴Ravalia, O.I., 2006 Opcit

³³⁵Mbudi, Eric O.I 2013 is a retired employee of Asians. He worked as a salesman at Nyanza furnitures

Asians rarely invited Africans to their houses unless one was employed as a domestic worker.³³⁶

It is important to note that in the Moi era, the Indians occupied a middleman position and participated in a number of economic ventures in the colonial and postcolonial African economies. Their economic position helped them to drive out local competitors. Among such ventures were Indian restaurants, which initially began by catering to the Indian migrant populations in African city centres, and later expanded to serve the local clientele. Indian restaurants thus assumed a distinct position in the local market (Gadzala, 2011:92). A comparable fusion between business and family is likewise discernible amongst both colonial and contemporary overseas Indian ventures, which similarly adhered to the model of the family firm. Enterprises were vertically integrated with concentration of authority in a dominant family leader (usually the family patriarch); family members occupied key managerial positions, and capital expenditures were financed through trusted relatives and moneylenders. For early Indian merchants and shopkeepers, the efficiency of such personal network ties facilitated access to key firm inputs, subsequently enabling them to undercut the prices of local commerce and gain leverage over the largely un-networked and under-sourced Africans (Gadzala, 2011: 93).

The intersection and relations of both Asian and African elite was very crucial at this stage. This is because although a number of conflict arose between petty Indian *dukawallahs* and traders in Western and Nyanza Provinces, such conflicts were rare between the African and Asian elites from the same region, especially in Nyanza. For instance, a number of Asian elite entered into business relationship with some African elite especially in Nyanza. This is evidenced by the joint business venture in Kisumu between Asian and African personalities like J. Nyaseme, Mr J. Shah, the late Bishop H.Okullu and the late Hon Job. H. Omino, who jointly managed financial institutions such as the Victoria Finance and Lake Credit Finance (*The Weekly Review*, 8/3/1991). This partnership therefore, gave these organisations an ownership identity that was neither Asian nor African. Such kind of business relationships ensured growth of the business sector in Kisumu as well as enhancing Afro-Asian relations (Omenya, 2010:229). The joint ventures in the banking sector were, however, not prominent areas like Kakamega and Bungoma. Earlier on, some Asian settlers in Kibos sold a huge piece of Land to Job. H. Omino Issues of land transfer continued to thrive along the settlement

³³⁶Odhiambo, George O.I., 2011 Opcit

schemes of Kisumu district in the 1980s. In a meeting convened by the Muhoroni Divisional Land Control Board held at the District Commissioners office, Kisumu on the 29th Sept 1981, and attended by Gurdial Singh as one of its members, it emerged that a consent was granted for the sale of parcels of land situated in the North East of Kisumu Municipality- Kibos area from Sukhev Singh, Hardev Singh, Harwant Singh and Malkiat Singh to Job .H.O Omino at a cost of Ksh 3,500,000³³⁷. This development attests to fact that both economic class and the elite class determined Afro-Asian relationship. In 1992, Kamlesh Pattni secretly donated Kshs. 2 million for campaign to the then Opposition Leader, Oginga Odinga and his party Forum for the Restoration of Democracy (FORD), and in 1997, Moi's Asian allies held an exclusive high cost luncheon for his campaign kitty³³⁸. The sale of land by Asians to African elites was a paradox and a practice unheard of before. A practice that was unheard of in the past. Ajay Gosh³³⁹ affirms that these relations were defined by common interest and business class that existed in Kisumu and that Indians were always willing to partner with African elites for the growth of the region. This also explains why Asian socialization with African elite was not affected by the caste system.

This Afro-Asian elitist relation can be traced back to the decolonization period when a number of Asian political elite joined hands together with African elite, to champion for the liberation of the state in Kenya. The same political socialization was witnessed in the Nyanza region with a number of Asian elite vying for political seats and winning those seats altogether. Current examples are Shakeel Shabbir who is the Member of Parliament for Kisumu Town East on an Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) ticket, as well as Aslam Khan who sits in the Kisumu Town Council Assembly as an ODM member. Because of his good knowledge of Luo language, culture and tradition, Mr Aslam Khan has been seeking inclusion into the membership of the Luo Council of Elders.³⁴⁰

In a span of 20 years under Moi's rule, factories that provided thousands of jobs to residents in Nyanza and Western provinces of Kenya either closed down or were placed under

³³⁷KNA, BX/2/89

³³⁸ Sunday Standard, April 4, 2004:5-7

³³⁹ Ajay, Gosh O.I 2012 Opcit

³⁴⁰ Patel, O.I 2014 Opcit

receivership. Kisumu Cotton Mills (Kicomi) in Kisumu quickly comes to mind, with its unwelcoming sight of rusty structures that exemplified the sorry state of the economy of the country's third largest town. This was and is still the situation with the PanPaper Mills in Webuye town of Western Province. Kicomi's collapse was primarily blamed on the negative effects of the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) popularized by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund that eliminated price controls leading to unregulated liberalization of Kenya's cotton sub-sector. It was placed under receivership with Price waterhouse Coopers (PwC) as the receiver managers. The receiver sold it to an Asian entrepreneur, Rumi Singh, for an undisclosed fee in 1993. Mr Singh confirmed that the mill was still down because of competition from cheap imported textile. "All the textile mills are closing down across the country because of dumped products. How do we survive?" (*Daily Nation*, 13/7/2009). Africans' effort to sell *mitumba* clothes (second hand clothes) under a liberalized economy and the Asian campaign to have these clothes banned was a testimony of how the chaotic space within the postcolony was negotiated. It also depicted how economic life within the postcolony was unequal. PanPaper Mills in Webuye was also put under receivership, ending in massive job losses for Africans who were employed in the two industrial sectors (textile and paper Industry).

Other industries that followed the same route include: the Kenya Matches, Miwani Sugar Factory, Kisumu Fishnet, Toworo Industries and several medium size industries owned by Asian entrepreneurs, especially in Nyanza province. Others like Muhoroni Sugar Company scaled down operations. Under a New corporate identity, Kenya Matches was acquired by a group of Asian entrepreneurs who changed its name to Phoenix Matches. Swan Industries was also placed under receivership by Investment and Mortgage Bank (I&M Bank) over a loan in excess of Shs 200 million. The Investment and Mortgage bank appointed VSC Consultants to manage the confectionery factory. A former director of Swan Industries, Mr. Sailesh Shah, also confirmed that Swan Industry acquired a new corporate identity (*Daily Nation*, 13/7/2009).

Adams (2010:249) observed despite the problems mentioned above, Asian families of Indian origin continued to get involved within the commercial sector of Kenya, and by extension Nyanza and Western Provinces during the Moi era, where they occupied 80% of the commercial and industrial ventures. A study carried out in 1997 by the French Trade Commission in the Kenyan French Embassy showed that Indians controlled 90% of

commercial activities and a substantial fraction of industries. Major pressure groups within the Kenyan authorities, such as the Kenyan Association of Manufacturers, comprised of 75% to 90% members of Indian origin. A number of major industries owned by Asians in Western Kenya appeared to be in the food processing (Miwani Sugar Company in Kisumu), paper Industry and packaging (Panafrican Paper Mills- in Webuye Western Kenya), Firestone (with branches in Kisumu and Kakamega), chemical industry (East Africa Heavy Chemicals- Webuye) among several printing companies. Among the top businesses run by members of the Sikh community in Kisumu included the Hayer Bishan Singh and Sons Ltd, a family-run civil and structural engineering company situated along the Kisumu-Bondo road. There was also Kibos Sugar Limited and the Farm Engineering Industries Limited. The three industries alone employed at least 500 people, both directly and indirectly.³⁴¹

At diversified financial levels, Asians held almost a monopoly of major commercial activities and services: large and small scale commerce, housing transactions, computer services, advertisements, tourism agencies, garages and the service stations as well as one of the two biggest distribution chains (Nakumatt, managed by a Visa Oshwal group), Some of the Indian banks which operated in Kisumu included: Bank of Baroda, Delphi's Bank, Trust Bank, Diamond Trust, Southern Credit and Finance Corporation and the Kenindia Insurance company (Adams 2010: 249-50). These financial institutions offered job opportunities to educated Africans with professional qualifications in those fields.

During this time, some Kenyan politicians like Kenneth Matiba³⁴² renewed the anti-Asian discourse and called for their expulsion from Kenya. In Kisumu for instance, residents

³⁴¹Jagpal, O.I 2014 Opcit

³⁴² Kenneth Matiba is a Kenyan politician who was the second-place candidate in the 1992 presidential election. In November 2007, he announced that he would stand as a presidential candidate in the December 2007 election. He was a permanent secretary at the age of 31. He joined Kenya Breweries as a general manager and rose to become the managing director. He left the corporate scene to join politics and was elected MP for Kiharu in 1979 on his first attempt, ousting the venerable Dr Julius Gikonyo Kiano, the first Kenyan to obtain a PhD degree. He won every election, save for the infamous Kanu branch elections of 1988 when he was blatantly rigged out. But when he resigned from the Cabinet and Parliament to protest Kanu's obsessive rigging culture and repression, the Moi regime saw flashing red lights all over him. The regime had almost effortlessly neutralised many a political foe, but this was doubtless the big one. It had to do something dramatic — which it did with a detention order. And thus began the beginning of the end for one of Kenya's most redoubtable public figures. Mr Gibson Kamau Kuria, lawyer for Raila Odinga during the heady days of 1990, teamed up with Mr Paul Muite to forge a partnership between Mr Odinga and Mr Matiba, Mr Muite's client. It is the two lawyers who drafted the statement read by Matiba and his collaborator,

threatened Asians to either support Raila Odinga's presidency in 1997 or leave the town.³⁴³ Local African leaders in Kisumu such as Dennis Akumu, a former trade unionist, supported anti-Asian sentiments by claiming that Asians had exploited Africans for far too long and should thus be expelled from towns such as Kisumu where they dominated trade and commerce (*The Weekly Review* May 24, 1996:17/18). The same was echoed by Mr Martin Shikuku³⁴⁴, MP for Butere from Western Kenya, who questioned whether Africans were allowed to operate and dominate businesses in India the way Asians dominated commerce and trade here in Kenya. He further accused the Indians of non-integration and exploiting Africans. It is from such tensions both psychic and political, that a strategy of subversion emerged (Bhabha, 1994:89). Seemingly, such sentiments affected Afro-Asian relations and integration in the sense that Asians developed fear, which further isolated them from the Africans. But, the more they became isolated, the more they were resented, and the more they were resented, the more they became isolated and vice versa (Bindra, 2005:2). This isolation thus affected their integration with the Africans.

