KYAMBOGO UNIVERSITY
AGRICULTURAL AND MARKETING COOPERATIVES IN
TORORO COUNTY C 1912-1991

BY
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APPROVAL

I declare that this work was carried out by Mr. Okware Joseph under the theme of AGRICULTURAL MARKETING CO-OPERATIVES IN TORORO COUNTY 1912-1991. The research was carried out under my supervision and is now ready for submission for the Award of Master of Arts (History) Degree of Kyambogo University.

SIGNED

SUPERVISOR DR. SEWANYANA SENKOMAGO
DECLARATION

I, Okware Joseph B, do hereby declare that this is my own work and it has never been submitted to any University for any award.

SIGN : 

DATE :
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the following:

1. My beloved parents, OKWARE BONIF ANCE AND THE LATE LUCY OKWARE AGO LA, for nurturing me, educating me, loving me and instilling in me the spirit of resilience.

2. The Reverend Fr. Dr. Zeverin Emagalit for selflessly paying for my studies from primary six up to senior four.

3. My loving brother and confidant, Okware john for sacrificing his needs and that of his family to see me through Higher School Certificate (H.S.C).

4. My loving wife and son, Grace Okware and Austin Okware who for long missed my company during data collection and writing of this report.
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•

ABSTRACT

This study explores the history of Agricultural Marketing Co-operatives, the impact of vested interests and the benefits to members in Tororo County in the period 1912-1991. It comprises six chapter.

Chapter one explains the meaning of co-operatives in general and agricultural ones in particular. It analyses the various takes of different scholars on the subject of co-operatives. The statement of the problem, the objectives, significance and scope of the study are also included. At the same time the research questions, methodology and the challenges encountered in the course of the study are discussed.

The second chapter reconstructs the genesis of agricultural co-operatives in general. An analysis of the relationship between agricultural co-operatives and the colonial state is also made. The chapter further examines the patronizing but less interventionist attitude of the colonial government; presented in the light of constituting the very beginning of vested interests in the movement.

The fourth chapter presents major policy shifts on the movement in the first five years of the National Resistance Movement (NRM) regime. The opportunities and challenges presented by the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) are examined. This chapter concludes with a discussion on the implications of the 1991 Co-operative Societies Statute on agricultural marketing co-operatives in Tororo County.

Chapter five discusses the organizational and structural problems faced by agricultural marketing co-operatives in Tororo County alongside the benefits to members and the debate on revival.

Chapter six handles the conclusion and recommendations.
DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Capitalism : The socio-economic system based on private ownership of the means of production (land, labour, capital and entrepreneurship and distribution.

Countervailing power: In the context agricultural cooperative, it means an organized group of farmers/ producers that has equal but opposite force to a group that seeks to exploit them.

Income poverty : It can be simply defined as the observable and measurable deprivation of financial resources.

Liberalization : An economic policy which involves a government allowing the private sector to freely participate in the economic life of the country.

Monopoly : A major enterprise or an association of enterprise controlling a substantial sector of the production and marketing of a certain commodity and dominating the market for this commodity in order to secure monopoly profits.

Primary cooperative society: A group of persons linked by an economic interest who undertake a planned economic activity using their own resources to solve their own problems.
Secondary Cooperative society: This consists of a group of primary cooperative societies. Example of these include district cooperative Unions.

Tertiary cooperative society: This draws their membership from the secondary cooperative societies and is national in nature.

Vested interest: A strong personal involvement in something for purposes of benefiting from it.
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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is an attempt to analyze major development of the agricultural marketing cooperatives in the present Tororo County between 1912 and 1991. Tororo is one of the counties that constitute the present Tororo District in eastern Uganda. It borders west Budama to the west, Kenya to the East and Mbaale and Busia districts to the North and South respectively. This scholars. The entire research process; objectives methods used and problems encountered in the course of the study are presented.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

There are various definitions of the term co-operatives. However there is also common agreement that cooperatives is a pure organizational model "which is any kind of group of persons linked together by economic interests, who undertake a planned economic activity by using their own resources of solving their own problems".' Agricultural marketing cooperatives therefore are those that undertake planned marketing of agricultural produce in order to alleviate income poverty among members. It is important to note that members come together voluntarily. Agricultural Co-operatives like other forms of modern co-operatives embody characteristics which include formal registration, by-laws, bureaucratic structure, organizational autonomy, self help initiatives, membership participation and empowerment?
Co-operatives as known today can be traced back to the famous Rochdale Co-operative Pioneers of the 1850s. Members of the above group voluntarily joined together to carry out their economic activities on democratic management equitable distribution of economic output and creating an atmosphere of autonomy.

Co-operation has been a way of life in Africa in general and Uganda in particular. Apart from these traditional forms of co-operation in hunting, grazing and agriculture, there seems to be no concrete historical evidence to suggest that modern forms of co-operatives existed in Uganda let alone Tororo County before 1912.

The first attempt at purely-co-operative activities went as far back as 1913, when four African farmers in Singo County of Buganda formed "Kinakulya Growers' Society" for purpose of marketing their crops cooperatively. The next stage came with the formation of "the Buganda Growers Association" in 1923.4

The introduction of export agriculture in Uganda coupled with the 1900 Buganda Agreement fostered social and economic inequalities. The basis of these inequalities was the new land tenure system introduced by the British colonial authorities. The newly created landed class of royals and chiefs exacted heavy tributes from their cotton growing tenants.

In the wake of British territorial expansion, Buganda generals notably Semei Kakungulu were co-opted to extend British imperial rule over other parts of Uganda particularly Bukedi where the current Tororo District and Tororo County fall. Consequently the Buganda economic structure was propagated throughout present day Uganda. Chiefs outside Buganda conscripted labour to
work in their cotton farms and excessive use of such force led to agitation which in conjunction with Bataka movement of 1922, prompted the colonial government to formulate legislations geared at protecting local producers from excessive feudal exploitation. Subsequently a law was enacted by the colonial authorities sought to make labour conscription unnecessary by having chiefs paid a salary. Besides, these chiefs were denied freehold and tenure, in this way granting local producer's security of tenure.

In light of the above arrangements, producers in Uganda in general and Tororo County in particular had by the late 1920's increasingly become masters of their own time and labour which they could invest into profitable cash crop production. However, cash crop growing in the 1920's was strongly organized on racial lines. Commenting on the same subject Opio Odongo observed that the British colonial authorities prodded Africans to specialize in growing cash crops while their European and Asian counterparts dominated the more profitable processing and export sub-sectors. This was a deliberate alliance between the colonial regime and European and Asian Traders to the exclusion of the Africans and like in the neighboring Kenya, it was bound to and did create racial tensions. However, because of alien vested interest in the commercial sector, African producers were faced with several obstacles. All kind of laws were passed ostensibly to regulate the commercial sectors but the real aim was to hamper African participation in commerce while buttressing Asian-European interests. Example of such laws was the 1901 law prohibiting petty trading, the 1902 law that forbade trading without a license, the 1918 cotton rules that barred the purchasing of raw cotton and so was the keeping of any factory or store for the purpose of processing cotton. Enrich C, while referring to the cotton ginning legislation and the produce marketing ordinance summarized the above impediments in the following words.
"Consolidated a rigid frame work into which it was virtually impossible for small scale African entrepreneurs to penetrate".

Meanwhile in neighbouring Kenya, imperfect completion in commercial agriculture and commerce in general bred racial disharmony and the colonial authorities were justified in their fears that perpetuation of the same system would replicate the Kenya situation in Uganda. 8 This prompted the colonial government to enlist the services of Mr. WHK Campbell a League of Nations advisor on cooperatives to advise on the prospects of institutionalizing cooperatives in Uganda. The 1946 Cooperative Societies Ordinance was a result of the 1945 Cooperative Societies' Bill both of which resulted from Mr. Campbell's recommendations.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM
Co-operatives are formed for purposes of common interest. One of the cardinal reasons among members is fighting income poverty. Population density and poverty in Tororo County are among the highest nationwide. For example, of the 30 million Ugandans, 480,000 (1.6%) live in Tororo district. This means a population density of 313 people per square kilometer, which is about 3 times the national average of 124 persons per square kilometer9. Inspite of this, there has been a tendency for scholars to concentrate research on Co-operatives in areas like Bugisu, Lango, Buganda and Ankole. The statistics above denote urgent interventions, one of them being agricultural and marketing co-operatives. The study therefore has attempted to fill the gap in Uganda historiography by drawing the attention of scholars to the history and critical role of co-operatives in improving the lives of the people of Tororo County.
1.4 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study is limited to the period between 1912-1991. The year 1912 is used as the starting point of the study because cotton growing that was to form the basis of the agricultural cooperatives in Tororo county spread to the area of study around that time. Besides, many peasants embraced the growing of cotton and then given the vested interest then dominant in the field of commerce in general and cotton marketing in particular, the seeds of the agricultural cooperative we know of today were sown then.

1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

In this study, the major objectives were;

• To examine the contribution of Agricultural Co-operatives to the improvement of the welfare of peasants.

• To assess the impact of vested interest groups on the performance of co-operatives.

• To examine the arguments in favour or against the revival of agricultural co-operatives.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study will:

i. Add useful information on the existing stock of knowledge about the development of Agricultural Co-operatives in Uganda.

ii. Show the role played by agricultural cooperatives in the socio-economic development of Tororo county.

iii. Be a voice of the peasants interested in revival of co-operatives.
1.7 LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature on agricultural marketing cooperatives in general is available, but no direct attempt has been made to carry out a detailed analysis of this subject as far as Tororo County is concerned. Gaps have been identified as shown by the review that follows shortly. At the same time attempts have been made to bridge them.

Opio writing on Agricultural co-operative movement in Uganda gave a country-wide overview of these farmers organizations!”. Where as his findings are essential to this study, its generalized nature justified my intension to limit the study to a specific geographical region- Tororo county. commenting on the relationship between cooperatives and development, Eagen, gave a plausible analysis on the critical role played by agricultural cooperatives. He observed; It is a recognized fact that in the early stages of economic development, agriculture is the dominant sector in the generation of employment and income”. This is a phenomenon typical of developing countries where agriculture contributes more than 50% of the GDP. The above findings are credible but Eagen paid no attention to how farmers organized themselves to create the said employment and improve income in a suitable way. The fact that agricultural cooperatives collapsed in Tororo County implied that creation and sustenance of agricultural cooperatives goes beyond the issue of vested interests. His findings were invaluable to this research nonetheless.

Deliberating on the genesis of the cooperative movement, particularly with regard to restrictions imposed by the British colonial authorities on indigenous entrepreneurs, Enrich critiques the Produce Marketing Ordinance in the following way; he noted how the colonial economic system was so rigid that it was virtually impossible for small scale African entrepreneurs to penetrate. The latter did penetrate the commercial sectors after World War II. Enrich’s findings seemingly
covered the pre-world war II period, thus explaining why peasants' post-war penetration of the commercial sector in Uganda in general and Tororo County in particular was not captured. My findings bridged this gap.

Zwannenberg with King described how the alliance between middlemen and European - Asian processors and exporters excluded African peasants from commercial agricultural activities. It was this exclusion, so they contend that prompted African farmers to opt for a cooperative strategy"

This thesis generally adds up, but their choice not to relate it to any particular area of study was remedied by limiting my area of study to Tororo county.

On the same subject above, Opio Odongo noted:
In response to the deliberate alliance between the Colonial government and Alien vested groups the African Farmers tactically adopted cooperative strategy

Like Zwannenberg with King Opio Odongo’s thesis is partly valid but generalized. They also fell short by not explaining why they felt African farmers formed cooperatives simply as a reaction to the alien vested interest. I posit however that from the study of economic organizations of pre-colonial African states/societies, cooperation in agriculture and other aspects of life was a fact of life. Agricultural cooperatives therefore partly resulted from the contradictions within the colonial economy but also partly because of the African Spirit of Communalism and self-help.

The cooperative Movement (particularly the Agricultural marketing ones) registered some failures some of which were caused by the fact that these organizations were in many cases headed by people with limited formal or no education at all. Digby, in this regard noted that the
heads of departments often knew nothing about cooperatives or even ordinary commercial methods”. It is my contention that it is not plausible to argue as Digby did that heads of departments were totally ignorant. They may have been ignorant about the modern principles of the Rochdale model of cooperation, but they were knowledgeable on the spirit of cooperation.

Stinchcomb re-affirmed Digby's findings and referred to the gross inexperience of leaders and members of cooperative movements as far as organizational techniques and methods were concerned”. Whereas such criticisms were well founded, the damning nature of the indictments was uncalled for. For instance, referring to organizational methods and techniques, these scholars seemed to be in favour of the western model of cooperation but oblivious of the fact that part of the problems agricultural co-operatives, or indeed any form of cooperatives faced in Ugandan in general, resulted from whole sale duplication of the western model. In a situation where the majority of Ugandans were illiterate and cherished no group beyond their ethnic boundaries, the authors above were better off suggesting alternative models of cooperation.

Heyden observed that social relationship based on kinships and other local institutions were still more important than mutual loyalty between peasants in different village communities”.

Though he fell short of suggesting how these social relationships can be harnessed to further a cooperative spirit and strategy, his findings though encompassing East Africa in context, was a Wriggly believed in the ability of Ugandans to generate wealth through agriculture”. Although his study was not specific to a given area, let alone Tororo County he exposed in general the colonial mentality towards the place of Africans in the commercial agricultural marketing

8
initiative. He summed up how in 1921 the chief colonial secretary made no secret of the policy restricting Africans to the growing of cash crops and Europeans to the more profitable buying and marketing process. This revelation helped me understand the genesis of vested interest in agricultural marketing cooperatives.

Okoro Okereke drew a link between the British labour party's socialist's ideals with the British colonial administration 1940's belief in cooperation as a means of fostering economic development. Perhaps then it was no coincidence that a bill was enacted into Cooperative societies' Ordinance in 1946. This ordinance had far reaching consequences on the legalization of the agricultural cooperative marketing in Uganda in general. Though generalized, Okoro Okereke's findings among others determined how this post-world war II and post-conservative policy impacted on the agricultural cooperative in Tororo County.

During the colonial period, British colonial authorities allied with Asian commercial interests to subdue African Ugandan interests. Mamdani Noted how the Obote 1 government (1962-1971) tried to right the above colonial anomaly by giving financial and managerial autonomy to cooperative societies in the cooperatives societies' Act of 1963. He pointed out how the same government made a complete "U" turn and replaced the 1963 cooperatives Societies' Act with that of 1970 whose purpose was to give government greater powers for the guidance, directing and control of agricultural cooperative societies and unions". Though the above observations were general in nature, they constituted an invaluable beginning-point for this study particularly as far as determining the ramifications of government interferences in the day to day affairs of agricultural cooperatives in Tororo County.
Referring to the importance of cooperative as a tool for rural transformations, the world conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural development of the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organizations noted one of its cardinal principles as follows:

Promote people’s organizations, including rural workers’ associations and cooperative to strengthen the participation of the rural poor in decision making, implementation and evaluation of agrarian and rural development programmes\textsuperscript{22}.

Although the above remarks made no particular reference to Tororo County, its findings apply to this study since it is among others aimed at assessing the relevance of agricultural cooperatives to the rural poor in Tororo County.

Banturaki wrote with reference to the cooperatives in general in Tanzania. He observed thus:

The central objective for the founding of modern cooperatives, the model we have today is the eradication of poverty through mobilization and coordinating resources from the very poor themselves\textsuperscript{23}.

Though Banturaki’s findings focused on Tanzania, it corroborated with my findings which revealed that peasants were better off with the week, inefficient and corrupt agricultural cooperatives of the past than with no cooperatives at all.

On the occasion marking the cooperative day in 2002, then vice president of the republic of Uganda, Specioza Wandira Kazibwe, emphasized the importance of cooperatives as a necessary organizational approach for sustainable development\textsuperscript{24}. This position has been echoed by many other scholars and found to be largely valid. I, hasten to add here that Kazibwe was talking about a different type of cooperatives, i.e. the Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies (SACCOs) and not agricultural cooperatives.
Besides, even when she rightly stated that the cooperatives of the past were a failure, she did not name the causes of such failures. I made use of her shortcoming to identify the reasons for the failure of Agricultural cooperatives in Tororo County.

Okello noted that cooperatives is the only institution truly owned by the people and is a Grass roots based organization. The phrase "truly owned by the people could be true of the early cooperatives during the colonial era or indeed other forms of cooperatives rather than agricultural marketing cooperatives. Nonetheless, Okello's piece of work formed the inquiry into the ramifications of state interventions model that agricultural marketing in Tororo County took.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In conducting this research, I was guided by three major questions. Firstly I asked and answered the question on how far agricultural Co-operatives went in bettering the welfare of the members and the community in Tororo County? Secondly I undertook to assess the impact of vested interest groups on the performance of agricultural marketing cooperatives during the colonial and the different post-colonial regimes. Lastly but by no means the least, the researcher answered the question if there was a strong argument among the farmers in favour of the revival of the agricultural co-operatives?

1.9 HYPOTHESES

- Agricultural co-operatives improved the welfare of members.
- Vested interests had negative impact on co-operatives.
- Liberalization led to the collapse of co-operatives
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Mostly the qualitative method was employed in collecting data for this study though occasionally quantitative data was also interpreted. The information was sourced from a wide collection of text books, journals, magazines and to a small extent newspaper articles. Libraries of Kyambogo university, Makerere University, Ministry of trade Tourism and Industry and the Uganda cooperative Alliance provided most of the written literature. Tororo public library and archives were also visited. Oral interviews and questionnaires were administered to selected individuals and groups particularly those who in one way or another were involved in the affairs of agricultural marketing cooperative either as members, leaders of both.

1.11 PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED DURING THE STUDY

Several constraints came in the way of this study.

Financially it was so demanding. The study went on nonetheless; I had to seriously review my personal and family budgets from time to time to balance between my family obligations and the research. Due to the high poverty levels in areas where the study was conducted, respondents often asked for monetary rewards in exchange for information. I made every attempt to educate such respondents on the purely academic and award-related nature of the study with a good degree of success. Given that the county is gearing up for the 2011 general elections and bearing in mind the current heightened ethnic tensions in Tororo District, the suspicion of respondents that I could be state agent was understandable. I made it a point to carry the letter of introduction from the history department, and it made a big difference. Attempts at exaggeration could not be avoided where upon I involved a cross-section of respondents to come up with clearer and representative picture. All said and done, I tried my best to conduct the study in the most professional manner possible. I therefore solely take responsibility for any commissions or omissions there in.
END NOTE


3. Ibid, P. 3


7. Ibid, P. 66


10. Opio Odongo JMA. Opcit, PP 74


   Boston; Miffin, P. 118.

13. Enrich, Opcit, PP. 275-285


15. Opio Odongo, Opcit, p. 70


CHAPTER TWO

THE ORIGIN OF COOPERATIVES

2.0 INTRODUCTION
This chapter reconstructs the genesis of the cooperative movement in general. It also lays bare
The synchronized historical facts about the agricultural co-operatives and their relationship with
The colonial state. The patronizing but less interventionist attitude of the colonial establishment is
considered and presented in the light of constituting the very beginning of vested interests in
agricultural marketing cooperatives in Tororo County like elsewhere in Uganda.

THE ORIGIN OF COOPERATIVES
according to Folke, man has always had to work and live together in order to survive. He
considered that this type of cooperation was less of a conscious act but more of a habit, a way of
life or natural order of things. What distinguished the former kind of cooperation from the
modern co-operative is the fact that the latter is conceived out of a conscious thought and
decision and action

Modern co-operative thought was developed in the 19th and 20th centuries in Britain.
This period was one of trial and era in the history of cooperatives, many societies are said to
have been formed in the latter half of the (18th and beginning of the 19th century. All failed except a few

The Rochdale Equitable Pioneer' Society was formed in 1844 and only then did the cooperative
Idea find its current form3• Across Europe, the cooperative ideals were largely influenced by the
democratic ideas of the French Revolution.
Meanwhile in Britain during the industrial revolution, the English society grew in wealth among well to do, But at the same time, exploitation, poverty and misery characterized the lower strata of the same society”. The source of cooperation therefore was to be found among the poor People and henceforth provided the cooperative movement with its mission of mutual self-help (ALL for ONE and One for all).

In Africa, the concept of reciprocity is strongly rooted in African culture. Here, early traditional life was based on working in groups. Rural families worked in their farm lands in a spirit of co-operation and shared the produce. This was aimed at helping our ancestors to cope with their daily life challenges. They cooperated in activities like hunting, agriculture, grazing and building Of huts for shelter.

To illustrate how our ancestors lived a communal life, we take the example of agriculture. Our ancestors survived on wild roots, grains, vegetables and wild fruits which they collected from the bush and forests. Often, they had to travel long distances to be able to collect enough food for an entire, family. Parents were often unaware of when they would return and children were taken a long on the gathering missions. While searching food, our ancestors came across certain plants which they could grow around their homesteads. This is how agriculture started. At first the aim was to produce enough food to feed the family until the next harvest. Later their needs expanded to include items like hoes, cloths, pots and meat.

Those who grew food crops exchanged their food stuffs for these items. It therefore became pertinent for each family to expand food production beyond immediate family needs. This required clearing large piece of land, most families could not do this single handedly. Planning also had to be in time for expected rains. Even if a large piece of land was cleared and planted
With crops, harvesting had to be accomplished fairly quickly to prevent crop yields from being destroyed by wild animals, birds and weather vagaries. Above all the produce had to be dried, threshed and stored. All these stages needed cooperative action: Although the modern cooperatives are not directly linked to this traditional form of cooperation, knowledge of the same is essential in helping us comprehend the concept of modern cooperatives.

In Uganda, cooperatives in general and agricultural marketing cooperatives in particular can be traced to 1913 when the African Ugandans realized the need to end monopoly of cash crop marketing by the Europeans and the Asian middlemen.

Kabuga5 and other scholars concur that the birth of agricultural marketing cooperatives was initiated around this period by four farmers in Ssingo county of Mubende district. As mentioned earlier in chapter one, it was the policy of the British colonial government then to limit the African Ugandans to the growing of cash crops like coffee and cotton, leaving the more profitable processing and marketing to the Europeans and Asian traders. It is little wonder that early agricultural cooperatives or indeed any form of cooperatives met stiff resistance from the Asian European vested interest groups.

The Alliance between the Europeans and Asians in the commercial Agriculture sectors did not stop at excluding the Africans from the more profitable processing and marketing of agricultural produce. It also involved paying the African producers low prices for their produce. For instance after World War (1914-1918), the cotton industry grew very rapidly partly due to the conditions of open competition in buying, ginning and exporting.
It is notable however that in the cotton industry did not translate into better Earnings for the chief cotton producers - the peasants. Largely illiterate, they were no match for The well organized and financed middlemen who represented the powerful interest groups of the Europeans and the Asians.

The Africans could not and did not accept the status quo. Two years after the end of the World War 1, five groups of farmers met in Mengo in Kampala and constituted themselves into Buganda Growers Association.

In 1933, the Uganda Growers' Association was re-organized under the name of Uganda Grower's Cooperative Society with its major objective being to market cotton.

1935, these groups transformed themselves into primary societies and in turn constituted themselves into a secondary society named the Uganda Cooperative Union.

By 1937, membership of the Uganda Cooperative Union had grown to twenty six societies. It is not surprising that all this while, these cooperatives operated without any legal instruments. Attempts to legalize cooperatives between 1935 and 1936 met very stiff opposition, particularly from the Asian Community. Meanwhile the Africans were relentlessly calling upon the colonial Government then to legalize cooperatives and later heeded see chapter one.

2.1 FORCES BEHIND THE FORMATION OF AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVES IN TORORO COU TY (1912-1962).

It has already been pointed out that the period before 1945 was characterized by governments Paternalistic attitude geared towards protecting non-African interest in commerce. The aftermath of World War II (1939-1945) left wanton destruction on the British economy. Naturally
Therefore pressure built up on the colonial government to increase production and also reduce
the potential of conflict in the colony engineered by economic organizations. Consequently this
led to a more positive attitude towards cooperatives in Uganda in general.