The issue of integration and isolation thus needs to be examined within a proper context. Herzig (2006:162) argues that that interethnic relation as expressed by different boundaries such as citizenship, language or marriage revolves around the central question of integration. The persisting stereotypes, but also the calls for total assimilation as claimed by African leaders as well as by the African people, do not cope with the situation perceived by Asians themselves. According to Rasna Warah (1998:48), a Kenyan Asian 'ignorance of Indian culture' (which is not only confined to Africans) and some "historical, cultural and to some

Charles Rubia, calling for a referendum to determine Kenya's political future in 1990. He was one of the founder members of the Forum For the Restoration of Democracy FORD, a pressure group which forced President Moi to repeal section 2A of the constitution to allow Multi party democracy in Kenya in the year 1990. The Moi regime detained Matiba without trial and it was during his detention that he developed a stroke which has really affected his health up to date. (Daily Nation, 5/7/2013)

³⁴³Omollo, O.I., 2014 Opcit

³⁴⁴Martin Shikuku, Was one of Kenya's champions in the struggle for independence. He was a politician and a longtime Member of Parliament for Butere Constituency in the Western region of Kenya. Shikuku became quite popular among ordinary Kenyans, especially the poor who embraced his populist ideas that attacked Kenya's wealthy elites who he claimed were being insensitive to ordinary Kenyans' demands. He detested Asians, and was against their labour policy of underpaying Africans. He was also a founder member of the Forum for the Restoration Democracy alongside Kennath Matiba, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, Masinde muliro, George Nthenge and Ahmed Bahmariz. He died on Wednesday 22, August 2012 after a long battle with Prostate cancer

extent, economic factors worked, against the successful integration of Asians and Africans”. This isolation was not seen as a problem. “Racial segregation suited the majority of the Asians just fine” as Warah (1998:49) sets out, however, not because of racism, but because of communalism:

What most people don't realize is that racism is far too ‘developed’ a concept for the average Asian whose vision of the world rarely goes beyond caste and religion. Asians are not so much racist as they are communalistic. Their ethnocentricity does not allow room for such broad categorization as race. Even among themselves, Asians rarely refer to themselves as a race, but as members of the religious, linguistic or caste group to which they belong. (Hence for example, an Asian describing him/herself would say “I am a Sikh, or I’m Punjabi (Warah, 1998:49).

Communalism is, may be, the main reason why Asians were not open to intermingle with other ethnic groups. Nonetheless, communal boundaries are weakening, and therefore, also ethnic boundaries lose significance. Ethnic identities have changed as well (Herzig, 2006:163). In the diaspora, particularly for the youth, the borders and cleavages inherited from partition in the Indian subcontinent are increasingly meaningless, and are being superseded by a common South Asian identity, produced by migration (Moliner, 2007).

Similarly, links with the ‘homeland’ and associated myths of origin often played a large part in identity formation amongst migrant communities, even though, or perhaps because the actual origins of Indians living overseas can be highly diverse. The experience of migration itself and, second, any racism to which they are subjected by the indigenous population are often all that migrants have in common. A selective ‘remembering’ of the culture and traditions of home is therefore frequently employed to build a sense of community (Bates, 2001:21). Likewise, the identity of migrant South Asians has often been reinterpreted in ways that overcome social barriers commonly encountered within the subcontinent, as well as facilitating integrative relationships with indigenous populations. However, identities cannot exist in a vacuum as a product of will, nor are they solely created from elements drawn from identities of the past. Although the agency and inventiveness of migrants is characteristic and vital, identities must be sustained and maintained by definitive structures of legal identification and representation (Bates, 2001:37). It is within this legal framework, that the Moi-Asian nexus operated, where the Moi regime recognized Asians as Kenyan citizens. This legal framework continued to define Afro-Asian relations especially within the industrial and commercial sector.

Communalism was a cause of unpopularity in East Africa because of the alleged cultural conservatism of the Asians, but it was not a major one. The major grievance arose from their economic position within the three tier plural society in the region established by British policy at the start of imperial administration on the ground, whereby white officials and settlers lived at the top of the colonial hierarchy, black Africans survived at its base, and brown settlers fitted themselves into the middle layers. That, in view of several younger East African Asian intellectuals in the 1960s, was the principle reason for Asian unpopularity with Africans. The South Asian settlers brought their communalism with them from India- 'the Asians in their entirety clung to their communal religions throughout their long residence in East Africa and Kenya for that matter. Their religious orientation not only fragmented the community, but also affected their economic, political and social activity and determined their attitudes. Nonetheless, Gregory considers that communalism had virtues as well as defects. 'It explains why the Asians [in East Africa] have been among the world's leading philanthropists. The Asians' religious and communal organization also indicates, at least partially, why they were reluctant to admit individuals of other races to their economic and social institutions, and why they so assiduously sought to preserve their separate traditions. They were moved further in this direction by racial segregation that soon permeated colonial society (Bates, 2001:111). In essence, therefore, it can be concluded that Asian isolationism was a colonial construct. This colonial construction had adverse effects of the Afro-Asian relations in the post independent Kenya.

On the issue of Indian culture it is largely seen that Bollywood films were very popular in Nyanza and Kisumu in particular. It was perceived that somewhere, there was a similarity in the culture, which perhaps could have been the key element for the popularity of Bollywood. Bollywood offered a third space, between local African culture and western culture but people created their own African image of the orient, of India, in Bollywood and dance, filling in the gaps in their own imagination (Dubey, 2010:16). In places like Tivoli and Nyanza Cinema in Kisumu, Asian culture was lived and consumed with the greatest intensity through cinema, music, food and sports. This helped in bridging ethnic and racial boundaries.

However, towards the end of 1990s, the leaders of some of the plural Asian communities became so close to some top government officials and some of these Asians were believed to have prospered fabulously by these relationships. In turn, they were expected to act as cheerleaders for government in their communities (Holmquist 2002:32). Such kind of political

relationship affected Afro-Asian relations at the local level in terms of business. For instance, the Hindocha, Pattni and Somaia families appeared to have had powerful business connections with top officials in the government, a connection which they used to cover up several underhand economic deals (*The Weekly Review*, 13 1996:17). Because of their closeness to the Moi regime, they were able to manipulate the provincial labour and police offices in order to safeguard and protect their business interests. This was basically through bribery. On the contrary, middle-class Asians never wanted anything involving them with the Police or the Labour Office (Omenya, 2010:233). Around the same time towards the close of the 1990s, East Africa Heavy Chemicals formerly owned by the late Cabinet Minister Hon. Elijah Mwangale was sold to the Pan African Chemicals Limited owned by Asians in Webuye.³⁴⁵

Unlike in Western Kenya, many of these Asians with high political connections traced their roots to Kisumu, for instance Hindocha, Pattni and Somaia. However, the growing collaboration, and the unscrupulous involvement and support of mafias-type as well as South Asian corrupt wheeler dealers and some elites with corrupt African politicians and middlemen under President Moi regime impoverished the Africans and made 'Muhindi' (Asians) unpopular, mistrusted and unwanted (Maganda, 2012).

In Kisumu however, the political alignment of some Asians for example (Shakeel Shabbir), with the local African leadership of Nyanza region became fruitful when Shakeel Shabbir became the Mayor of Kisumu through the support of Raila Odinga. It should be noted here that the government of Moi was not very popular in Nyanza. This was due to the fact that most Africans (Luo) in the area rallied behind the doyen of opposition politics-Jaramogi Oginga Odinga in most of the elections. Moi's government had also convicted Raila Odinga accusing him of organizing the 1982 coup attempt against president Moi. Nyanza province for many years was thus considered as an opposition zone. This was the genesis of political, social and economic tension and hostility between Asians who were seen as leaning towards and supporting Moi's rule.

It is evident that, Afro-Asian relations were characterized by upheavals, sometimes good or bad. The Asian fear was rejuvenated again towards the turn of the century around the year 2000, when the country was approaching elections in the year 2002. This fear came as a result

³⁴⁵Matete, Peter, O.I, 2013 is an oral interviewee based in Bungoma, Kanduyi division

of economic stagnation, doubts as to the governments' protective capacity and fears that the Moi regime was losing its grip on power and because of chronic corruption and their feelings that they must participate in it or face unfortunate consequences (Holmquist, 2002).³⁴⁶ Many of them read the political signs and with the help of Shakeel Shabir, the former Kisumu mayor, they voted for the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) government, which was popular in Nyanza Province. Raila Odinga's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) was a member of the NARC coalition. However, in this election, there was no Asian candidate both at the parliamentary and civic level. With the ouster of president Moi in the subsequent general elections of 2002, their loyalty shifted. Nevertheless, a number of Asian businessmen were subjected to probe regarding scandalous business deals that they were engaged in in the past Moi regime. Although these were happening at the national level, it affected the relations between Asians and Africans at the local level since Africans generally believed that these Asians have swindled our money.³⁴⁷

The fall of KANU in 2002 altered the situation with Kikuyu capital resurgent under the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) to varying degrees (see Wrong, 2009). Many Kikuyu elite did not forget the enforced competition with Asian entrepreneurs under Moi, and it may be that President Mwai Kibaki and his allies had a posture to India conditioned in some ways by the highly competitive position of historical Asian vis-à-vis Kikuyu capital, and given the range of new foreign actors with economic ambitions in Kenya. The high profile complicity of a number of Asians such as Kamlesh Pattni and Ajay Shah to Moi's kleptocracy in the 1990s, compounded (unfair and essentialised) historical impressions of Asian greed. This is not to say that Asians were exclusively blamed for graft in Kenya, merely that their organizational centrality became unfairly exaggerated in the context of historical antipathy.

Describing Afro-Asian relationship from an Asian perspective, Mr Shakeel Shabbir³⁴⁸ argues that there is great compatibility between the Luo and the Punjabi. "We have several similarities — we are both a proud people and for both of us, it is easy to forgive."

³⁴⁶Bodo, Charles O.I., 2012, is an oral Informant and a retired field office with the Kenya Marine and Fisheries. He is currently based in Kisumu where he works as a land agent

³⁴⁷Obetto, Kennedy O.I 2013 is a retired inspector of buses having worked at the Kenya Bus Services. He is a businessman in Kisumu living in Manyatta, Kisumu.