On the part of the Africans in Tororo County however, several forces were at play in generating
interest for agricultural marketing cooperatives.
Mamdani rightly recounts how every peasant in Uganda on top of growing food had to grow
something for export to overseas monopolies. Unfortunately for the peasants, they were
confronted by government set prices and monopoly buying association. Agricultural cooperatives in
Tororo County dealt mostly in cotton and occasionally sunflower. But as
Mamdani reveals and we largely concur, even before marketing boards were created in the post-
war period to squeeze the peasant dry so that Britain's international economic position might
improve a peasant was paid a paltry 39.8% of the total export price of cotton. The Tororo county
peasant was a cotton producer and by the above figure lost 60.2% of the value of his produce to
the overseas monopolies.
The importance of Agricultural marketing cooperatives In Tororo County cannot be over
emphasized because above 80% of the population derive their livelihood direct from agriculture.
Njoki writing on a regional perspective emphasized the importance of East African governments
Investing in Agriculture as a means of fighting income poverty. Farmers in Tororo County
therefore were the backbone of the country's economy yet as already mentioned they got paid
just over a quarter of the total value of the cotton produced. This is partly because small farmers
of Tororo County were individually helpless and vulnerable to distortions caused by capital
Based corporations operating in the same cotton market. To make agriculture play the noble role of reducing income poverty therefore, small farmers needed to organize their human capacity, market channels management, price negotiations and domestic and international marketing Networks.

Njoki, notes that agricultural marketing cooperatives are important for small farmers because they create economies of scale where they are not possible under normal circumstance”. The twenty three primary co-operative societies in Tororo County had members whose average annual cotton turnover was just about 300 kilograms.

From our survey we concluded that though these figures were of the post-colonial era, they were not very different during the colonial era, therefore these small farmers could not realize bulking To enable them enjoy economies of scale. The Asian business community that had settled in areas like Magodes trading centre along the Tororo-Mbale highway were well financed yet as private buyers their single-most motivation was maximization of profits and minimization of cost. To achieve the above, the cotton farmers had to be paid a small price for the cotton produce”.

Kabuga, observes that for a long time banks and government found it safer to lend to a society than an individual of low income". This is generally true of banks even to this day. For the case of Tororo County Producers during the colonial era, this was even more true. The producers here carried out their agriculture, particularly cotton production on numerous individuals holdings averaging 2 to 3 hectares. The conventional banking sector was firmly in the hands of Asians and Europeans and in addition to denying Africans access to bank loans due to lack of collateral, they had to protect the interests of European and Asian businessmen by keeping the Africans at bay.
The Africans therefore realized that co-operative agricultural marketing would go a long way in improving their bargaining power.

2.2 THE NATURE OF VESTED INTERESTS AND THEIR IMPACT ON AGRICULTURAL MARKETING COOPERATIVES IN THE COLONIAL PERIOD.

There is no doubt that cooperatives in general and agricultural marketing ones in particular prevented with vested interests. As noted before, the colonial government sought to protect the position of European and Asian traders in the more profitable processing and marketing of agricultural produce. One of the major motives of such an arrangement according to Mamdami was to ensure that the trading class had little historical contact with the colonized masses since in his words the colonized trader learns his nationalism in the market place. A non-national trader Would in away be isolated from the general population and therefore fall back to the colonial master for paternalistic support.

The first policy geared at perpetrating a non-African trading class m Uganda in general and Tororo County in particular was to develop Uganda as a peasant economy. Mamdani cited above, notes how the thousands of Indian Immigrants were legally barred from owning land but purposely channeled into commerce. Kiwanuka, in Ogot corroborates the above position 14. Mr. Simpson (Director of Agriculture, 1915-1929) and Mr. F. Spire (then provincial commissioner in charge of Eastern province are credited with encouraging peasant participation in cash crop growing. Though Tororo County like the rest of Uganda concentrated on peasant agriculture, the marketing of agriculture produce remained in non-African hands. The Indian traders influenced the government to set prices that were below those at the international market. The unscrupulous Asian middlemen then paid meager price for African produced cotton which was then sold Overseas at a handsome price. The colonial policy of giving the processing and marketing
monopoly to non-Africans can partly explain the failure of the Indians to integrate into the Tororo county community. Their exploitative practices, together with unwillingness on their part to socialize with the Africans only confirmed the latter's fears that the former were on a Sojourn and keen to maximize profits for repatriation to Bombay. For instance, in 1926 engineer Laggy acting on behalf of the colonial state constructed a ginnery in Magodes in Molo Sub-county. It was sold to Indian-group known as Damadari Jinabhai and Company limited and started operating in 1936.

Its chief products were Lint cotton, soap and cooking oil. The raw materials were cotton, groundnuts, sim-sim and later sunflower. The Indians discouraged individual small scale farmers from ferrying their produce direct to the ginnery choosing instead to deal with the producers of the above raw materials through middlemen who were in limited cases African but predominantly fellow Indians. The producers therefore received very little of the total value of the produce, most of it going to the owners of the ginnery, the middlemen and the colonial state in taxes.

This situation changed with the 1952 Acquisition of Ginneries Ordinance that enabled the District cooperative Union (South Bukedi Cooperative Union) to acquire a ginnery. This impression was confirmed when president Arnin gave the reason of exploitation when expelling.

The British adopted the spread of agricultural marketing cooperatives to cotton growing County Of Tororo in 1950s. This compelled many cotton growers to join cooperatives for it was the only Sure way for the small-scale farmers to market their produce. Economic viability criteria were
Strictly adhered to in forming cooperatives explaining why cooperatives of this time registered success. As Mamdani notes, part of the government's interests was maximization of revenue and this coupled with need for high profits for the foreign-owned monopoly buying associations meant-low prices for the peasant 15. The post-war period was even much worse given that the creation of marketing boards which were exploitative too coincided with the urgent need to rekindle Britain's war ravaged economy.

The above findings suggest that even when the British colonial government allowed the creation of cooperatives, it had two elements of vested interests, the first was its paternalistic relationship with the Asians and Europeans throughout the colonial period and the second was the need to bolster the metropolitan economy particularly in the post-war years.

Consequently the Asians regarded themselves as second in superiority or actually equal to the British. An attitude that further alienated the Asians from the Africans”.

Of all vested interest groups, the British marketing firms were the most privilege. Because of the need to counter the increasing number of African associations interested in produce marketing, the colonial government felt naturally obliged, perhaps out of sheer racism to cushion the British marketing firms. African association had risen and continued to rise in every part of Uganda. In 1934 there had been formed the African Cultivators' Association of Budama, then including the present Tororo county, to press for the demand for the abolition of the pools stem. The powerful interest groups sought the protection of the colonial state. The draft bill on cooperative societies drawn up in 1935 and revised in 1937 was strongly opposed particularly by British firms on the grounds that cooperative legislation was yet inopportune in the county.
This proposal was drafted by the colonial government. Instead the government settled for a commission of inquiry. Accordingly, the 1938 cotton commission recommended that African producers who wished to gin and bale their cotton should be given facilities to do so. With the above recommendation the same commission noted that:

There is nothing to be said in favour of the encouragement of the cooperative cotton societies, on the other hand, we appreciate that on political and educational grounds the time may arrive when it may be expedient to foster and encourage cooperative undertaking.

In the words of Okereke, the official attitude towards cooperative development was cold. Asiimwe notes how there was a shift to increased government paternalism and control in produce marketing to protect the interest of British firms like Baumann and Co. It has been deduced given the above background that the vested interest that mattered most was that of the British firms. This signals the difficulties that awaited cooperatives at their institutionalization, the Colonial state kept a watchful eye in the creation, expansion and activities of the cooperatives. The predicaments the cooperatives faced in the post-colonial times are to be discussed in detail in the subsequent chapter.

The vested interests already discussed pit the Asian interests versus those of the British firms, both to the exclusion of the Africans. Most scholars of cooperatives and agricultural ones in particular have presented the Africans as the victims. The situation in Tororo County, like everywhere else in Uganda during the colonial times, was such that the Africans too constituted a vested interest group, the weakest and most vulnerable nonetheless. But even more vulnerable than the male Africans were the women”. Whereas women and children were a dominant force
In the production of cotton in the county, the membership and leadership of agricultural cooperatives was almost a preserve for men. At national level, organizations like the federation of Uganda African Farmers (F.U.A.F) presented their grievances against the overwhelming powers vested in the cooperative department and registrar by the 1946 Cooperative Societies' Ordinance. In response then governor granted concessions notably the creation of a cooperative council in which cooperative representatives from the whole county would sit. The Africans were definitely making in roads as far as agricultural cooperatives were concerned. As I conclude that this situation constituted a vested interest", it had the undesirable impact of keeping women in Tororo County from mainstream agricultural cooperatives for many years.

One of the most remarkable achievements of the colonial state was its attempt to Africanize the ginning industry over a ten year period ending in 1962 through cooperatives. This was contained in the Uganda Government's "Proposal for the Re-organization of the cotton ginning Industry". The proposals encouraged African participation in cotton processing through cooperatives. Ginneries including the one in Magodes, Tororo County had to be compulsory acquired for the cooperatives from the private sector. At the same time, construction of new ginneries by interests rather than the cooperatives was banned.

2.3 CONCLUSION

During the colonial period, the economy in Uganda in general and Tororo County in particular was divided on racial lines to the advantage of European and Asian interests. The post-war years came with the urgent desire on the part of the colonial state to reduce prospects of conflict resulting from economic injustices. This led to a change of attitude in favour of formation of
Cooperatives. That said, Uganda was generally developed as a peasant economy in which European and Asian interests were placed before those of Africans.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid, P.3

4. Ibid, PP. 1-2


8. Ibid.

9. Interview with Mr. Emelait Vincent 73 years, Molo Sub County, 6-03-2010.


11. Interview with Mr. Emelait, mentioned above, 6-03-2010.


13. Ibid.


15. Mandani Opcit p. 11.

16. Interview with Omoding John. 77 years 6-03-2010.


20. Interview with Omoting John, noted above.

21. Okoro Okerere, Opit p. 31
CHAPTER THREE

AGRICULTURAL MARKETING COOPERATIVES AND THE INDEPENDENT UGANDA

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the development of agricultural marketing cooperatives in the independent state of Uganda between (1962-1985). For purposes of constructing a clear picture about how the above cooperatives fared in the post-colonial era, this chapter has been subdivided into the various but major regime of Obote I (1962-1971), the Idi Amin regime (1971-79) and Obote II (1980-1985). The NRM regime is tackled separately because its policies on cooperatives constitute a departure from the former regimes.

3.1 THE FIRST UPC GOVERNMENT AND AGRICULTURAL MARKETING COOPERATIVES IN TORORO COUNTY (1962-1971).

In the closing remarks of chapter II, I noted that the colonial state had undertaken to encourage African participation in cotton processing through cooperatives in the decade ending in 1962. Upon attaining political independence in 1962, the UPC government promoted agricultural cooperatives at the grassroots and funded their growth remarkably, in Tororo county, Primary cooperatives societies, in some cases with full-fledged stores emerged. This included Molo, Papakol, Kidoko, Apokor, Merikit, Mela among others. In preparation for the agricultural cooperatives Cardinal role of produce marketing, the new UPC government enacted the ostensibly more pro-members 1963 cooperative Act in the place of the various colonial legislations perceived largely as exploitative. Why then did the post-colonial government show such keen interest in agricultural co-operatives? One explanation is that they were the most
convenient vehicles for rural mobilization for development. Mamdani, referred to earlier, noted that one of the reasons why the British colonial state chose to empower a non-African commercial group was because "the colonized trader learns his nationalism in the market

Indeed cooperatives had been fertile breeding ground for independence leaders. However, and much more convincing was the explanation that cooperatives were ideally suitable avenues through which resource re-allocation could be channeled for purposes of building a loyal political power base

Above all else, the government of Uganda at independence emphasized the importance of mutual social responsibility in rural development and viewed agricultural marketing cooperatives in that light

3.2 AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVE IN TORORO COUNTY; FARMERS ORGANIZATIONS OR POLITICAL VEHICLE?

At independence, it was a major concern of many African governments, including the one in Uganda, that if agriculture was developed, income poverty would be reduced as a direct consequence. For this to happen, there was need for capacity building, market channels management proper negotiations and domestic and international marketing networks. On their own, small farmers would fall prey to the better organized and financed foreign dealers.

In order to counter the likelihood of the above occurring, agricultural marketing cooperatives emerged rapidly in every part of Tororo County. Unfortunately political considerations rather than economic viability criteria dictated the creation of primary cooperative societies within the County. For instance in Molo Sub County, there emerged societies like Molo Growers society, Papakol Growers society, Papakol Growers Society, Kidoko Grower's society and Apokor Growers' society. All these were created to coincide with the administrative structures at the parish level. This constituted one of the very few policy shifts from the colonial arrangements
that emphasized economic viability criteria in the establishment of cooperatives.

The above observation notwithstanding the first cooperative resulted from the farmers' own initiative aimed at fighting the problems of income poverty among themselves. It was later that government "hijacked" cooperatives and made them vehicles to implement their own development agenda.

Since the beginning of government's active intervention in cooperative development in the early 1960's agricultural cooperative increased greatly in number. From about six registered primary societies in 1954, the movement had by 1966 grown to about 23 with a total membership of about 2760 members\(^3\).

This growth can be attributed to two major factors. First was the increasing socio-political Consciousness in the post-independence period which made the movement a more readily acceptable tool of policy. Secondly, the systematic promotion and supervision of the movement by the department of cooperative development meant that expert advice was readily available to the movement at every stage of development".

Government intervention more than anything else accounted for the rapid growth of the movement and as will later be discussed explains why the movement could not sustain itself once liberalization was introduced set in the 1980s.
3. The post independence government was right to attack the cooperative legal framework during the colonial era as repressive and undemocratic. However its own legal framework was far from democratic. For instance the colonial time 1946 Cooperatives Societies Ordinance compare very favourably with the 1963 Cooperatives Societies Act. The colonial arrangement of having a hierarchy of bureaucrats down to the Area Cooperative Officer (Assistant Registrar) at primary society level was replicated". This arrangement was parallel to that of the cooperative executive elected by members of c-operative societies.

3.3 THE 1970 COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES ACT

While the 1970 Cooperative Societies Act came largely as no surprise to the agricultural Cooperators in Tororo County, its impact was disastrous to the cooperatives. The new Act replacing that of 1963 vested enormous powers in the hands of the Minister in charge of cooperatives and marketing. (See Act 30, section 86 of the 1970 Cooperatives Societies Act). The line minister could by statutory order, appoint a secretary / manager, factory manager, an Accountant or indeed any other officer whom he/she deemed fit to appointing authority. Cooperatives, rightly so, came to be regarded as government property for furthering its political agendas. This' largely lends credence to the argument that governments the world over dread organized civil society and like the colonial regime, the first UPC government not only watched cooperatives every where very closely but actually established strict control measures.
3.4 THE PERFORMANCE OF AGRICULTURAL MARKETING COOPERATIVES IN THE FIRST UPC GOVERNMENT (1962-1971)

The first UPC regime was perhaps sincere in its determination to fight the societal ills of poverty, disease and ignorance and was equally right unthinkingly that cooperatives particularly agricultural ones, was the way to go. These noble objectives would have been achieved in Tororo County in the years 1962-1971. To reach the above target agricultural cooperatives needed to have remained true to the principle of being truly a people's organization, i.e. the cooperatives had to be formed by the members, owned by the members and supervised by the members. The avowed principles of democracy, education of members in addition to improvement of their welfare should have taken precedence.

To the party and state functionaries, agricultural cooperatives in the UPC regime boomed. They "boomed" in a sense that primary cooperative societies trading in cotton covered the entire county, the ginnery at Magodes Molo, functioned to capacity, farmers were paid fair prices sometimes in a timely manner and the District Union (the South Bukedi Cooperative Union) had fixed assets like its headquarters located on plot 6, Busia Road in Tororo Town, among others.

However, this was not the true picture of agricultural cooperatives in Tororo County in the first Obote led government. At primary society level, cooperatives depended on crop finance provided by the central government. These funds were channeled through south Bukedi cooperative Union and the primary societies bought and transported the cotton to the union store or ginnery for a Commission".

This account is corroborated further with emphasis that because government money was involved, it had a stake to protect. Increasingly government became more involved in
4. cooperative affairs, influenced the appointment of key officials and dictated policies. The "owners" of cooperatives were disenfranchised right from the lowest level of primary societies". As the managers became increasingly untouchable so did the levels of corruption.

There has always been consensus among cooperators, advocates of the cooperative model of development as well as scholars that for agricultural cooperatives or indeed any other form of cooperatives to thrive, there must be a partnership between government and the cooperatives. Unfortunately, their preferred nature of partnership was always at odds with that adopted by the first UPC government. The question therefore is; were agricultural cooperatives in Tororo County autonomous? Researchers in management sciences have appropriately defined the conditions for partnership as a process of developing the rules of enabling each other and self-enabling. When it comes to cooperatives-state relations; both government and cooperative movement must see each other as enablers of one another”.

In summary therefore, the development of an autonomous cooperative movement in Tororo County was far from realized. The government then did not involve the cooperatives in a joint formulation of cooperative policy and legislation and therefore effective government intervention and collaboration was largely lacking. The cooperative state relations in Tororo County during Obote I fell under typology 3 in the table 1 below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE I</th>
<th>The state is not concerned with cooperatives, but generally influences the environment using policies and market driven tools.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TYPE II</td>
<td>The state actively influencing the work and development of cooperatives through legislation, price regulations, fiscal policies assuming a supervisory role.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TYPE III</td>
<td>State actively initiating the formation of cooperatives, interfering with the continuous process that takes place between members and their cooperatives such as supervising the Annual general meeting and vetting candidates who should be voted for leadership. Here the state takes a controlling function.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source of table:** Njoki A. Mutisya: An Analysis of the Socio-economic Impact of Cooperatives in Africa.

Besides, agricultural cooperatives in Tororo County were organized as micro-economic enterprise concerned with the immediate needs of their membership.

This outlook of cooperatives was bound to and did conflict with that of the national government that dragged the movement into macro-economic structures and practice. As Elise Bialey puts it, this was the source of government interference in the co-operative movement and in some cases government took the initiative of forming cooperatives on behalf of the members. The spread of agricultural cooperatives was not spontaneous in Tororo County and government in line with the policy of having cooperatives cover all cash-crop growing areas initiated the formation of...
5. primary cooperative societies on behalf of the cotton producers. The consequence of this arrangement was a contradiction in the role of Cooperatives. The government increasingly viewed them as tools for implementing its economic policies yet as mentioned earlier; cooperatives were essentially self-help organizations concerned primarily with fighting income poverty among the rural farmers. The resultant interference in the management of agricultural cooperatives adversely compromised their performance.

3.5 THE COMMON MAN'S CHARTER

On 24\textsuperscript{th}-10-1969, the members of Annual Delegates conference of the Uganda People's Congress, the body then charged with the responsibility to lay down the broad basis policy of the party adopted the Common Man's charter whose principles had been formulated by the Annual Delegates Conference of 1968. Under the way forward 40 steps were suggested for the realization of the move to the left strategy, of these, 5(sub section V) states; to plan Uganda's economic Development in such a way that government through parastatal bodies, the cooperative Movement, private companies, individuals in industry, commerce and agriculture, will effectively contribute to increased production to raise the standard of living in the country. For the people of Tororo County in general and UPC loyalists in particular, this was a welcome move for it underscored the importance the regime placed on co-operatives in particular and the people's welfare in general. This moved hand in hand with government's granting monopoly of cotton marketing to the cooperatives.

To illustrate the impact of this we take the case of Zambia. Elise notes how in the 1970's agricultural cooperatives in Zambia were granted monopoly in the collection of cash crops and
distribution of farm inputs. He notes further that in the short run this boosted the position of the movement, but in the long run it created slackness in operation particularly when the Zambian government covered losses incurred by cooperatives through restitutions 13.

The situation of agricultural cooperatives in Uganda in general and Tororo county in particular was not any different, over dependence on government financing and its monopoly status created complacence and had a crippling effect on agricultural cooperatives. So much so that on surface it would appear the first UPC government fared well with regards to agricultural co-operatives in Tororo County. Underneath the "booming" co-operatives were irreconcilable contradictions involving close government control that compromised the cooperative principle as a self-help initiatives. Co-operatives elsewhere notably Kenya, Zambia and Tanzania collapsed under the close watch of the national governments. The UPC government on the other hand had no deliberate intention to kill agricultural cooperatives in Tororo County in particular but must be apportioned a fair share of blame for creating a dependency syndrome that compromised the ability of these ostensibly farmers' organisations to survive the liberalization era of the 1990s of discussion in the subsequent subsections.

3.6 AGRICULTURAL CO-OPERATIVES UNDER THE IDI AMIN REGIME (1971-1979)

The Monday 25 January 1971 Military coup that ousted Obote from power was received with different reactions from different quotas. In Tororo County, there were two major forms of reactions from two different quotas. The anti-UPC elements, particularly those who felt marginalized by the regime welcomed the coup. On the other hand the UPC diehards condemned the move by Idi Amin. Most co-operatives officials then were to be found in the latter category. It is important to note that the jubilation that followed Obote's overthrow was not limited to any particular area of Uganda. Regardless of the above, it should be noted that in the end, both those
who welcomed the coup and those who condemned it suffered more or less similar consequences. When min's honeymoon ended and the terror unleashed, it was felt by all alike!

3.7 EXPULSION OF THE ISRAELIS, ASIANS, THE ECONOMIC WAR AND AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVES

The Israelis came to Uganda in the mid 1960's and their relationship with the Obote 1 regime were close and friendly. The Amin regime maintained this friendship but only up to February

Asians is applied here to mean people of Indian origin. These originally came to Uganda in the beginning of the 20th century as indentured labourers in the construction of the Uganda railway. When the contract of the construction was terminated in 1901, most of the labourers of Indian origin returned to India while a substantial number of about 61724 stayed. Immense commercial opportunities existed in Uganda then and the remnants of the Asian Community spread news of such openings in Commerce prompting further inflow. As noted in chapter one and two, the colonial state weary of economically empowering Africans patronized the Asians. In the words of Mutibwa,

The British used the Indians to establish and later consolidate their rule using them as middle men political as well as economic between themselves and their African subjects 17.

An attempt had been made in the Obote 1 regime to Africanize the economy both at macro and micro level. For the case of Tororo County as earlier mentioned agricultural cooperative societies had been introduced in all the six sub-counties as one of the means to Ugandans commerce. However, the Asian community had by far remained the most economically powerful group in Tororo County and Uganda in general.

The general reasons advanced by Idi Amin for expelling the Asians were;
An Asian girl spurned him, the need to improve the economic situation of the population, refusal of the Asians to integrate with Africans and the desire "to teach the British a lesson they would never forget. The expulsion of Asians was followed by the distribution of the property and businesses of the departed Asians. In Tororo County such property was to be found in Magodes in Molo Sub-county and Malaba Town Council on the border with Kenya. Co-operatives had been sources of funding for cotton farmers in the county but it was not always in adequate amounts. Asians had therefore been additional sources of loans in form of cash, farm implements and pesticides to co-operators in parts of Tororo County like Malaba and magodes. Coupled with the general breakdown of the economic sectors at Macro level, the expulsion of Asians remarkably reduced the volume of cotton-the major produce cooperatives delt in. some farmers / producers of cotton for the cooperatives reverted to subsistence farming because of limited support coming from cooperatives or complete lack of it. The other impact has to do with the loss of prominent cooperatives members in the frenzied quest for quick wealth resulting from the expropriation of the deported Asians property. One of such members was Mr. Emelait Vincent of Molo Sub-county. Like other contemporaries in the current Malaba Town Council, he acquired a block of commercial buildings in Magodes formerly belonging to the Asians. Such people abandoned the cooperative movement opting instead to concentrate more on running the business left behind by the fleeing Asians. How far successful these business became is a subject of another study but members of the defunct primary co-operative societies attested to the fact that the gains associated with laying one's hand on the property and businesses of the expelled Asians was more paying and gratifying in the short run than membership or even leadership of cooperatives.
Agricultural cooperatives in Tororo County like those in other parts of the county or indeed the world were not divorced from or independent of the other sectors of the economy. To meet their obligations, they needed a properly functioning export sector to market their produce, an import sector to bring in farm inputs like hoes, tractors, fertilizers and improved seeds.

Mutibwa gives an account of the loss of a critical category of people linked to the expulsion of Asians in the following words. "The country’s stock of professionals, artisans and experienced importers and exporters, wholesalers and retailers was drastically reduced?" .

At micro level in Tororo County, particularly Molo Sub County, there was a remarkable decline of agricultural marketing cooperative related employment. The ginnery in Magodes (mentioned earlier) was linked to the marketing cooperatives in a way that it provided ginning services for the farmer’s cotton for the district Union.

At the same time it bought sunflower seeds from the neighbouring farmers and together with the cotton seeds manufactured products like soap, cooking oil and animal feds. The volume of employment generated from these activities cannot be quantified due to existence of every scanty records but for the purpose of this study it suffices to note that the Asians employed African labour in this ginnery and its subsequent mismanagement in the hands of Africans following the departure of Asians is regrettable.