³⁴⁸Shakeel Shabbir Ahmed is a Kenyan politician of Asian origin. He belongs to the Orange Democratic Movement and was elected to represent the Kisumu Town East Constituency in the National Assembly of Kenya since the Kenyan parliamentary election, 2007. Before becoming a Member of Parliament, Shakeel served as the Mayor of Kisumu from 2000 up to 2006. He is the current Member of Parliament for Kisumu Town East

Similarly, Mr Khan another Asian, observes that Luos of Nyanza province are a most welcoming people. “They don’t look at colour, creed, religion or any other non-substantial matters.” It is on the basis of this observation that both Shakeel Shabbir and Aslam Khan have been able to represent Africans at the National Assembly and the Kisumu County Assembly respectively.

Wanyonyi³⁴⁹ argues that Asians operated most of the major businesses in Webuye, and so they played a significant role in running the economy of not only Webuye town, but also Kakamega and Bungoma Districts. The impact of the Asian hold of the economy was evident when the Pan Paper Mills stopped production. ‘This place is dead a ghost town for almost one year.’³⁵⁰ Baraza continued to state that there was a jaggery factory in Webuye owned by Indians, which has been in operation for the last 15-20 years before it collapsed. The factory produced crude sugar, which the Indians sold to the local community. Initially, there was a timber yard where the jaggery factory was built also owned by *Kalasingas* (Sikh). These *kalasingas* owned houses (a flat) within the vicinity some of, which they leased out to Africans as tenants.

Similarly, Indian businessmen have helped in raising the living standards and the economy of Kakamega by offering employment opportunities to many Africans within and around Kakamega town. A number of these Africans were employed as domestic servants, watchmen, drivers, shop assistants, pharmacists, builders, mechanics and factory workers. Besides, some Indians owned rental houses which they rented out to African business people and students of Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (then WECO College). Asians also owned shops where they sold farm inputs such as fertilizers, pesticides, insecticides and herbicides to African farmers. As such, they assisted in agricultural development of areas around Kakamega town. In turn, Asians bought foodstuffs such as fruits and vegetables from Africans, and therefore helped the Africans to earn a living. But more importantly, Africans living in Kakamega town and around the town were able to construct both business and residential houses using building materials purchased from Indian hardware

³⁴⁹Wanyonyi Simon O.I 2013, is an oral informant based in Webuye town.

³⁵⁰Baraza, Peter O: I, 2013 is an oral informant from Western Kenya. He works as a dhobi (drycleaner) in Webuye town

shops in the town.³⁵¹ With the ambivalence of Asian contribution towards the economy of Nyanza and Western regions, it would be necessary to interrogate how their social relations unfolded outside their political and economic engagements in the Moi era within the two regions.

7.4 Social Relations between Asian and African Communities in the Moi Era in Western and Nyanza Province

East Africa's and more so Kenya's Indian traders, both Hindu and Muslim, were commonly known as *banyans* (Chattopadhyaya, 1970:351). The *banyans* (locally referred to as *Abonyo* or *bai* in Kisumu) were forbidden by religious precepts to eat food prepared otherwise than in accordance with their religious rights, or to partake of the same in the presence of persons outside their caste (Chattopadhyaya, 1970:351)

However, during post-independence period and thereafter, Indians were faced with dilemma of living exclusively as immigrant or mixing with Africans as citizens. With the Africanization process in place, Asians were given an option of becoming Kenyan citizens. But as Adams (2010:244) postulates, they were called upon to choose between leaving the country and integration into an all-inclusive society and political system, the majority Asians opted for a midway path, advocating settlement in the country but at the same time refusing complete integration. This is the in-between position that Homi Bhabha described as a hybrid position of neither being here nor there (Bhabha, 1994).

The Asians in Kenyan are familiar with *Kiswahili*, the national language in Kenya and commonly used for communication with Africans, especially in the professional context. Furthermore, in the small towns of Kenya, Indians spoke the African languages for example Luo, Luhya. But this knowledge of African languages was not accompanied by any symbolical, aesthetic, literary or affective absorption, and appeared to be limited to daily communication. On the other hand, the social and family organisations of the Asians followed complex modalities whose structure hardly changed since the time of immigration. Often

³⁵¹Maloba Patrick, O:I, 2013 is a resident of Kakamega and a lab technician at the kakamega District hospital

categorized in the indivisible family category, the traditional family strongly resisted the attempt of modernization despite a strong juvenile protest that was influenced by western models. In the asymmetric community family model (joint family), brothers cohabited with their spouses and their children (Kapadia, 1966). The heritage is indivisible ownership between brothers (bhay) with the addition of, if the case arises, direct cousins, adopted boys and brothers in-law (this model is named Mitakshara, and is used in the North Western part of India). The last-born brothers who intended to leave the community had to make a sacrifice on their part, receiving in return a small payment. Under the strict supervision of the patriarch (babuji- which has also been acquired by Africans especially in Nyanza used in describing the father-babji to denote the father of people), brothers generally occupied the same office and shared managerial responsibilities (financial management, human resources management etc.). In the majority of families, houses were not accessible to strangers, in particular for the male sex (Adam. 2010:246).

Excluded by the British during the colonial period, the Asians spared no effort to avoid cohabitation with Africans, thus giving priority to intra-community social groups, imposing endogamy precepts and preserving residential segregation. There was a cultural gap that separated Asians and Africans. Whatever their religious attachments and their affiliation (this was particularly appropriate to Hindus and representatives of superior castes), Indians were repulsed by a number of African cultural features (animal sacrifices, consumption of beef, initiation rituals, funeral rituals among others.). Already subjected within their respective communities to certain forms of avoidance and endogamy, Indians argued that, their defenders could not be more tolerant of Africans. Given the apartheid principles in force then, such a situation did not shock Africans, who were also subject to the same segregated situation and suffering as the Indians were, especially in matters of citizenship. In the contemporary era, the practice of 'separate development' expressed by the Africans' will to end the exclusion process. On the other hand, for the Indians, centripetal and protectionist bias maintained by all the communities was justified on several accounts: It was in the eyes of the interested parties, a guarantee for the best preservation of cultural identity; It used to provide protection (both social and security) for every community-as well as for a minority, which the Kenyan state was incapable of doing and without endangering all Kenyans, it did not threaten the eventual citizen commitment in favour of collective development (Adams, 2010:254)

Residential segregation was the most visible form of self-segregation practiced by Asians living in Kenya. Residential segregation has not diminished since independence due to the increasing distance between working areas (businesses, workshops etc.) and residential places. In these residential areas, the Indians shared the same territory divided into several community perimeters. Some allotments were enclosed and provided with common services (gardening, waste collection, maintenance of the green areas, day care etc.). In these protected areas, which were not often frequented by Africans except the domestic workers, the Indians lived among themselves (Adams, 2010:254)

In the Moi era, Afro-Asian social interaction continued to take the usual isolationist tendency by the Asians. They stayed in the same segregated housing zones they had occupied before, namely their shops cum residential houses within the town centres. Others stayed in Milimani, Kibuye and Patel flats in Kisumu; where most of them had settled since withdrawing from interior parts of Nyanza and Western Provinces. They maintained minimal interaction with their African neighbours. Those who stayed in Patel flats, continued to secure their own flats while Africans also stayed in separate flats. In such areas, social interaction was always minimal. They rarely invited Africans to their houses because they shared nothing in common unless one was assigned some duties by them. Africans also rarely invited Asians into their houses or homes.

In Western Kenya, although segregation in housing was a common phenomenon, some of the Asian employees of the Pan African Chemicals together with the employees of the defunct PanPaper Mills continued to stay together with Africans at the National Housing Corporation (NHC) houses belonging to PanPaper. Wekhomba³⁵² states that these Asians frequented Park Villa Hotel, where they enjoyed and socialized themselves alongside Africans. Being in the same NHC compound, Wekhomba argues that some of the Asians would occasionally carry an African in their vehicle as one proceeded to PanPaper factory for work. He further observed that there was a crop of recent Asian immigrants in Webuye town whom he referred to as the dark ones due to their skin pigmentation (black Indian). According to Wekhomba, this group of Indians was more social and accommodative. They were down to earth and their children just mixed with African children freely.

³⁵²Wekhomba, Edwin O.I, 2013 Opcit

It is worth noting that as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility, the Asians, especially within Webuye, through the PanPaper Mills interacted with Asians in several fronts. Some of them attended and participated in harambees (fundraising), building of bridges, spring wells, giving seedlings to farmers at subsidized prices, building classrooms in some schools, equipping schools with computers, books, constructing bus stop shades, sponsoring bright students through high schools within Bungoma District and sponsoring students doing degree courses at Moi University in relevant fields like forestry.³⁵³ In education, the PanPaper High School came into being around late 1980s as a Corporate Social Responsibility for PanPaper Mills factory. They also built the PanPaper nursery and primary school, which is still in existence up to date. These two institutions provided education to both Asian and African pupils from nursery to class four. Other Asians also attended local schools like St Joseph's Nursery and St Joseph's Primary School. Namulata³⁵⁴ states that his sister Yvonne had an Asian friend who was married to an African in Webuye. They were all classmates at St Joseph's Primary School. This was one of the rare cases where an Asian woman had been married to an African man. In Kisumu, one Sikh man married an African woman (ka mama kaka/mama Kaka's place). Additionally, there was a case of an Indian man married to a Luo woman in Kibuye estate of Kisumu in Nyanza province. Although these cases may sound marginal, it points to the fact that there were some forms of hybridity within the contested economic and social spaces of Nyanza and Western regions.

A number of Asian men believed that Afro-Asian marriage depended on one's predisposition. However, because such marriages were resented within the wider Asian community, it came therefore with anguish. The current Member of Parliament for Kisumu East, Shakeel Shabir, is married to an African woman, the same applies to Aslam Khan and Rehmat Khan among other Indians married to Africans. Shakeel Shabbir, argues that "my wife (Nancy Wanyonyi) was a catholic but converted to Islam on her own volition. This conversion is allowed in Islam. However, Shakeel's marriage to an African lady, did not go down well with some members of his Asian community. Not only did some members of his Asian community shunned him, many called him a traitor. Nancy (Shakeel's wife) on the other hand observed that although racial intolerance sometimes got to her, she was very happy with their marriage (*The Standard*, 17/8/2014). Shakeel argues that many Asians were anti inter-racial

³⁵³Odanga, Wilfred O.I, 2013 is a former employee of the Panpaper Mills and resides in Webuye town

³⁵⁴Namulata, Benedict, O:I, 2013 is the son to Odanga Wilfred. He also attended St Josephs Primary School in Webuye

union/marriages because Hindus and Sikhs respected the caste system and got offended whenever Asian women get involved with African men. Similarly, “the Asian society is also too harsh to women who date black men. There are many cases where African men have impregnated Asian women. When this happens, the pregnancy is often terminated and the girl taken to India where she lives in seclusion.”³⁵⁵ Other known Afro-Asian marriages in Western province include: the union between Godfrey Okaya Ochinjo of Butere and Azmina Abulalim (now Doreen Okaya) and Timothy Khamala of Bungoma with Sarika Patel (Daily Nation, 27/10/2014).