Amidst a lot of uncertainty, cotton output kept falling while speculation became normal business practice.

In the words of Mutibwa; Mamdani equally corroborates this, the economic war was a continuous process and progressively took the form of a continuous redistribution of a fading
stock of goods. The new owners of the Asian property perceived wealth, sometimes exclusively as a stock of commodities, houses, trade goods, personal ornaments like jewelry, watches etc. Consequently operation, "mafuta Mingi" (Operation get rich quick) came into being. Available stocks of goods were sold out, sometimes even just consumed by the new owners without restocking! Worse yet the new owners shunned the practice of generating wealth through manufacturing. As mentioned earlier, the decline in industry associated with the departure of the Asians led to a steep decline in employment. For those peasants who did not benefit from the departed Asian's property (these were the vast majority), they had to make do with the less and less pay they were receiving for their cotton. On the other hand, they had to pay more for items like hoes, pesticides and seeds and households like soap, medicine and cloth. The logical reaction on the part of the peasant cotton farmers was to resort to the cultivation of crops that were not marketed by state agencies like the Lint Marketing Board. Such crops included but were not limited to onions, maize, beans and sunflower. This resulted into a sharp decline in cotton production between 1973-1978 and since agricultural cooperatives in Tororo County were largely dependent on peasant cotton production, the same period was a dark one for agricultural marketing cooperatives. The situation was not helped by the fall in world prices of cotton from the end of 1978.

3.8 THE MILITARY REGIME, "MAGENDO" AND AGRICULTURAL MARKETING CO-OPERATIVES

The term "Magendo" means illegal parallel channels of trade. This included malpractices such as creating artificial shortage, smuggling and selling in the black market. In Tororo County this word came to be commonly used in the Amin era (1971-1979). It was carried out in mainly two levels. The first level involved individuals who ferried products like hides and skins, coffee and
cotton across of Kenya where these commodities fetched a better price. At this level an individual trader, sometimes with the help of a few family or other members each carried a specific quantity of the trade goods by head porterage crossing in the night through the unmanned sections of Uganda Kenya border. At a more sophisticated level it involved the military governor of the eastern province taking advantage of the proximity of the Kenyan border to smuggle agricultural produce with armed escort to Kenya. In this case vehicles were involved. This was all done with impunity”,

In 1975, the military reorganized Uganda into ten new provinces each headed by a military governor. Tororo County fell under the eastern province and it too was placed under a military leader. What did this mean for agricultural marketing cooperatives in Tororo County? If by re-organizing the country into these administrative units, Amin intended to improve on service delivery, it achieved quite the opposite, particularly with respect to cooperatives. Mutibwa talks of Ugandans having experienced relative peace between July 1975 to July 1976 when Amin was O.A.U chairman and bent on window dressing his regime”. If the eastern province realized such peace, the agricultural marketing cooperatives did not. In line with this, Asiimwe notes,

The "illegal" parallel channel (Magendo) sprouted, thrived, undermined cooperatives and was particularly threatening when it involved powerful, government operatives, who operated as if they were authorizedr'.

In Tororo County then, cotton fetched a better price when smuggled to Kenya. This lured the governor and his cohorts who often grabbed farmer's cotton and at times intercepted other smuggled goods and smuggled it under armed escort to neighbouring Kenya27.
Amidst such chaos, unscrupulous cooperative leaders took advantage of the situation. Some leaders at primary society level connived with the provincial leaders (often military) to dispossess peasant cooperative members of their cotton produce. An account is given of the secretary manager of Molo primary cooperatives society who collected members cotton produce in the 1976 cotton season and when the store was full to capacity faked a robbery in which the cotton was loaded into military trucks and transported to a destination that farmers never got to establish immediately, it was later established that the cotton was smuggled to Kenya and that the secretary manager actually got paid for his role in the stage-managed "robbery=". This was just an example among many; elsewhere cooperative leaders took advantage of the uncertainty and chaos to enrich themselves at the expense of the members.

The cooperative leadership and even membership was quick to realize that Amin would not tolerate any signs of opposition to his rule. Yet most of the leaders of the agricultural cooperatives were Obote loyalists. In order to fit in the new regime and partly for fear of being purged, many co-operators identified with the new regime. Throughout this regime cooperatives continued to operate amidst all the difficulties already mentioned. But one particular difficulty during the military regime was the often delayed or even defaulted payment of crop finance. This served to make "Magendo" even more attractive and lucrative. After the regime lost powerful allies like Britain and Israel, its pre-occupation was switched primarily to its own survival. Crop finance that was almost a guarantee during the Obote 1 regime continued to trickle in but without guarantees.

The leaders often diverted the little available crop finance for personal profiteering. On the contrary, a successful trip to Kenya guaranteed prompt and higher pal. Magendo therefore became a more convenient process of disposing of farmers produce and agricultural co-
13. operatives inevitably suffered with reduced stocks because even the unions borrowed farmers' produce by issuing I owe you (LOU) chits to farmers.  

3.9 WOMEN AND THE AGRICULTURAL MARKETING CO-OPERATIVES DURING THE MILITARY REGIME

One would have imagined that the expulsion of Asians from Uganda in 1972 removed the last vested interest group from the economy of Uganda in general and Tororo County in particular. As mentioned earlier, agricultural co-operatives in Tororo County largely dealt in cotton. Cotton cultivation is a labour-intensive activity which involves land clearance, planting, pruning, picking, sorting and transportation to the primary co-operative society. Women participated in all these activities and almost did the last one which involved head porterage exclusively.

The available membership figures for all the primary societies visited indicate that on average women constituted just about 25% of the membership. There is no doubt that like elsewhere in Uganda women constitute a larger percentage of agricultural labour and by implication contributed more to the production of the cotton that agricultural cooperatives dealt in Tororo. All the 23 societies in the county at the same time never at any time had female heads. Therefore, for all their generous contribution women received token appreciation. This was very much the case even during the first UPC government since both operated within the 1970 Co-operative Societies' Act. Their role during the Amin Military rule however, deserves scrutiny given that the expulsion of Asians was hyped for its role in Africanization of the Ugandan economy.

In conclusion, not all was lost during the military regime. AS noted by Asiimwe, at macro level produce marketing remained under the monopoly of the marketing boards and that regardless of the challenges created by the military rule, co-operatives remained resourceful institutions.
Although misused by state elites and state supporters and functionaries, they survived into the second UPC regime which is the next sub topic of discussion.

3.10 THE SECOND UPC GOVERNMENT (1980-1985), A NEW DAWN FOR AGRICULTURAL MARKETING CO-OPERATIVES

As noted in the last section, many people went with the Amin military rule but agricultural co-operatives lived to experience the second UPC led government (1980-1985). However as Asiimwe noted the economy was in a sorry state and cotton had declined as an export crop and the government set out to re-invigorate cooperatives”.

The agricultural marketing co-operatives in this regime like those in the previous ones continued to be state controlled. Six years after the collapse of the Obote II government, Honourable Abu Mayanja then 3rd deputy Prime Minister summed the co-operative society-state-relations during the regime. He noted that he would like to see a situation where government used to put their supporters or relatives and girlfriends as managers of the co-operative movements come to an end. By way of policy then, nothing changed in the Obote II regime.

3.11 CONCLUSION

Agricultural co-operatives in Tororo County can be said to have began with a big bang. The lifeline of the movement was crop finance. The reason behind the introduction of crop finance was noble to ensure farmers receive timely payments for their produce. However the fact that these funds were provided by the UPC regime, made government an interested stakeholder. To ensure that finances were not mismanaged, government brought the agricultural cooperatives under its close supervision. The net consequence of this government
intervention was that members lost ownership of cooperatives. With government directly responsible for funding, hiring and firing of managers at most levels, farmers/members were cut off from the cooperative chain at a very early stage. This is because by providing crop finance, farmers' produce was bought off by government as early as the planting season. Payments to farmers were ensured sometimes promptly but the producers sold their produce in raw form leaving large profits to unions that handled the ginning. In this way even the cooperatives cut off their members from the chain at an early stage”.

Initially, cooperative unions felt the moral obligation of sharing their profits with the primary societies by providing what came to be known as second payment. This was phased out gradually leaving members out.
ENDNOTES


20. Interview with Okware John, 46 years 6-032010. He was the Area Co-operative officer Malo Sub County between 1987-1990.


22. Interview with Mr. Okware John.


25. Interview with Mr. Opolot Egos, 53 years, 15/03/2010. He was formally District Co-operative Officer, Ministry of Tourism Trade and Industry.

26. Interview with Mr. Msemakweli Leonard 29/03/2010. He is the current General Secretary of Uganda Co-operative Alliance. He noted that the provision of crop finance by government meant that farmer's cotton was bought off as soon as it was planted at a price dictated by the state. The farmers were therefore not given the power to own their produce and determine its final price like it is in modem business practice.


"The Move to the left" P. 2

13. Interview with Mr. Msemakweli mentioned earlier. He told me that UPC Government crippled co-operatives unconsciously. He emphasized that far from evolving into independent, economically viable farmers' organisations agricultural cooperatives operated like government institutions that depended heavily on government funding. Ibid, p. 115.

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.


17. Ibid.

18. Ibid. p. 29.

19. Ibid. p. 115

20. Interview with Okware John (noted earlier) 6/03/2010. He informed me that Asians complemented the role of Agricultural Co-operatives by among others advancing loans to Co-operative members and supplying farm inputs some times in larger quantity than the co-operatives.

21. Mutibwa, Opcit p. 116

22. Interview with Atabong Scolastica, 69 years- Retired Teacher and former member of Tuba Primary Co-operative Society.

23. Ibid.

25. Interview with Mr. Okware Bonifance 68 years, *2010/2010*. He revealed to me that he smuggled cotton, skins and hides to Kenya during Idi Amin regime and noted how some members of the agricultural Co-operatives often sold their cotton to him since he paid in cash rather than the T Owe You (LO.U) chits given by the primary society.


28. Interview with Emojong Constant 74 years *27/03/2010*. He recounted how his high cotton yield in 1976 was grabbed by Amin's soldiers on the pretext that he was a smuggler. Together with the hides and skins he was trading in ferried away to a destination he never got to establish but suspects to have been smuggled to Kenya.

29. Ibid.

30. Interview with Opolot Egos mentioned earlier


32. The Study; Of all the 23 Primary Agricultural Societies visited, none of them had a female leader.

33. Asiimwe, Opit p. 32.

34. Ibid, p. 33

35. The Co-operative Movement and the Economy of Uganda, Opit p. 35
CHAPTER FOUR

AGRICULTURAL MARKETING CO-OPERATIVES DURING THE FIRST FIVE YEARS OF THE RM REGIME

This section has been constituted into a separate chapter although it falls within the postIndependence time scope. The major reason behind this decision is that the National Resistance Army Movement (NRM) came to power at a time when agricultural and other forms of cooperatives had already been greatly weakened. It is also during the first five years of the NRM regime (1986-1991) that most agricultural cooperatives in Tororo County became dormant. While critiquing the performance of co-operatives in the regimes that preceded the RIM, Kazibwe noted that one of the reasons for the down fall of cooperatives was that the political leadership was no example in democratic governance at any level, both ideologically and in practice. Meanwhile SAPs are presented as having brought both opportunities and challenges to the cooperatives.

Asimwe contrasts the NRM with the UPC government's policies on co-operatives. He notes that the former was inclined towards a mixed economy strategy with emphasis on creating a nationalistic entrepreneurial middle class while the latter was out rightly pro-co-operatives.

President Museveni has on numerous occasions commented that his regime liberated peasants from the Shackles of corrupt and inefficient co-operatives. Msemakweli corroborates this comment.
In the late 1980's, economically weak governments in the developing World embraced the International Monetary Funds (IMF) pre-conditions for Aid.

Outside the developing world, the most notable country to bow to IMF pressure for economic and political reforms, as a condition for loans was Gorbachev's Soviet Union. "Perestroika" and Glasnost" were policies and actions in that respect.