Generally, in South Asia where Indians come from, women are the repository of the community’s *izzat* (honour), hence potentially the instrument of its defilement. Their male relatives have therefore the responsibility to enforce community norms, and impose ‘appropriate’ behavior. This patriarchal control of women, of their body and their sexuality, usually understood with reference to ‘traditional values’, is in fact a by-product of transnational migration and fits in a complex set of relations between ethnicity, gender and class in particular, relates to social constructs of masculinities of marginalized groups. The prohibition of relationships outside one’s community is therefore not specific to Sikhs, but it takes on a specific shape when involving Muslims. The issue of ‘our girls’ being taken away by Muslims is a regular feature in many informal interviews, the reason being that these girls would be converted to Islam. As in the case of exogamous relationships, the community of the girl had a feeling that its integrity, its *izzat*³⁵⁶ was threatened (Moliner, 2007: 16). This therefore, explains why Afro-Asian marriages were characterized by ridicule and were marginal within Nyanza and Western region.

In 1987, tension and suspicion between Asians and Africans in Kisumu went up. This tension arose over the issue of entry into Simba Club (Sikh Union). This was a ‘members only’ club owned by Asians, but was used as a checkpoint during the 1987 Safari Rally competitions. As the rallying cars started arriving at this checkpoint, the management of the club decided to allow Asians only into the club to watch the rallying cars while African entry was

³⁵⁵Shah, Issa O.I 2014, is an Asian oral informant based in Kisumu where he works as an electronic engineer with Samtec Engineering company

³⁵⁶*Izzat*, This is a concept of dowry among the Hindus which is so deeply rooted that even young women and men who seek to rebel against society by opposing dowry cannot do it wholeheartedly because there are issues of family honour at stake. It's the power and prestige, respect, *izzat*, that becomes primary.

restricted.³⁵⁷ This was evidently an act of discrimination and a clear show of racial prejudice which offended the Africans. The result of this was the revival of conflict between Africans and Asians. It also brought into focus the question of Asian citizenship in the minds of Africans in Kisumu. The move by Asians to restrict Africans from entering Simba Club was proof that they still harboured some colonial racial prejudices (Omenya, 2010:226). The above observation demonstrated the communalism, dynamism and the complexities of Afro-Asian social relations in Nyanza region. Asian socialization in the Western region also took a similar trend with Asians frequenting exclusive clubs.

Otiato³⁵⁸ observes that in Kakamega, modern Indian youths moved away from their older generations' social life, which they saw as old-fashioned. For example, he noted that male youths visited social places such as Golf hotel and sportclubs within Kakamega town in the evenings and over the weekends, where they freely interacted with Africans such as businessmen and women, lawyers, teachers, doctors among others. They even shared discussions, meals, drinks and indoor games. He further noted that some young Indian men went as far as going out with African girls to social places such as hotels and clubs against their culture. Additionally, some young male Indians had African girlfriends. To the contrary, young Indian women did not befriend African men and were seen as more conservative as compared to their male brothers. At one time in the 1990s, one Indian youth married an African Muslim girl. The rest of the Indian community did not like it at all. They, in fact, started treating him as an outcast and even talked negative things about him in public.³⁵⁹

In principle, followers of an unrestricted exogamy, Sikhs, practiced it always in the way of masculine hypergamy (they accept African women for wives but refuse to allow their women to marry African men). Such ultra-minority mixed couples existed for some time especially in Kisumu (see also Adam, 2010:234). But, the three incidences of intermarriage in Nyanza region unlike Western region demonstrate the limited extent of this flexibility. Thus, the ultimate African demand for integration was not met. While for the community, not only racial but religious integrity would have been lost along with their identity as an immigrant minority of strangers, which they held to so closely (Twaddle, 1975:47). The issue of Afro-

³⁵⁷Olingo, O.I., 2006 Opcit

³⁵⁸Otiato Pius, O:I, 2013 is a resident of Kakamega and works at Masinde Muliro University

³⁵⁹ Shivachi, O:I, 2013 Opcit

Asian marriage was thus a complicated affair not because of racial differences between Asians and Africans, but because of cultural and religious issues, which also affected Asian to Asian marriage.

For instance, the asymmetrical marriage was only acceptable between members of different neighboring status and never, in principle, between members of different Varna³⁶⁰; that is exactly what made this practice difficult between Indians already excluded from the matrimonial alliance for religious reasons. One therefore understands that, whatever their feelings towards Africans, Indians have not been better disposed to practice mixed marriages. However, this conclusion does not apply equally to all faiths. Whereas no mixed marriage is ever observed in Hindus of strict obedience, some cases of Afro-Asian hypergamy existed in Sikhs and marginally in Jains. Muslim makes the biggest number of mixed marriages. This was also demonstrated in Nyanza with the examples already given, although the biggest number of mixed marriages was evident in the coast region, which was overwhelmingly Islamic. In the other regions of the country, there was a negligible number of marriages with non-Muslim African women (Adams, 2010: 259). However, this integration was not without difficulty, especially outside the coastal region³⁶¹ and in the non-Muslim regions of the country. Examples showed that whereas mixed couples faced difficulties in being accepted in Indo-Kenyan circles, Africans did not show that much tolerance to them, especially for mixed race children (see Adams, 2010:260).

The present day mixed marriages or even casual sex relations indicate assimilation. However, within the Asian community, mixed marriage implied loss of status, if not outright expulsion from the Asian community. Therefore, casual mixed sex relations were more common than mixed marriages. The transition from casual liaison to a permanent union occurred gradually when the Asian partner realized that no more personal benefits were to be derived from a continued full membership of the Asian community. This interpretation of miscegenation, of course, disregarded the ties of affection, between the man and the women as well as the responsibility towards the children and so on. (Desai, 1966:100).

³⁶⁰ *Varna* is a Sanskrit word which means colour or class in Hindu. Ancient Hindu literature classified all humankind, and all created beings, in principle into four *varnas*: the Brahmins: priests, teachers and preachers.

³⁶¹ In non-coastal and non-Muslim areas where cultural mixtures are ancient, impact of Swahili civilization was never felt, and this affected Afro-Asian marriages. This could also be explained in term of the Islam as religion which was limited in non-coastal regions of Kenya

It is important to note that, full integration in schools was also not achieved even in the Moi era. Bindra (2005:6) states that by 1990s, wealthy Asian families started taking their children out of the public education system, and were busy building academies that were exclusively Asian. Such schools were Kisumu International School, Kisumu Senior Academy, Jalaram Academy and Mahavir School in Nyanza Province, while Webuye Kindergarten with a high proportion Indian students catered for the educational interest of Asians and wealthy Africans. Some African children of the same economic class also found their way into these high-cost Asian schools.³⁶² Therefore, economic class, regardless of gender and race, determined Afro-Asian relations in such schools. This was the characteristic of Afro-Asian relations and engagement that kept on shifting depending on economic interest and class by 2002, in the Nyanza post-colony. These schools in Kisumu alongside Bungoma Town High school in Bungoma were established for commercial purposes alone. In Kakamega, Asians took their children to the academies and public schools such as Hill Primary School and Rotary Secondary School, where they learned together with African pupils. Most of the academies were owned by Africans and staffed by African teachers. However, Rotary Secondary School was run by the Rotary Club of Kakamega, which is owned and managed by Indians. Likewise, some Asian teachers taught in the African schools. For instance Mr Bilais wife taught at Mukumu Girls in Western Kenya for a number of years.³⁶³

Figure 19: Entrance to the Kisumu Senior Academy owned by Indians but also admits Africans



Source: Picture taken by Gordon Omenya

³⁶²Maseno, Obeid O.I 2006 Opcit

³⁶³Shivachi, O.I, 2013 Opcit

7.5 Comparative Aspects of Afro-Asians Relations in the Moi Eras: Navigating the Plural and Chaotic Economic and Social Spaces in Nyanza and Western Regions

The Moi era depicted a rather ambivalent situation for the Kenya Asians. This situation was unpredictable since there was an increased anti-Asian sentiments coming from political leaders. Increased anti-Asian sentiments had a serious impact on their economic activities and their social lives especially in the Nyanza region. Coupled with their activity of hoarding goods, Asians in Kisumu became a target of African program, a situation which was never experienced in the Western region. However, comparing the Kenyan situation with the Ugandan situation in the post expulsion era, it is evident that a new wave of Asian nationals emerged with a transnational identity. Comparatively, the new Asian immigrants in Uganda after the post expulsion period were driven by two factors. One; they were encouraged by President Museveni's government to come back and claim their property and, secondly, it was as a result of an ideological project of South-Southism. This was unlike Kenya, where the migration of new Asian immigrants was influenced by personal initiatives of the 'rockets,' to come and look for new opportunities. But like in Kenya, the status of this new generation of Asians, remained ambiguous since most of them had a triple identity (Asia, Africa and Europe). However, the emergence of these transnational identities transcended religious, ethnic or national boundaries.