While it is largely true that agricultural co-operatives, including the ones in Tororo County were largely corrupt, it is also probably true that President Museveni did not mind sacrificing these erstwhile UPC political Power bases out of expedience. What is for sure is that the IMF conditionalities for economic bail-out included the requirement that prospective borrowers shed off "excess baggage". Co-operatives had been patronized by the UPC regime and in IMF thinking, these were part of the excess "baggage" to be shade off whether or not co-operatives were "excess baggage". The fact that the IMF implied so made it economically expedient for the NRM to keep their hands off the agricultural co-operatives or even speed up the demise of these institutions by starving them of funding. Perhaps any government faced with bleak economic prospects like the NRM in the late 1980's would have acted likewise. One fact for sure is that the fore mentioned trend had weakening effect on co-operatives in Tororo County, a problem they never got out of.

In the words of Professor Adonyi Osuntog m of Obafemi Awolowo University (Nigeria), Structural adjustment programmes (SAP) is "a package of policy measures or instruments designed to achieve structural shifts within and between the different economic components of the national economy towards a direction."

Both in the national and international scene, there have been and continue to be a debate as to whether or not the SAP was a blessing or a curse to the economies of the developing world. The consensus seems to be that these IMF conditioned policy shifts have brought untold hardships at the grassroots. Agricultural marketing co-operatives in Tororo County were grassroots organizations and this study has attempted to analyze the opportunities and challenges that co-operatives were faced with.

4.2: THE OPPORTUNITIES AND LESSONS OF THE SAP ON AGRICULTURAL CO- OPERATIVES IN TORORO COUNTY

As mentioned earlier, the debate on the importance or otherwise of the SAP is inconclusive. The usual verdict however is that this policy has been without any positive impact. This is the view of AJ Faye's the executive secretary, co-operative federation of Nigerian limited, Ibadan. His conclusion was based on the situation in Nigeria during the late 1980s but also fits well into the Ugandan and indeed Tororo county situation.
These policy instruments were aimed at redirecting affected economies away from dependency into self-sufficiency.

Although there are no vivid examples of benefits derived from the introduction of SAP as an economies policy, there were several lessons that the agricultural co-operatives movement in Tororo County should have embraced and proper mastery of these lessons should have improved the opportunities of the former co-operatives and the prospects of future ones. The lessons include the following:

One aspect of the SAP was the liberalization of trade in agricultural produce. Elise notes:

> In principle, this is a blessing to the co-operatives movement because it has become essential for them to improve the efficiency of their operations.

Agricultural co-operatives in Tororo County enjoyed monopoly of cotton marketing and became complacent in return. During Obote I, Amin and Obote II regimes, the government faced no competitors in cotton marketing and all along managed to keep a float regardless of the inefficiency in their operation. The liberalization of cotton market was supposed to be a wake-up call for the co-operatives". However as noted by Mamdani, the co-operatives were being controlled by anti-peasant elements, the movement was satirized and robbed of any democratic content. The membership of the co-operatives were predominantly peasant and therefore going by Mamdani's arguments, the anti-peasant element who controlled the movement at the political and policy level could not embrace the challenge cum-opportunity to reform the movement into economically viable entities.

The other opportunity presented to the agricultural marketing co-operatives by SAP was that the programme stimulated new demand for agricultural produce. This is partly because one of the
SAPs policies was devaluation of national currencies which made the prices of agricultural produce more attractive to the buyers abroad. Because of this, farmers' income increased in the short run but could not be sustained in the long run partly because of the failure of the agricultural co-operatives to increase their educational programmes to equip the members and managers to optimize the benefits of SAPs. Co-operatives in Nigeria for instance were able to mitigate the negative effects of the SAP by creating new co-operatives societies and ventures and closer involvement in social mobilization at the grassroots and general development programmes.

This implies that co-operatives in Nigeria were able to transform a would-be challenge of SAP into sustainable opportunity during the same period (1986-1991) when agricultural co-operatives in Tororo County were losing the battle to private sector. It is important to make a distinction here however. For the case of Nigeria, the federal government and the European Economic Community (EEC) gave considerable support to the co-operative movement. For the case of Uganda and Tororo County, in particular, government had co-operatives nowhere near its development agenda.

Under the SAP, particularly its policy of liberalization, it was possible for co-operatives to diversify and spread their risks. This is because the world market was increasingly widening its consumption scope to include non-traditional produce like sunflower, beans, ground nuts, maize etc. the study revealed that Tororo county produces all the above plus many more. Going by sub-county it is evident that Molo produces plenty of pineapples, kwapa-onions and maize, Merikit -rice, Mela onions and Osukuru -maize. All these are in addition to the traditional cotton though in ever declining quality. The prospects for agricultural co-operatives diversifying to tap into
ready international market for these produce were therefore evident. To draw the example of Nigeria again, co-operatives reaped big from the SAP by way of diversification of their trade items. In a way, while in other parts of the developing world masses reacted to the challenges posed by SAPs by public, sometimes violent demonstrations, co-operatives in Nigeria drew good lessons and grew in strength. The agricultural co-operatives in Tororo county in contrast stuck to their single crop of cotton and are yet to emerge from the drain.

Lessons in self-reliance came with SAP. As mentioned earlier, the architect of the above programs (IMF) was after ensuring economic sanity mostly among economies of the developing world by streaming their economies. While the economies were being forced to withdraw subsidies in all sectors of the economies, the condition of withdrawing funding to areas like co-operatives was an opportunity in disguise to the latter. Since this was implemented under the Liberalization privatization policy of the SAP it implied that unlike the past regimes, the NRM government would not have a vested interest in the co-operatives. Asiimwe notes:

Aware that the state interventionism/ top down strategies were partly responsible for the failure of co-operatives, the NRM policy could promote an environment for spontaneous growth of co-operatives rather than take the previous active interventionism policy with all its contradictions.

It is clear from the above observation that if indeed co-operatives had for long craved for independence from government, the liberalized arena kept that NRM government at a safe distance. However, a survey of the agricultural marketing co-operative societies in particular reveals they were more comfortable with aspects of government interventionist approach—particularly the element of crop finance. This view is firmly help by several other respondents and the impression from them (in fact the firm belief) is that of waiting for the government (NRM) to revive the agricultural and other forms of co-operatives. The essential aspect of
spontaneity still eluded most co-operators in Tororo County. Though out the research respondents both the leaders and farmers kept asking the question of when will the governments bring back our co-operatives? An attempt to bring them to realize the importance of self-initiative in rebuilding co-operatives was in fact misconstrued for unwise counsel.

Whatever the misgivings, above, it's true that SAP presented an opportunity to co-operators in Tororo county and elsewhere in Uganda, the NRM government decision to tow the line of the IMF engineered Sap and almost abolish funding for co-operatives was to say the least an opportunity squandered by the co-operators in Tororo county. To illustrate this we take the example of IMF conditional ties of government reducing public spending to be eligible for loans.

A reduction in public spending meant government had to review its priority areas and co-operatives were nowhere near any of the items. Even critical areas like health and education were subjected to cuts in their budgets. Mamadani however, observed that there was no need to press the NRM government to cut public spending. He argues that before the introduction of the second IMF programme in 1987, expenditure for 1986/987 was only 6.8 percent of GDP. The question then is how much of the 6.8 percent went to the co-operatives? But even more pertinent is the question of why agricultural co-operatives in Tororo County or indeed elsewhere in Uganda fail to embrace the new found independence now that the central government was standing aside? The answer to the first question cannot be readily established while the one to the latter is that the movement leadership was illiterate, not-committed and only after scavenging of any available co-operative society's wealth.
4.3 CHALLENGES PRESENTED BY SAP TO AGRICULTURAL MARKETING CO-OPERATIVES IN TORORO COUNTY.

In the last section an analysis was made on how the globally dreaded SAP presented isolated opportunities to agricultural co-operatives in Tororo County. Whether or not the co-operatives embraced such opportunities is a different question all together. In this section an analysis has been carried out and a revelation made that just as SAP presented prospects, the structural problems partly created by the past regimes compromised the ability of these farmers' organizations to survive. Where should the blame for the collapse of co-operatives should be laid then? Is it to the NRM regime, the SAP or the co-operators themselves? A close scrutiny revealed that all the three bear a share of the blame, perhaps in varying proportions.

I now turn to the challenges attributed to the SAP notwithstanding the structural inconsistencies that compromised the ability of the co-operatives to outlive the SAP in Tororo County.

In the past regime, particularly Obote I and Obote II, co-operatives depended on crop finance provided by the central government. Under this arrangement, government availed funds to the south Bukedi co-operative union (Tororo district Union) which in turn would distribute such funds to the various primary growers' co-operatives societies mentioned earlier. The latter then paid for the farmers' cotton and transported it to the union store or union ginnery in return for a commission. Beside, the crop finance, the United States Agency for international development (USAID) funded projects that provided cotton farmers with inputs like fertilizers, pesticides and hoes at subsidized prices. From the above therefore, it can be deduced that regardless of the inefficiencies, associated with co-operatives, cotton farmers kept producing and selling to co-operatives thereby providing the much needed life support to the organization. What did SAP
bring? As noted earlier, SAP among others dictated that government relieves itself of excess baggage. Agricultural co-operatives fitted within the context of excess baggage and government withheld crop finance. In the same light the USAID funding had to be redirected to fields like education and health in line with the SAP agenda. At the same time SAP dictated the opening up of agricultural produce marketing (commonly known as liberalization).

Liberalization then opened the cotton marketing to private buyers/competitors who in most cases were better capitalized than the agricultural co-operatives. The inevitable consequence of this was outbidding of the co-operatives by the better funded private sector. Henceforth members of the co-operatives resorted to selling their cotton produce to the private buyers not necessarily because of better prices but because of prompt payments, no need for sorting and transporting the cotton to the G.P.C.s.

As noted in the above paragraph, trade liberalization (especially in cotton marketing) was a relief to some farmers/co-operative member but in a way it stifled competitive consciousness in agricultural co-operatives in Tororo County. With crop finance not forth coming and open competition ushered in by the SAP conditioned liberalization, co-operatives in Tororo County opted for bank loans with member's assets as collateral. Suffice it to point out that the leadership and membership of these co-operatives was largely illiterate.

Lack of experience on how to handle bank loans soon took its toll on the co-operatives. The previously "free for all" crop finances had been mismanaged, lent out to immediate family and friends and at times simply embezzled. Bank loans were treated in the same way. This resulted
into high rates of defaulting. The banks in return attached members' assets ranging from stores, ginneries, trucks and commercials building”.

To illustrate the above we take the example of the South Bukedi co-operative Union. It once boasted of a large base of both fixed and moveable assets. By 1991, it was survived by only one asset, i.e. its headquarter located in Tororo town, plot 6, Busia road. Unfortunately for agricultural marketing co-operatives, these times were unlike the past when the patronizing government relationship would have resulted into an automatic, or should I say unconditional bailout. The important conclusion to draw here is that the conduct of co-operative at the beginning of the SAP and afterwards apparently vindicated President Museveni’s verdict that all forms of co-operatives were inefficient and poorly managed. That the NRM liberated peasants from the shackles of corrupt and inefficient co-operatives certainly adds up in-so-far as these farmers institutions failed to learn from their pre-SAP structural weakness. Is it any longer sustainable to blame the collapse of the agricultural marketing co-operatives squarely on neglect by the NRM government? Your guess is as good as mine.

Agricultural co-operatives lost volumes of cotton to the private sector. As noted earlier, the government of Uganda due to domestic and external macro-economic exigencies accepted the second SAP from the late 1987. Most significant is that the SAP demanded that government withdraw the use of state institutions like the lint Marketing Board in marketing of farmers’ produce. This together with the 1991 co-operatives statute should have given the movement the opportunity to become truly a people's movement and use its own organization structures to market members produce directly. However in addition to the fact that agricultural co-operatives already suffered from dependency, the SAP resulted into the liberalization of cotton ginning and
market by removing the monopoly of co-operatives unions over ginning and that of lint marketing board over export marketing. Ideally this situation should have gone a long way into improving the competitiveness and effectiveness of agricultural co-operatives. The situation was not made any better by the fact that co-operatives for some time had collected farmer's cotton on credit. This was the same time when rival buyers were paying for the same cotton in cash. Farmers therefore resorted to selling their produce to private buyers principally because of prompt payment from the latter. In opting for this, they were also in for better terms of payment free from nepotism, favoritism, red tape and mistreatment from co-operatives officials as illustrated below.

**Table 10: reasons for selling cotton to private buyers other than co-operatives by sample population.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prompt cash payments</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher price offered by private buyers without discrimination</td>
<td>33.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No bother of sorting, grading etc by private buyers</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: the study*

From the above it can be deduced that SAP had served to expose the weakness that had for long been concealed. Once laid bare, co-operatives in Tororo County failed to work on areas like the timing of payments and payment rates, issues that concerned 98.1% of the farmers.
The trade liberalization policy also ushered in what could be described as unfair competition. While buying was made open to all, agricultural co-operatives were still obliged to offer certain services to their members even to those who sold their produce through channels other than cooperatives. A number of chairpersons of former primary societies advanced in credit for farm inputs to members, sometimes without the guarantee of the latter having to sell their season crops to the cooperatives society. Prior to the liberalization period, such loans where recovered at the time of payment for the produce and compliance was close to 100%. Members of co-operative societies therefore sometimes secured loans from their societies but sold their produce to the private buyers.

Besides, co-operatives were also believed to operate as buyers of the last resort. How did this arise and what were the consequences? As dully constituted societies, agricultural societies were obliged to collect and buy members' produce regardless of the Cost- Benefit analysis. The private buyers on the other hand placed profits above all else. The latter therefore constricted in buying cotton whose producers were located in allocated in accessible areas. Whereas the private buyers received preferential treatment of the first buyers, the co-operatives had a binding agreement with the members under the law to buy members produce regardless of the accessibility of the location of the produce. How where co-operatives expected to be economically competitive under search agreements?

The SAP changed the economic trends of Uganda from the late 1980s. Firstly, it created a shift in emphasis from a pre-dominantly government driven economy to a private sector led one. Secondly there was also a shift from the lax and "free- for all" attitude of the previous regimes to one of the accountability. At a micro level of Tororo County, this challenge was never translated
53.
into an opportunity. Co-operative movements in countries like Nigeria increased their educational programs to equip its members and managers to optimize the benefits of SAP and reduce its negatives. The ones in Tororo County in contrast sought to maintain the status quo. A survey of the membership and management of the former societies revealed that the vast majority were illiterate. The new economic dispensation demanded specialized skills like book keeping and internationally recognized accounting standards. When critiquing the nature of SAP particularly the second one that begun in 1987. Mamdani noted;

"my argument has been that in the economy, the need of the hour is for large scale institutional changes for the major democratic transformations that will give peasants security of tenure and control over co-operatives".

By the institutional changes, Mamdani must also implied empowering the members of co-operatives with skills that would enable them supervise the work of management and committee members. I can deduce from the above that SAP should have served in a eye opener to agricultural co-operatives in Tororo County and elsewhere in Uganda, unfortunately the co-operatives didn't translate this challenge in to an opportunity.

**4.4 THE 1991 CO-OPERATIVES SOCIETIES ACT**

On 19th September 1991, the NRM government replaced the 1970 Co-operative Act with that of 1991. Unlike the 1970 Act, the one of 1991 was silent on whether there would be a ministerial portfolio for co-operatives in particular. The status empowered the Registrar, Deputy Registrar and Assistant Registrars with running co-operatives at policy level.

The 1991 co-operatives statute, unlike the 1970 co-operative society act, provided for a fair sharing of power between the office of the registrar and the board. For instance under the 1970
54. co-operative act, the minister could by statutory order appoint a secretary and any other officer whom he or she deemed fit to appoint any registered cooperative society or union. The penal code (amendments) acts 30 of 1970 sections 51-56 empowered the minister to empower the institution, working and financial conditions of the registered society. On the other hand, 1991 statute limited the powers of government technocrats such as registrars for instance section 51 (1) stated that registrar in consultation with board may hold an inquiry or direct a person authorized by him by order in writing on that behalf to hold an inquiry into the constitution, working and financial conditions of the registered society.

51 (2) states;

"On receipt of the resolution demanding an inquiry passed by not less than two thirds of the members present at a general meeting of the society which has been dually advertised, registrar in consultation with the board shall cause such an inquiry."

Other sections of the statute two are less draconian compared to the 1970 act, but 51 (1)m and 51 (2) are of particular significance because it provides a platform where the registrar, the board and even the members of the co-operative societies are empowered in the day to day running of the affairs of co-operative societies. 51 (2) in particular clearly spells out the over site roll of the members over the managers of the respective society.

Section 32 was designed specifically to protect the society and the general membership from unscrupulous members. In cases involving government prior claims or that of land lords or indeed any other prior charges duly registered the society is accorded first charge. In line with this, 32(a) states; registered society shall have a first charge,

Upon agricultural produce of the members of past members at any time within two year from the date when seed, or manure was advanced or agricultural services where supplied, or money was lent to such or past members in respect to the unpaid position of such advance, supplied services or 10an.22
Asiimwe observed that in respect to the 1970 co-operative societies act:

The new 1970s co-operative society act therefore decentralized absolute powers over co-operatives in the state though a government minister and appointed officials, this enabled UPC government officials and functionaries to reward party faithful by either out rightly imposing them on a co-operative members or manipulating electoral systems so that they could access institutional resources.

I agree with the above position but add that in contrast, the 1991 Co-operative Societies Statue places the power in co-operative societies where it got to be. It provided for a hierarchy of government bureaucrats but significantly empowered the members to call the board and management of the society to account. Agricultural co-operatives had experienced a downward trend before the NRM came to power. They collapsed during the NRM regime. The above exposition however vindicates the regime from the scores of accusations that master minded the collapse of the agricultural co-operative systems. In figuring out why the co-operatives collapsed under the weight of SAP, I observed that agricultural marketing co-operatives perceived themselves (erroneously) as a means of shielding the peasants from capitalism. The NRM regime didn't make matters any better for these farmers farmer's organizations. The regime was pre-occupied with concern of its micro economic survival and sacrificing co-operatives would endear the NRM government to the money lending IMF so it was.

4.5 CONCLUSION

It is important to keep in mind that agricultural co-operatives were meant to be problem solving people owned organizations. IMF induced SAP was introduced in Uganda in two phrases. The first lasted from 1981-1983, the second one in 1987. The second was to have a more adverse bearing on agricultural co-operatives in Tororo county and Uganda in general. In the words of Mamdani;
Instead of looking for ways of increasing revenue, the thrust of the IMF has been to reduce expenditure by freezing wages and reducing expenditures on social services. The thrust of the policy is to blame and further victimize the very victims of the Amin and Obote II dictatorship in Uganda.24

It’s equally important to add here that the cooperatives themselves were not prepared for globally trends that came with SAP. They operated exclusively on the traditional model viewing themselves as exclusively people owned organizations with no links to the wider capitalist system.
ENDNOTES


3. Interview with Msemakweli

He concurred Museveni's comments that co-operatives in general were marred by cases of corruption and insufficient but was quick to add that peasants were better off with corrupt and insufficient co-operatives than without co-operatives at all.

4. Fayes A J quotes "Nigerian co-operatives and SAP; opportunities and challenges" Elese J Bayley Year Book of co-operative enterprises, 1992, Oxford; blanket BLU MK Foundation p 41


6. Interview with Mr. Okware john (noted earlier).


8. Fayese A. J. op.cit P 47


10. Asiimwe, B G Opicit, P 37

11. Interview with Mze Omoding, 77 years he became chairman of Papakol primary Growers Co-operative Society (P.G.C.S) in Molo sub-county in 1981 and claims to hold the position to date. He argued in support of government intervention using crop finance
because in his view farmers members were too poor to raise the requisite capital to purchase cotton.

12. Interview with Mr. Oitamong, 66 years (noted earlier).

He too claims to be the legitimate leader of the Molo Primary Growers Cooperative Society in Molo Sub County. He assumed the position in 1968. He wondered how government would perceive an initiative by farmers to revive Cooperatives. In his opinion it is the duty of the central government to do this!


14. Interview with Mr. Opolot Egos (cite earlier)

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

18. Fayese A.J. Op cit, P. 47

19. Mamdani M. Op cit, P. 136

20. Ibid P. 135

21. u.o. The Co-operative Societies Statute, 1991 Kampala, P. 28

22. Ibid, P. 19

23. Ibid, P. 32

24. Mamdani M. Op cit P. 135
CHAPTER FIVE

THE PROBLEMS FACED BY AGRICULTURAL MARKETING CO-OPERATIVES IN TORORO COUNTY, THE BENEFITS THAT ACCRUED TO MEMBERS AND THE DEBATE ON REVIVAL.

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines three aspects that are essential to the understanding of the dynamic of the agricultural marketing co-operatives in Tororo County. The problems faced by the movement are analyzed alongside the benefits that are accrued to the members of the community. These two are discussed with respect given that the 1991 when the study ends, the movement was in its last active days. The third aspect is to do with the debate on the revival of the agricultural marketing societies. The basis of this debate is hinged on the fact that liberalization of produce marketing has brought relief to a few farmers but the vast majority are still victims of the unleveled fields. This debate is worth analyzing in view of the light that the performance of the movement didn't meet the expectations of most farmers and members. Caution is sounded therefore, that the movement can and should be revived but with strict reforms.

5.1 PROBLEMS FACED BY AGRICULTURAL MARKETING CO-OPERATIVES

Co-operatives in general and the agricultural marketing in particular have been subjected to scathing attacks sometimes without factoring in the constraints under which they operate. In Tororo County, these organizations faced enormous challenges throughout the period of their existence. Some of these problems were common to agricultural cooperatives everywhere and have been written about quite significantly. Why then write above the same in Tororo County?
The most compelling reason is that most available literature doesn't address Tororo County in particular. Those that do, these are very few indeed to do so in passing. The problems are therefore discussed and put in the context of the area of study with the view of guiding future co-operators.

5.2 THE NATURE AND CONTEXT OF THE PROBLEMS

Agricultural marketing co-operatives in Tororo County operated on a season basis. The defunct ones in Tororo County fit the description of cotton marketing co-operatives. This is because all the co-operatives dealt in one crop i.e. cotton. Cotton is grown once in a year. The planting is done between July and August and the harvesting picking is done between December and February. This means then that the co-operative societies would be in business only between December of one to March of the subsequent year. For eight out of the twelve months in a year, the societies were without business. In 1991, three medium term objectives for co-operatives were identified by the NRM government. They included the need to increase the production of both cash and food crops (including the exportable) by co-operative members through improved infrastructure and better produce prices. The second objective was to improve credit facilities through the co-operative banks and other credit institutions. The third and perhaps most relevant to this study was the need to diversify co-operative activities into areas such as agro-processing. This objective three was made out of recognition of the fact that agricultural co-operatives by 1991 were unsustainable because of the dependence on a single cash crop, cotton for the case of those in Tororo County. All forms of co-operatives thrive in an atmosphere of honesty, transparency and accountability. Respondent(s) most common complaint was against society leaders/ managers involved in
falsification of weights to under value the members' cotton. They also complained of officials who made it a habit to deduct 5kgs from every bail of cotton to cover the weight of the bail. The officials never accepted these sacks to be weighted without the cotton to ascertain the exact weight of the sacks. There was another dimension to this dishonesty that was not revealed by the former members. This was in term revealed by respondents most of whom were former leaders. In this respect, members also devised tricks to increase the weight of their cotton. This included placing heaps of unsorted cotton, damp cotton or stones in the middle of each bail of cotton; sometimes these went unnoticed at the primary level. But the inspection team sometimes succeed in netting the culprits. This therefore means that this practice was more exploitative to the farmers than the society and the movement. In the long run it created a lot of acrimony between the members and leadership with the former claiming they were subjected to humiliating treatment by the time of weighing the cotton.

Favoritism was also reported by the respondent as a problem agricultural co-operative society lived with thereby compromising their ability to operate as a truly people owned organization. According to the respondent’s favoritism at the social level was practiced in form of according preferential treatment to clan mates, family, friends, members of a particular religion and political party. The practice is said to have ranged from selective payments, less rigorous inspection of their cotton and granting of soft loans. Related to the above was the allegation that some members practice witchcraft against other members. Most noted in this case was the members who felt sidelined in accessing the benefits of the society resorted to witchcraft”. These claims could not be verified because even the respondents themselves could not substantiate their allegations with evidence. What is clear, however, is that the belief of members that witchcraft was being practiced created a situation of mistrust among the members. One such incidence is in
Papakol primary co-operative society. The safe here out of negligence and disuse was covered up by an anthill. This was surely a natural phenomenon but was apparently interpreted by some members as witchcraft. When I visited the society, I noted that the safe was still covered by an anthill. What is important here is not to prove whether or not witchcraft was practiced but the fact that there was high member drop out because of the fear of witchcraft or prospects of it.