The Moi era was a period when Asians enjoyed a working relationship with the head of the state. The Moi-Asian nexus was very prominent with Kisumu grown businessmen like Ketan Somaia and Kamlesh Pattni. With their close relationship with the Moi government, they helped their fellow Asians to establish an economic network with the Moi regime. This nexus made a number of Asians to get government tenders in the areas of construction, electricals, and supply of various items to government institutions. In Kisumu for instance, Hayer Bishan Singh Construction company became synonymous with road construction and recarpeting in almost all parts of Kisumu during Moi's era. Such political connections were, lacking among Asians within the Western region of Kenya. Political relationships, which characterized the political landscape of Kenya towards the end of 1990s, played both positive and negative roles as far as Afro-Asian relations were concerned. As indicated earlier, some members of the plural Asian communities were quite close to some top government officials and some Asians were believed to have prospered fabulously by these relationships. In turn, they were expected to act as cheerleaders for government in their communities (Holmquist, 2002:32). Such kind of political relationship affected Afro-Asian relations at the local level in terms of

business. For instance, the Hindocha and Somaia families appeared to have had powerful business connections with top officials in the government, a connection which they used to cover up several underhand economic deals (*The Weekly Review*, 13 1996:17). Because of their closeness to the Moi regime, they were able to manipulate the provincial labour and police offices in order to safeguard and protect their business interests. This was basically through bribery. The issue of Indians manipulating government officials was also witnessed in Kakamega District (Omenya, 2010:233). Although there were some semblance as far as manipulation of African government officials were concerned, it is important to note that, unlike in Western Kenya, many of these high profile Asians with high political connections traced their roots to Kisumu, for instance Hindocha, Pattni and Somaia³⁶⁴

During the Moi era, Western region experienced an expansion in the sugar sector with the establishment of the West Kenya Sugar Company. Similarly there was additional increase in the number of supermarkets in both Nyanza and Western regions. Although these expansions continued to sustain the economies of the two regions, some major industrial ventures owned and managed by Asians such as the Pan Paper Mills and KICOMI in Western and Nyanza regions experienced serious operational challenges, which forced them to go under receivership.

At a professional level, Asian and African elites in Nyanza, unlike Western province, ventured in joint operation and management of financial institutions. This was evident with the establishment of Victoria Finance and Lake Credit Finance during the Moi era. Such ventures demonstrated the fact that Asians were key players in the economic development of the Nyanza region. Alongside banking, there were also cases in the Moi era where elite Asians sold their already acquired plots to African elites such as Hon Job Omino, a former Member of Parliament for Kisumu Town. Omino would later on lease out his plaza, the Omino Plaza, to a number of Asian businessmen in Kisumu. Such Afro-Asian political and economic dynamics were not witnessed in the Western region.

³⁶⁴ Ketan Somaia is a Kenyan of Asian origin. He was associated with a number of scandals such as the Goldenberg scandal during the Moi regime. He made headway in areas that range from hotel ownership to car distribution to sugar manufacturing. In 1989, Ketan Somaia founded Marshalls Ltd., an automobile distributor in Africa known for its allocation of cars like Honda and Tata to the African customer. Because of his shrewdness in business he was jailed in kamiti Prison and in London.

Similarly, a number of Asian owned banks like Bank of Baroda, Delphis Bank, Trust Bank, Southern Credit and Finance Corporation majorly operated in Kisumu town (Nyanza region), with very little existence in the Western region during the Moi era. Although these banks supported the economic growth of the Nyanza region, local African politicians and trade unionists cum politician such as Martin Shikuku (Western region) and Dennis Akumu from Kisumu in Nyanza region, had different and negative opinion towards the Asian. Their negative opinion and attitude influenced the Afro-Asian relation within the two regions. Dennis Akumu and Martin Shikuku advocated for the expulsion of Asians from Kisumu and Western Kenya respectively, arguing that Asians were agents of African exploitation. Martin Shikuku in particular questioned whether Africans could be allowed to operate and dominate businesses in India the way Asians dominated commerce and trade in the region. Such sentiments brewed and fuelled Afro-Asian tension and hostility. Such sentiments also promoted exclusion and inclusion of member of a certain community while at the same time drawing binaries between communities. It is, therefore, evident that some political elites in both Western and Nyanza regions were against the continued presence of Asians and their dominance over the economy of the two regions.

Although politics of hatred took a centre stage in the 1990s, the turn of the 21st century came with a different political realignment. This was demonstrated by the new alignment of some Asian elites with the local political leadership of the Nyanza region. This political alignment became fruitful when Shakeel Shabbir was nominated as the first Asian Mayor of Kisumu in the year 2000 with the approval and support of Raila Odinga. These political positions were never attained by Asians in the Western region nor were there any close political collaboration between Asians and Africans in the Western region of Kenya as evidenced in the Nyanza region.

Socially, Asians owned and managed some entertainment joints in the Nyanza region compared to the Western region. For instance, Asians managed cinema theatres such as Tivoli cinema and Nyanza cinema. These cinema theatres mainly showed Indian movies, which were apparently popular with African viewers. Movies acted by Amitabh Bachan were very popular with the African youthful audience who drew some social lessons from these movies. This notwithstanding, it is important to note that there was lack of full Afro-Asian integration in the housing sector. Unlike Kisumu, although segregation in housing was a common phenomenon in Western Kenya, some of the Asian employees of the Pan African Chemicals

and Pan Paper Mills stayed together within the same compound with Africans at the National Housing Corporation houses in Webuye. There was also a marked difference on issues related to Afro-Asian marriages in both Nyanza and Western regions. While Asian men married African women in Nyanza province, in Western region, cases of African men married to Asian women was common. Nevertheless, cases of Afro-Asian marriages were marginal in both regions of Nyanza and Western Kenya.

In the education sector, Asian owners of the Pan Paper Mills constructed Pan Paper High School as part of their social corporate responsibility. No such schools existed in the Nyanza region under the social corporate responsibility.

Conclusion

Moi era 1978-2002 was characterized by a close relationship between Asians and president Moi himself. This Moi-Asian nexus was meant to serve two purposes. The first purpose of the nexus was to ensure that Asian economic and political security was well taken care of. Secondly, this nexus was to provide certain levels of financial support to the Moi's government in return for their economic support. Few prominent Asian personalities like Pattni and Somaia among others were close to the political establishment and their closeness to the authority made other members of the Asian community to benefit from government tenders. There was also a rise in the immigration of a new generation of Asians known as the 'rocket' whose main interest was not to settle down but in Kenya but to get jobs, work and move to other places once they had made money. It has been demonstrated that most of the industrial ventures that the government had jointly established with the Asian experienced serious operational challenges and companies such as KICOMI and PanPaper had to be put under receivership.

It has been demonstrated that unlike in the past, there was a high level of Afro-Asian collaboration at a professional. This was seen with joint Afro-Asian ventures in the banking sector. But also, Asian banks flourished in Nyanza province compared to Western Kenya. Additionally, Asian political aspirations that were witnessed immediately after independence in Nyanza repeated itself in again in the Moi era when Shakeel Shabir was nominated and later on elected as the first Asian mayor in Kisumu. However, it is also important to note that some key political leaders both in Western and Nyanza regions disliked Asian presence and dominance in the economy of the two regions and called for their expulsion. Socially, it has been concluded that Asians operated cinema theatres especially in Kisumu town of Nyanza

province and marginally engaged in Afro-Asian marriages with Africans. But also, education which was meant to integrate Africans and Asians, became a class affair for rich Asians and Africans who took their children to high cost schools. It is, therefore, suffice it to say that despite the government concerted effort to encourage total Afro-Asian integration in schools and social places, this was not fully achieved due to Asian religious and cultural perception of Africans. In cases where Afro-Asian integration took place, economic class and status played a major role.

Finally, it is also important to note that the kind of Afro-Asian political relationship that emerged in the Nyanza region was as a result of the resistance to Moi's rule by the Luo ethnic community, which lived in Nyanza province. This relationship was a political strategy of countering Asian pogrom especially towards the end of the Moi's era in 2002. It was apparent that Moi's constitutional term was coming to an end and there was a need for a new Afro-Asian political realignment. Such Afro-Asian political dynamics were not experienced in the Western region of Kenya.

7.6 Postscript

In the subsequent election of 2002, which ousted President Moi from power and brought in President Kibaki at the helm of leadership, a number of developments took place. One, the Kibaki-Asian nexus was not as open as Moi-Asian nexus since Kibaki came on the platform of zero tolerance to corruption. However, towards the general election of 2007 and the subsequent violence that rocked many Kenyan towns including Kisumu and Kakamega, the aftermath of the post-election violence saw a shift as far as Afro-Asian relationship in Kisumu was concerned. Asian owners of supermarkets, which were closed due to fear of looting, decided to open them up so that Africans could buy food. But also, it emerged that most of the property that were left behind by members of Kikuyu community residing in Kisumu were sold to Asians, this was not so much witnessed in Western province.

Within today's ethnically divisive elite sphere, certain continuities might be identified. Raila Odinga, the former Prime Minister was perceived to be close to a number of Kenyan Asians. This impression was no doubt buttressed by the presence of Odinga and several Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) ministers at the Vibrant Gujarat Global Investors Summit in January 2009. Viewed from a different perspective, the Raila-Asian nexus could be traced from his father's relationship with the Asians, some (e.g. Pranlel Sheth) of whom were

deported by President Kenyatta during the height of Africanization process for their perceived closeness with Jaramogi Oginga Odinga who was seen as anti-Kenyatta establishment (Omenya, 2010). Asians had made contributions to the political ventures of Oginga Odinga, Raila's father, whose relations with Kenyatta became increasingly acrimonious in the mid to the late 1960s. The fact that these older ethnicised issues of competition and collaboration were entering into ODM/PNU rancor (whether accurately or not) could have well affected the investment from Asian nations and Afro-Asian relations in Nyanza and Western Provinces of Kenya (McCann, 2011:118/9).

After the post-election violence of 2007/8 Asian entrepreneurs and businessmen came back and bought premises which were hitherto owned by Africans from central province (members of the Kikuyu community). These included the Kimwa Grand Hotel in Kisumu, part of which is now operating as a supermarket. Tumaini, an Asian supermarket with an African name was also built on a site belonging to an African from Kikuyu ethnic community. On this site stood a large timber yard before it was burnt down during the post election violence. Several other wholesale businesses and hardwares owned by Asians also emerged especially in Kondele within Kisumu town. It therefore suffices to state that, inter-ethnic political rivalry between Africans enhanced Afro-Asian relationship in Kisumu. This was evident by an emergence of new Asian business enterprises operating in places like Kondele, Nyawita and Carwash. These areas were the epicentres of the post-election violence in 2008. This was quite ambivalent, considering the fact Asians and Africans had had long time business rivalry.

CONCLUSION

This study is contextualized within the postcolonial narrative and theoretical framework, and both Nyanza and Western provinces have been taken and used as postcolonial spaces. The notion ‘post-colony’ identifies specifically a given historical trajectory; that of societies recently emerging from the experience of colonization and the violence, which the colonial relationship involved. To be sure, Mbembe (2001:102) postulates that the postcolony is chaotically pluralistic; it has nonetheless an internal coherence. It is a specific system of signs, a particular way of fabricating simulacra or re-forming stereotypes. It is not, however, just an economy of signs, in which power is mirrored and imagined self-reflectively. The postcolony is characterized by a distinctive style of political improvisation, by a tendency to excess and lack of proportion, as well as by distinctive ways identities are multiplied, transformed and put into circulation. But the postcolony is also made up of a series of corporate institutions and a political machinery that, once in place, constitute a distinctive regime of violence. In this sense, the postcolony is a particularly revealing, and rather dramatic stage on which are played out the wider problems of subjection and its corollary discipline.

The argument as far as postcolonial relations, which this study is anchored on, is that to account for both the mind-set and the effectiveness of postcolonial relations of power, we need to go beyond the binary categories used in standard interpretations of domination, such as resistance vs passivity, autonomy vs subjection, state vs civil society, hegemony vs counter hegemony, tantalization vs detotalization. These oppositions are not helpful, rather, they cloud our understanding of postcolonial relations (Mbembe, 2001:103). Hence, it would seem wrong to continue to interpret postcolonial relationships in terms of resistance or absolute domination, or as a function of the binary oppositions usually adduced in conventional analyses of movements of indiscipline and revolt. It is on this note that Hommi Bhabha’s (1994) hybridity as a variant of postcolonial theory becomes handy and informs our analysis of postcolonial relations between Asians and Africans in Kenya’s Western and Nyanza Provinces. Bhabha (1994) raises concern over the failure of the postcolonial discourse to deliver stable and fixed identities. He describes colonial identities as almost the same but not quite. He argues that, the grim polarities of the colonial encounter are necessarily bridged by a ‘third space’ of communication, negotiation and, by implication, translation. It is in this indeterminate zone or ‘place of hybridity,’ where anti-colonial politics first begins to articulate its agenda and where the ‘construction of a political object that is new, *neither the*

one nor the other, properly alienates our political expectations, and changes, as it must, the very forms of our recognition of the moment of politics' (Bhabha 1994).

The study employs the postcolonial theoretical framework in understanding the dynamics of Afro-Asian relations within the chaotic plural spaces of Nyanza and Western provinces of Kenya. The postcolonial theory illustrates the complexities of the postcolonial identity, particularly at a time of intense globalization. The thrust of postcolonial thinking is to recognize the existence of the otherness and dismantle formulations, which inform discourses on the otherness (Kisiang`ani, 2003).

Omeje (2015:2) argues that colonial and postcolonial discourses have to be understood in their historical, genealogical, ideological and conceptual contexts. Whereas colonial discourses emerged out of specific historical, political and ideological constructions that witnessed their climax in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Europe, postcolonial discourses have mainly materialized from resistance (i.e. political and ideological) and critique (mainly intellectual) of post nineteenth century imperialism and colonialism, including the legacies of Western exploits in the global South and the contemporary power relations between the latter and the global North. Imperialism, colonialism and post colonialism are related in a complex way, but the precise nature of relationships or connections among these concepts depends on the theoretical and ideological persuasions of various theorists and commentators. Consequently, the historical and empirical referents of imperialism, colonialism, and postcolonialism have marked a variation across different regions of the world.

This is because, the legacies of colonialism have apparently not only persisted in the post-independence era, but have also aggravated in some instances, leading to conflicts of varied intensities. Africa is at the same time ravaged by the legacies of colonialism and the ravages of neocolonialism (Zezeza, 2006:99). Hence, the concept of post colonialism is postulated as having greater explanatory power in helping to understand the broad legacies of colonialism, the contemporary international structures that tend to reinforce the colonial legacies and asymmetrical relationships as well as their consequences and dynamics (Omeje, 2015:4)

In this study, Western and Nyanza regions are treated as postcolonial sub-spaces, which are grappling with imperial hegemony and legacy. The subject of race relations assumes even greater significance in such plural sub-spaces as the Nyanza and Western regions in which the

population is divided not merely on the basis of race, but also by language, culture, value system and religion. In such societies, unless a common consensus exists or a sense of nationhood is developed, divisive tendencies may intensify creating an atmosphere of suspicion, hate, and violence (Bhatt, 1976).

This study compared Afro-Asian relations between Nyanza and Western provinces of Kenya. The objectives of the study were: to investigate and compare the roots of Asian presence in Kenya's Western and Nyanza regions, to examine and compare the causes of suspicion, tension and conflict between Asians and Africans in Western and Nyanza regions, to examine and compare the roles played by Asians and Africans in the socio-economic activities and development in Western and Nyanza provinces of Kenya. The study also compared the levels of Afro-Asian integration within Nyanza and Western provinces of Kenya. The study uses oral as well as secondary data as methods of data collection.

This study was developed to test the following research premises: That the Asian presence in Western Province followed the same pattern of formal settlement as it happened in Nyanza region of Kenya; that the causes of Afro-Asian conflict in both Nyanza and western regions of Kenya were the same; that the Asian economic role in Western Kenya and Nyanza Province was negligible and that the levels of racial integration in Nyanza and Western Kenya was different. This study is important since no study of a comparative nature has been undertaken in Kenya to understand the relations between Asians and Africans living in different provinces of Kenya. It therefore fills in the paucity of literature as far as Afro-Asian studies and interaction in Nyanza and Western Provinces are concerned.

Looking at the diasporic Asian migration and settlement in Western and Nyanza provinces of Kenya, it has been demonstrated that the Asian diaspora was transnationally engaged and a dispersed group maintaining links with a real or perceived homeland (see Turner & Kleist, 2013:194). It was also observed that Indian settlement in Western and Nyanza provinces was a colonial venture aimed at entrenching colonial administration and capitalism into the interior parts of Nyanza and Western provinces. This was achieved, first by the construction of the Kenya- Uganda railway, which was completed in 1901. In Nyanza province, Asian settlement was both formal and informal. The formal Indian settlement in Nyanza province followed a pattern of a settlement scheme which was sanctioned by the colonial government. This led to the establishment of the first formal Asian settlement scheme in Kibos with the second settlement scheme being started within the Nyando valley. In these settlement

schemes, Asians were engaged in experimental farms, which were basically put in place to serve colonial capitalistic objective of introducing capitalistic agriculture within the colony through planting of cash crops. Informally, Indian settlement in Nyanza was encouraged by the construction of the Kenya Uganda railway. Asian traders accompanied colonial administrators as they moved into the hinterlands of the region. As they moved into the interior parts of the colony, they established *dukas* along the railway line and also settled within trading outpost that were created through colonial ordinances. It is suffice it to say, as Oonk (2013:31) puts it, that the colonial state created three types of peoples: the white settlers, the natives and the settled strangers who were the South Asians in Nyanza and Western Provinces of Kenya. This is because many of them saw themselves not as migrants, but as ‘settlers’. Often, they acquired local citizenships; however, in the eyes of the locals or ‘natives,’ they often remained ‘strangers’. They were ‘insiders’ and ‘outsiders’ in one and the same time. They were insiders, because they knew the local language, the local cultural and political habits and the local peculiarities. They were also aware of the dos and don’ts, and over the generations, they made a living in an initially unfamiliar environment. This is the place where they were born and raised and dreamt of raising their children and grandchildren from. They were born in an environment which, for them was not strange, but they were perceived as ‘strangers’ (Oonk, 2013:6). This observation by Oonk (2013) is true considering the fact that most of the Asians who settled in Nyanza became localized with some acquiring names such as Ogola Malikhan and Ogola Amali. Others spoke the local language with ease and ate local food, while other bought land. This cultural and linguistic hybridity played a key role in the whole process of Afro-Asian interaction.

In essence, land was alienated in places like Kibos, Muhoroni, Chemelil and Songhor to settle the Asians as agriculturist. This was in sharp contrast to the Asian settlement in Western Kenya, where Indians settled as commercial traders along the railway line and also in the trading centres, which emerged thereafter. Finally, although Asian settlement in Nyanza was to serve two conflicting and ambivalent purposes, their settlement in Western province was basically to open up the region to commercial activities and European administration. Demographically, the population of Asians in Nyanza was more compared to their population in Western Kenya. This explains why a settlement scheme was vital in Nyanza as compared to Western province.

Chapter three interrogated the emergence of Afro-Asian economic relations in Western and

Nyanza provinces of Kenya from 1900-1918. It was observed that Afro-Asian relations were shaped by the infrastructural developments that came into being as Indian merchants and colonial administrators penetrated into the interior parts of Western and Nyanza postcolony. These relations were diverse and included such issues as trade as well as social relations, which described the postcolony. It has been concluded that these relations changed the African social and economic lifestyles since Africans were exposed to foreign merchandise like clothes. Their dressing habits began to change as they moved from wearing of hides and skin, to a Dutch manufactured *Kanga* with deep Indonesian influence, thereby introducing a class of people known as *jonanga* (cloth wearers). Asians too borrowed some positive values from Africans. The study has demonstrated that some Asian terminologies and words such as *Sinduk*, *Dastur*, *Kalam* and *Kabat* were domesticated and formed part of African daily usage. These terminologies are currently used by Africans within Nyanza and Western regions of Kenya.

Such linguistic hybridity (ties) was a common feature which characterized Afro-Asian relations within the postcolony. The study demonstrates that Afro-Asian relations and engagements were similar and sometimes different within the two regions and Kisumu, which became the administrative centre of the two regions played a key role as far as Afro-Asian economic relation was concerned. In both areas, agriculture and commerce characterized the Nyanza and Western post-colony, as these were the main economic activities which ensured the survival of the colonial administration. Unlike in Nyanza province, where trading and market centres were started through ordinances, in Western Kenya, the most significant market in the province started with that of Mumias owned by Mumia of the Wangi Kingdom. Afro-Asian economic interactions in Central Nyanza was also different from the Western region in that Asians engaged themselves in fishing and fish trade. Afro-Asian economic interaction intensified with the colonial urbanisation effort as many trading centres were established. Although the process of urbanization was spearheaded by the colonial government, Asian also played a key role by mediating and supplying Africans with foodstuff especially during the early periods of colonization when Nyanza experienced a severe drought. The chapter concludes that education and housing followed a racial pattern both in Western and Nyanza regions of Kenya. However, because of sheer force of necessity, the Asians were forced to hire and stay with Africans as domestic servants. It is out of this condition that Asian women taught their African househelps how to cook some Indian dishes such as *chapati*; which Africans mimicked and later domesticated. Although mimicry reveals

something in so far as it is distinct from what might be called an *itself* that is behind (Bhabha, 1994:172), the Indian kitchen became the site of Afro-Asian hybridity. This chapter therefore disapproves our hypothesis that the Asian economic role in Western Kenya and Nyanza Province was negligible.

Focussing and comparing the Afro-Asian socio-economic relations in the interwar period, it has been argued that the political economy during the interwar period informed the patterns of Afro-Asian relations since the colonial government introduced economic policies, which ambivalently worked in favour of Afro-Asian relations. The colonial politics of this period thus favoured the interest of Africans at the expense of the Asians as stipulated in the Devonshire declaration of 1923. It was evident that the Asians were the pioneers of the dairy, sugar and transport industries in our areas of study. Although Afro-Asian relations were ambivalent and sometimes reciprocal as was evident in the dairy industry, there were a lot of economic contestations within the economic spaces of the two postcolony. This was demonstrated by Afro-Asian rivalry not only in the transport industry but also in commerce. For instance, business organisations such as the Kavirondo Chambers of Commerce and the Kavirondo Taxpayers Welfare Association played a critical role in countering Asian dominance in trade. In response, whether it was a mimicry or imitation as Bhabha (1994) puts it, the Asians also used associations such as the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce, North Nyanza Indian Traders Association and the Kisumu Chambers of Commerce, to contest and negotiate for their economic space in the region, an indication that mimicry also marked those moments of disobedience as well as being a sign of spectacular resistance. However, from the chapter discussion, it is suffice it to say, therefore, that postcolonial relations were not just about absolute dominance.

But also, it is important to note that the postcolonial space is an agonistic space. Despite the 'imitation' and 'mimicry' which the colonized peoples had to cope with in the presence of the imperial powers, their relationship became one of constant, if implicit, contestation and opposition. Indeed, such mimicry became the very site of that conflict, a 'transparency', which Bhabha (1994) believes, is dependent for its fixity on the underlying negative of imperial presence which it seems to duplicate. For Bhabha (1994), 'mimicry' does not mean that opposition is rejected, but rather that it is seen to encompass more than overt opposition. Opposition is not simply reduced to intention, but is implicit in the very production of dominance whose intervention as a 'dislocatory presence' paradoxically confirms the very

thing it displaces. The resulting hybrid modalities also challenge the assumption of the ‘pure’ and the ‘authentic’ concepts, upon which the resistance to western forms of knowledge often stands (Ashcroft *et al*, 1995: 9).

It is further demonstrated in chapter four, that unlike Kakamega, Lakha family one of the earliest Indian family within Nyanza region constructed a Town Clock (*saa maduong*) in memory of Kassim Lakha within the Central Business District of Kisumu. This portrayed a way in which the imagination and aspirations of the colonized was controlled. It also demonstrated how socialization of contested economic spaces was achieved through historical memories, which strategically represented authority in terms of the artifice of the archaic (Ashcroft *et al*, 1995:207). But also, the Town Clock epitomized the value and historical attachment that Asians had with Kisumu. Contrary to Nyanza region, goldmining was one of the major economic ventures in Western Kenya, its deposits in Nyanza was insignificant. Unlike Nyanza region, however, the discovery of gold spurred and increased Afro-Asian trade and relations in Kakamega town of Western Province. This was evident with the number of illegal trade in gold between Asians and African.

In spite of the fact that the cultivation of cotton was an initiative of the colonial government of introducing capitalist mode of production into the rural economies of Nyanza through the Asians, their attempt to introduce this crop was met with some resistance. It has also been demonstrated that there was an apathy in the cultivation of cotton by African in the interwar period 1919 to 1945. This apathy was viewed as a subversive resistance by Africans to western forms of knowledge and values. The cultivation of cotton led to the establishment of cotton ginneries by Asians in both Western and Nyanza regions of Kenya with a higher concentration of these ginneries in Nyanza compared to Western province. The chapter concluded that racial segregation in schools and in residential areas were, however, not conducive for the development of Afro-Asian social relations as their interaction was limited. However, because of necessity, some of these racial barriers were overcome.

Afro-Asian socio-economic relations in Western and Nyanza provinces of Kenya during the decolonization period 1945-1963 was also examined in chapter five and it was observed that there were a number of socio-economic changes, which shaped up Afro-Asian relations within the two regions. However, there was continued rivalry between Asians and Africans. Similarly, there were illegal Afro-Asian partnerships that were manifested in the transport and the mining sectors (Jivraj, O.I, 2013). This was necessary to ensure a steady source of

income for some of the Asians who had not yet entrenched themselves economically within Western and Nyanza regions of Kenya. This notwithstanding, under the colonial rule and beyond, it was demonstrated that a constellation of distinctively indigenous interest gradually came into being (Mbembe, 2001). It played a key role in the transformation of ancestral systems of power and in the realignment of alliances, including economic ones. This transformation resulted in the creation, by Africans, of a relatively large number of small businesses. Most specialized either in trade as witnessed by Africans taking up business in the dairy industry, and in the transport sector both in Western and Nyanza regions of Kenya. The Afro-Asian colonial relation, in its relation to subjection was thus inseparable from the quest for productivity.

It was demonstrated that apart from the sugar and soap industry, large-scale industrial production did not perform well and most of the industries were basically agricultural. Similarly, it has been pointed out that Asian owned Miwani Sugar Company played a significant role in the production of sugar, which was widely distributed to consumers within Nyanza and Western provinces. Moreso, Africans acquired skills and Africanised some of the Indian technology that they learnt, especially with regard to automotive repair and making of tin lamps (*tach nyangile*); a demonstration of the usage of the power of hybridity. These lamps (*tach Nyangile*) received wide usage in the rural areas of Kisumu, Ndere, Bungoma and Kakamega. Nevertheless, the sugar and transport industry continued to remain areas of economic contestations as Africans complained of low pay for tonnage of sugarcane supplied to the Asian owned jaggery factories. Economic contestations were also witnessed when Africans developed the desire to outdo Asians in the transport industry. These contestations were a source of hostility and conflict between Asians and Africans.

It has been concluded that although there was an acute shortage of houses for Asians in Kisumu and Kakamega, efforts were made through the Kisumu Ismailia Housing limited, Kisumu Asian Housing Committee and the Municipal Council of Kisumu to address the problem. This combined effort was lacking in Western province. Socially, colonialism was racist as witnessed in the housing and education sectors. However, African servants working for Asians in the dynamics of Afro-Asian relations were a vital link in the whole scheme of things. Their hard work and total dedication contributed to the idyllic lifestyles of Asian women, who sometimes helped them during crisis. This dynamism either reinforced or weakened the relations between Asian women and their African houseboys/house girls.

In chapter six, the study examined comparative aspects of Afro-Asian relations in the post independent period, 1963-1978. The chapter demonstrates that European colonialism was Africanized, making Kenyatta the first black governor (East Africa Standard, 14/12/ 2008). This 'independence' was actually the Africanisation of colonialism. The Africans, as Mbembe (2001:103) puts it, sought to institutionalize themselves and to achieve legitimation and domination. The post independent Kenyatta era was majorly characterized by Africanisation. This was the government's main agenda after independence in Kenya. In terms of administrative structure, there was no much change as European colonialism was Africanised, making Kenyatta the first black governor (East Africa Standard, 14/12/ 2008). This period also witnessed a massive attempt by the African government to expand schools and enforce racial integration. To bolster trade under African control, the government established institutions such as the Kenya National Trading Corporation at the national level with branches in Kakamega and Kisumu in Western and Nyanza provinces respectively. This was also supplemented with local trade boards such as the Kakamega Trade Development Joint Board and the Kisumu Trade Development Joint Board, which were formed in Western and Nyanza regions respectively to improve African trade in the two regions. It has been demonstrated that although the Independent government was keen in Africanising the economy, this policy was not realized much as there were cases where Africans colluded with Africans to conceal ownership of some businesses owned by Asians. Later on, the government decided to get into joint industrial ventures with Asian industrialist leading to the establishment of certain industries such as the PanPaper, Muhoroni sugar, SONY sugar and KICOMI. Other illegal partnerships also emerged which were mutually beneficial to both Asians and Africans. Socially, the process of Afro-Asian social integration was encouraged in schools and residential places. However, this was not fully achieved as anticipated due to the colonial legacy of racial discrimination. It has been concluded that, although the Kenyatta government emphasized and encouraged Africanization policy, this policy became a source of conflict and tension among Africans and Asians which it intended to integrate, leading to a situation where Asians became a source of resentment.

Finally, the Moi era 1978-2002 witnessed an emergence of a Moi-Asian nexus for political and economic survival of the Asians. Nevertheless, this nexus was also financially beneficial to President Moi too. Few prominent Asian personalities like Pattni and Somaia among others were close to the political establishment and their closeness to the authority made other members of the Asian community to benefit from government tenders. There was also a rise

in the immigration of a new generation of Asians known as the 'rocket' whose main interest was not to settle down but in Kenya but to get jobs, work and move to other places once they had made money. It has been demonstrated that most of the industrial ventures that the government had jointly established with the Asian experienced serious operational challenges and companies such as KICOMI and PanPaper had to be put under receivership.

It has been observed that unlike in the past, there was a high level of Afro-Asian collaboration at a professional. This was seen with joint Afro-Asian ventures in the banking sector. But also, Asian banks flourished in Nyanza province compared to Western Kenya. Additionally, Asian political aspirations that were witnessed immediately after independence in Nyanza repeated itself in again in the Moi era when Shakeel Shabir was nominated and later on elected as the first Asian mayor in Kisumu. However, it is also important to note that some key political leaders both in Western and Nyanza regions disliked Asian presence and dominance in the economy of the two regions and called for their expulsion. Socially, it has been concluded that Asians operated cinema theatres especially in Kisumu town of Nyanza province and marginally engaged in Afro-Asian marriages with Africans. But also, education, which was meant to integrate Africans and Asians, became a class affair for rich Asians and Africans who took their children to high cost schools.

This study has achieved its objective by establishing that the patterns of Asian settlement in Western Kenya and Nyanza provinces were different. Although there were two Indian settlement schemes in Nyanza province; one in Kibos and the other one in Nyando area, Asian settlement in Western province was very informal. This observation disapproves the first hypothesis of the study that Asian presence and settlement in both Western and Nyanza regions of Kenya was the same and followed a similar pattern. The study has also demonstrated that most of the conflicts and tensions arose out of various contestations within the economic spaces of Nyanza and Western regions of Kenya. However, there were unique cases especially in Western Kenya where conflict arose out of the need to access natural resources such as water from the rivers within Western regions in places such as Luanda and Butere. It is therefore suffice it to state that as much as the Afro-Asian conflict came out due to economic factors, water as a natural resource also played some key role in heightening tension and conflict between the two groups especially in Western province of Kenya. This conflict due to accessibility to water was not manifested in Nyanza province. This observation

therefore partly confirms and contradicts our second premise of the study that the causes of Afro-Asian conflict in both Nyanza and western regions of Kenya were the same.

Similarly, the study has demonstrated that Asians played a major role in the economic development of the two regions as far as industrial growth is concerned. The study concludes that although full integration has not been achieved between the two races, the levels of Afro-Asian integration in Nyanza vis a vis Western Kenya was not the same. In Nyanza province, Asians tended to have integrated with Africans more than in Western Kenya. This could be attributed to the number of Asians in Kisumu and the fact that a number of Asians in this area found themselves born in an environment which, for them, was not strange. This was demonstrated by the linguistic hybridity that the Asians adopted. Most Asians in Kisumu for instance, speak the local language, they shared certain apartments with Africans, and they played alongside Africans in the Kisumu hockey team locally referred to as Kisumu Simba Union Club. Similarly, the level of integration was also evident by the fact that Africans and Asians watched Indian films and movies together in Asian owned theatres such as Nyanza Cinema and Tivoli Cinema. These avenues were missing in Western Kenya and could, therefore, explain why the levels of integration between the two races differed in Nyanza and Western regions of Kenya. This observation, therefore, confirms our last premise that the levels of integration between Asians and Africans within the two regions of study were different.

Still, the question of 'local assimilation' often defined along marriage patterns (within their own group or outsiders) continues to linger. The Asians constantly had to deal with these notions of the state and local citizens. Even after three or four generations of running local trading companies and spending money on charities, temples, mosques, local education, hospitals, dispensaries and what not, they found that this was never enough to be accepted fully as locally loyal. As Bindra (2005) observed, the more Asians were resented, the more they became isolated and the more they become isolated the more they were resented. The ambivalence of the local natives eventually explained why settled Asians themselves remained ambivalent towards their local habitat as well. Because of the sometimes hostile political and economic atmosphere, it was often very rational to keep business and family ties with other countries open. In fact, these transnational ties (which are much broader than the ties with the 'motherland') often became a vital factor in the historical development of the 'settled strangers' (Oonk, 2013:7).

This situation thus posed a major challenge of assessing the extent of integration as far as Afro-Asian marriages were concerned within the two provinces, taking marriage as a parameter of measuring the level of integration. However, the study has confirmed that despite the strict nature of the caste system, both Asian and African men and women married across the racial divide within Nyanza and Western Province, albeit with equal resistance rejection and hate from the Indian families, especially whose women were married to African men. Asians have continued to contest Afro-Asian marriages as a proof of Afro-Asian integration arguing that there was a lot of Afro-Asian integration at the economic level (Ajay, O.I, 2013). Finally, this study emphasizes that the economic role of the Asian community cannot be underestimated within the two regions. This is because Asians laid the foundations of the dairy industry, transport industry, sugarcane, paper industry and cotton industries within the region. Their expertise, business acumen and managerial skills in banking and the supermarkets sectors in the two provinces are evident in all the two provinces of Nyanza and Western. Their economic role was therefore significant and not negligible as premised earlier in the hypothesis. Similarly, their economic investment in Nyanza province was more as compared to their investments in Western province.

In conclusion therefore, Afro-Asian socio economic relations in Nyanza and Western regions of Kenya brings forth the family network of the Asians and their local embeddedness, which developed into transnational families and communities. The study highlights the concept of migration as a process. The process might be seen as a scheme of smaller and bigger questions, uncertainties, assumptions and good and bad experiences. The migration and settlement of Asians into Nyanza and Western provinces of Kenya was therefore a colonial trigger aimed to serve some colonial interest from the beginning. This settlement was to shape Afro-Asian relations during the colonial and postcolonial periods. These relations were characterized by conflicts and animosity, which had their origin in the colonial period and especially in the institutional structures imposed by the British. These institutional patterns gave rise to certain attitudes and beliefs, which were conducive to a state of conflict and interracial hostility, which were seen between Asians and Africans in the early colonial period. All these, were as a result of capitalism, which was the main rider of colonialism with Asians being the agents of colonialism.

Although Afro-Asian hostility and animosity was part and parcel of their relationship, it is important to note that the relationship was reciprocal and mutually beneficial. This is

exemplified by the economic initiatives that the Indians started within the region and the entrepreneurial skills, which they imparted on the Africans. The dairy industry, sugar industry as well as the transport industry in Nyanza and Western provinces are worth mention as some of the economic ventures that the Asians helped to sustain.

In this study, the postcolony of Nyanza and Western regions has continued to be shaped and reshaped by the socio-economic dynamics of both Asians and Africans. These dynamics demonstrated the ambivalence and the hybrid nature of relationships between the two communities during the colonial and postcolonial period. The plural nature of the Nyanza and Western post-colony led to the emergence of new Asian identities and families; the ‘rockets’ whose interest in the region was fluid and economically driven without serious attachment to the older Asian generation. New forms of Afro-Asian marriages also emerged against the cultural norms and traditions of the Asians, which affirms the importance of hybridity within the postcolonial social spaces of Nyanza and western province.

The impact of Afro-Asian relations today is that the two communities have been able to live peacefully together. This is due to the fact that Africans in both Western and Nyanza provinces have continued to benefit from the industrial and economic investments that the Asian community has put in place in the two regions. This was demonstrated during the 2008 post-election violence, when members of the African community were forced to calm down so that they could be allowed to buy food stuff from Asian supermarkets within the town centre after going for several days without adequate supply of food.

Although Uganda and Tanzania were out of the scope of this study, it is important to point out that after the expulsion of Asians from Uganda, Asians remained apprehensive as far as settling in Uganda was concerned, until President Yoweri Museveni made a call that they should come back and continue with their business. It is, therefore, a bit difficult to assess the level of Afro-Asian integration during the time of Amin and the post Amin era in Uganda. There is therefore a need for further studies to be carried out to compare Afro-Asian relations in Uganda during the time of Museveni’s rule.

Finally, the study of diasporic communities needs to be recontextualised within the postmodern and globalized African state, which is more liberal. By looking at Afro-Asian relations from this perspective, it is believed that other intricacies as far as Afro-Asian relations are concerned in Nyanza and Western provinces of Kenya would emerge.

The study, therefore, recommends that research should be carried out on the gendered relations within the Asian households, bringing both African men and women together with their Asian counterparts, in terms of roles, division of labour and so on. The study also recommends that further research should be done on the role of Asians in the Kenya Defence Forces from the colonial time up to the postcolonial period. Because of the emerging issues of intimate relationships between Asians and Africans (both men and women), studies should be carried out to assess the sustainability of Afro-Asian marriages by looking at the driving factors behind such kinds of marriages. Further research should also be done on the Asian religion and culture with a view to examining how religion and culture affect Afro-Asian relations in the country. Finally, the study recommends that a comparative research should also be carried out about Afro-Asian relations in the three East African states of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania in the post Idi Amin era.

Table: 10 Population of African and Asians in Western and Nyanza Province 1919-1999

Year	Town/Region	Population of Asians	Population of Africans
1912	Kisumu	659	4367
	Mumias	65	470
1919	Kisumu	1,977	558,163
	Kakamega	265	576, 800
1948	Kisumu	4,973	979,000
	Kakamega	604	635,000
1962	Nyanza Province	11,352	1,651,779
	Western	1,174	954,029
1969	Nyanza Province	8,994	1,664,100
	Western	1,347	1,014,500
1979	Nyanza Province	3,536	2,643,956
	Western	610	1,832, 663
1989	Nyanza Province	3,926	3,507,162
	Western Province	858	2,544,329
1999	Nyanza Province	-	4,392,196
	Western	-	3,358,776
Total		40, 340	26,317,290

Source: Maxon R. (2002), Population Census 1962, 1969 1979, 1989 and 1999. Nyanza Province Annual Report 1912, 1919 and 1948

Conclusively, the demographic Table 10 above demonstrates that the region's Asian community was largely concentrated in urban areas. This group included individuals whose families (or they themselves) had come to the region during the twentieth century from what are today Indian and Pakistan. They were divided by religion and caste. The main religious groupings were Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Christians. Table 10 further demonstrates that the largest number of Asians lived in Nyanza province compared to Western Province (Maxon 2002:334). There, a number of Asian families had also been involved for some time in farming, particularly of sugar cane. The political and economic change that followed 1963 after Kenya got her independence had a considerable impact on European and Asian populations of Western Kenya. Considerable number left the region, many leaving Kenya altogether while others moved to major cities such as Kisumu. Those who left Kenya did not wish to remain in a Kenya ruled by the African majority or they felt that their future economic prospects were not at all bright. Those who left did not take up citizenship in Independent Kenya and left the region. This is well captured by the reduction in population of Asians especially in year 1962, 1969 and 1979.

The Asian exodus after independence was the result mostly of uncertainty over the future of businessmen in commerce and industry after the government decided to Africanize commerce. The Immigration Act of 1967 gave the state power to control non-citizens ability to work or carry on commerce. The Trade Licensing Act of the same year called for re-licensing of all traders, and it gave the state power to exclude non-citizens traders from certain goods and areas. It came into effect in 1968. It was these acts, which helped propel the exodus of Asians from Western Kenya (Maxon, 2002:335).

Nevertheless, Asian commercial concerns continued to dominate the main streets in Western Kenya's towns and cities. A more visible impact was felt in the small trading centres in the rural areas where African shopkeepers now took over from non-citizen Asian traders. Asian citizen traders (those who took Kenyan citizenship) stayed on in these local market centres, as at Luanda in now Vihiga District, or moved to larger cities like Kisumu. This would explain why Asian population in Nyanza was higher than Asian population in Western province. Moreover, the rate of decline of both the Asian and European population was quite similar: 36.5 percent decline between 1962 and 1989 for Asians and 32.6 per cent for Europeans. The table also shows an interesting increase in Asian population in Western Kenya between 1979 and 1989. It is also fascinating to note that the percentage of Asian citizens among the Asian

population living in the region was higher in the latter year than in the former: 48 per cent against 37.1 per cent (Maxon 2002:336).

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