One problem discovered was absence of democratic management particularly at the primary society level. The purposely selected respondents who included mostly "former" chairpersons, unconsciously admitted to this absence in democracy in management. One such respondent strongly refused to be referred to as former chairperson claiming he still holds his position he was first elected to in 1966. Another claimed to be the legitimate chairperson; a position he was first elected to in 1975 so is another whose first debut mandate dates to 1971. These respondents and others of their position claimed their mandates was the directly from farmers/members but could not explain if such mandates were open ended. The selected correspondents who were mostly farmers/former members were of quite a different opinion. Of the respondents interviewed all pointed out that once elected, (sometimes selected into office) the committee members never asked for fresh mandates. Of these two positions the latter seems to be more plausible. It was difficult to imagine the circumstances under which, 13 out of 23 chairpersons of the 1970s still hold office to this day even with the many problems that surrounded the now defunct societies. That the farmers/members (through largely illiterate) could out of a real democratic process retain leaders (who were also largely illiterate) all that while is not sustainable.
At the co-operative organizational level, agricultural co-operatives in Tororo County suffered from a weak capital base. As already noted, co-operatives in Uganda in general were dependent on crop finance provided by government. On their own, the fees raised from membership fees and the little if any generated from the seasonal commissions paid by the ginneries and/or unions were insufficient. Other than these minimal revenues, the co-operatives generally had a weak and narrow capital base. Over dependency on government therefore made these Cooperatives more of a liability than an asset. In line with this Baur and Yamey noted that when cooperative societies enjoy substantial government support, their economic performance can’t be rationally assessed. This was a statement concerning comparatives in developing countries in general but depicted the true picture of the now defunct agricultural co-operatives in Tororo county. Okereke echoes the same position when he notes:

The question of profit for any production unit either in the short run or in the long run is of vital importance as an economic indicator of efficiency 10.

The summative effect of this arrangement was that the peasant/member lost out to other more powerful forces within the agricultural marketing arena. In the words of Nabudere;

As a form of organizing marketing and processing, although it played a progressive role in a bourgeois sense, the co-operatives could not eliminate peasant exploitation. At most; it only redounded to the benefit of the rich among them in its service to Finance capital.

Both Baur and Yamey and Nabudere’s observations are plausible and resonate perfectly with the situation of agricultural co-operatives in Tororo County.

The challenges that were posed to agricultural co-operatives in Tororo by liberalization were discussed earlier and so were the issues concerning political intervention and unprogressive co-operative legislation before the 1991 co-operative societies statute. (See chapter 3 and 4).
5.3 BENEFITS OF AGRICULTURAL MARKETING CO-OPERATIVES TO THE MEMBERS AND COMMUNITY.

There has been and continues to be an ongoing debate as regards the benefits or otherwise of agricultural marketing co-operatives. Prominent scholars like Nabudere are of the view that co-operatives particularly credit co-operative did not achieve the aims and objectives of the founders of the movement. He argues that far from economically empowering the peasant farmer, agricultural co-operatives only served to farther entrench the interest of the richer among the co-operators. (see Nabudere p 89).

Others like Banturaki writing with respect to co-operatives in Tanzania with relevance to Tororo County are of the view that the main aim of rural co-operatives since independence was the Socio-economic advancement of the rural individual person and the local community correctly observed that.

They were reckoned; too by the government to be suitable local organizations at the village level to efficiently promote small farmers with government aid to bring about rapid social change and economic development. The designated mission of rural co-operatives was to improve every aspect of the lives of the rural poor.

Opio Odongo is non-committal but overtly convinced that the claim that the agricultural co-operatives have promoted rural welfare may after all be an expression of vested interest. He is in a commission of enquiry to examine the authenticity of the claims that co-operatives transformed rural life. He observes:

Short of such an inquiry, the claim that co-operatives play a major role in the socio-economic development of the countryside would be a mere expression of vested interests in the extraction of surplus value from export agriculture rather than a genuine concern with the welfare needs of agricultural producer”. 

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The concerns of the above scholars like those of many others are genuine and the study actually revealed that the performance of marketing agricultural co-operatives in Tororo County was far from perfect. The question at hand then is did the co-operatives achieve nothing in the economic front? Was the economic efficiency criterion sufficient in assessing the performance of these organizations? The responses from former members interviewed vindicate their view points; a conclusion that these farmers organizations did not fare very well but that not all was lost.

Respondents observed that as members of the now dormant agricultural co-operatives societies, they enjoyed higher bargaining power than they did as individual small scale farmers before joining co-operatives or even after their collapse. For long banks and government found it safe to lend to society than an individual person of low income like peasant. Therefore an individual bargaining power was increased through membership in a co-operative society. Of course the loans secured in this way were not always used to the benefit of all the members. This is because of nepotism, favoritism, corruption and outright embezzlement. This not to deny the fact that there were a few success stories. There were isolated reports of members who though obtaining favors from co-operatives societies at the expense of others nonetheless made strides in the right direction.

Perhaps this should have been listed as the very first benefit of agricultural marketing co-operative to members. It is true that at the time of their collapse, agricultural co-operative represented neither the poorest sections of the population nor the least endowed areas in Tororo county. This should never serve however to preclude their contribution in helping some people to participate in and benefit from the colonial and post-colonial economic dispensation in Uganda. At time of their introduction, agricultural co-operatives gave a large number of people in Tororo
county the much needed leverage to integrate into the main stream of economic life. The movement was not without difficulties but created a number of successful (by rural standards) farmers, home-owners and entrepreneurs and other co-operators who confess to being unable to link their improved lives to anything else but agricultural co-operatives. 16

Membership in co-operatives societies enhanced the credit- worthiness of individual peasants. As noted earlier, individual farmers of low income in Tororo county possessed low bargaining power. In the same light, these individual farmers had very limited, if any credit worthiness. The government, banks and individual lenders often shunned lending to such farmers for lack of collateral. Members of the defunct agricultural societies observed that their membership in agricultural co-operatives societies enabled them to get cash advances against their deliveries of cotton for such urgent needs as school fees for their children and relatives, medical bills and funeral expenses for relatives and friends. One may ask that why then are there may critics who tend to suggest that agricultural co-operatives in Tororo county and elsewhere did not enhance members economic welfare? The answer is that such critics tended to look at the immediate income that accrued to the members and probably chose to ignore facilities like cash advance to members that went into necessities like education and health which bear an indirect economic tag.

Former co-operators expressed some level of satisfaction regarding the extension services provided by the farmer agricultural co-operatives movement to its membership. Looking back with nostalgia they fondly reminisce quality cotton seeds supplied by the primary societies during the planting season. Equally noted were sensitization workshops organized by the south Budeki co-operative union to equip members with skills in modern crop husbandry and how to maximize land use. The members acting in a true African spirit did not keep the advice to
themselves but shared it with even some nonmembers of the co-operatives movement. Whereas it is difficult to quantify such services in economic financial terms, a logical conclusion can be drawn that the members who heeded such advice realized increased and better quality yields and in the same measure translated into better economic returns.

It has been noted several times that the membership and leadership of former agricultural marketing co-operatives in Tororo county lacked formal education but somehow the movement survived from the 1950's up to the first half of the 1990's. How this was made possible? This question has already been partly answered i.e. the south Bukedi co-operatives Union organized workshops for the leadership and leadership at primary society level. Short seminars, sometimes lasting just one day were organized to address the above challenge. Elementary skills in book-keeping enabled leaders with very little or no formal education to keep an exact record of the money that was spent or received by the primary society. This practice also included skills in the management of the other forms of records that were vital for the planning purposes and day to day running of the affairs of the society. A sizeable number of former committee chairpersons gave an impression that they learnt good lessons in record keeping because some are still in possession of some important records of past transactions. The most remarkable among them is the 77 year old Omonding of the Papakol Primary Growers Society who has records up to 1995 when his society last brought farmers cotton 18. A conclusion can be reached here that agricultural co-operatives in Tororo County may not have fared very well economically but judging by other criteria like education to the members and leadership, the movement can be credited with having benefited its members and the community. The principle objectives of agricultural co-operatives in Tororo County, like elsewhere in Uganda was to improve members' incomes. However there were benefits that accrued members consciously or unconsciously and these falls outside the scope of income welfare. Respondents recounted what they referred to as the good old days of
co-operatives. They recall the end of year's parties where their chairperson served them sumptuous meals together with 'ajono' (a local brew made of millet). Challenged that this was not a core activity/ services of the co-operative movement they retorted that the African culture which emphasized socialization was attained in such occasions. They noted that society among the Iteso in Tororo before the colonial era portrayed the self help principle whereby members of a kinship or neighborhood came together for purpose of performing certain task in rotation from one member to another depending on their need. This practice was known as "ekitai". This pooling together of labour resources produced a spirit of unity, unlike today where individualism rules the day.

5.4 CONCLUSION

Co-operatives have been subjected to scatching criticisms. Some of these were warranted, others not. It suffices to note that they were not a total failure. Those who describe them as a total failure judged them by the economic efficiency criteria only. Other criteria like promotion of education, creditworthiness, bargaining power and socialization point to the fact that weaknesses aside, there cannot be an immediate substitute for co-operatives.
ENDNOTES

1. Interview with Mr. Opolot Egos (noted earlier).

2. Opio JMA (ed), Opct, P. 18

3. Interview with Ms. Asio Pulgeria 67 years, 27/03/2010.

4. Interview with Mr. Omamera Asanasio 64 years, 27/03/2010. He is the former chairman of Kalachai Co-operative Society.

5. Interview with Mr. Emomer Fulgensio 61 years, 6/03/2010.

6. Interview with Mr. Omoding John (noted earlier).

7. Interview with Mr. Oitamong (noted earlier).

8. Interview with Mr. Omaset Nicholas, 61 years, 3/04/2010.

The Economics of Underdeveloped Countries,
London: P.149.

10. Okoro Okereke, Opct, P. 110


14. Interview with Ms. Amella Dorosa 58 years.
a. She informed me that late husband Okumu Leonard was able to buy an ox-plough and their first bicycle in 1966 out of such a loan. He went on to explain that out of the savings from hiring out the ox-plough to the community, they were able to build their first permanent house.

15. Interview with Mr. Emelait Vincent (noted earlier). He too attributed his first four bedroomed house to agricultural Co-operatives.
16. Interview with Mr. Owerege Anatoli, 67 years, 10-04-2010.
a. He told me that he attributed his first active membership and participation in Agricultural Marketing Co-operatives.

17. Interview with Ms. Ataparachu Mercella, 65 years, 10-04-2010.
a. She fondly remembers how she used not to move long distances in search for quality cotton seeds for planting. She added that these seeds were free unlike today.

18. Interview with Mze Omading John (noted earlier).

19. Interview with Mr. Omaraga Alonsio, 60 years, 17/04/2010.
CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 INTRODUCTION

As noted earlier, agriculture marketing co-operatives began their downward slide particularly during the introduction of the second IMF structural Adjustment Programme in the second half of the 1980s. By 1991 most primary societies in Tororo County were out of business. The major causes of this downward trend were explained earlier (see chapters 3 and 4). From then onwards, the debate on the need to rejuvenate the government picked up pace, with some members but mostly the former leadership and members of opposition political parties calling for the revival of agricultural co-operatives. One may argue and quite rightly so that those who have been at the fore front of the crusade for the revival of these farmers’ organizations harbored vested interests. However it is evident from the response of most respondents that regardless of the weakness and contradictions that surrounded the movement, they were better off with such co-operatives than with no co-operatives at all. That being the case, a conclusion can be drawn that the debate to revamp the movement is real.

The above conclusion is drawn from the responses from the study but also statistics from the national level point to the fact that transformation can only be realized when the poor masses are economically empowered in the decision-making in matters that affect them. Okereke for instance rightly comments thus:

That there has been and could still be economic growth in Uganda without the co-operatives is not in dispute. A high trend in economic growth could possibly be observed without co-operatives through for example a rise in commodity prices or an increase in investment. But it is a fact that the co-operatives have made some contribution towards economic growth through their various activities. In 1965 for instance, their turnover in cotton and
coffee was about 50% of the country's total and it raised to about 53% the following year’.
Besides, 85 percent of Ugandans live in rural areas. This population is made up of 81 percent engaged in agricultural work while the rest are engaged in either elementary occupation at 7.6 percent or are low level government workers at 4.6 percent while craft workers and technicians constitute 3.4 percent and 2.4 percent respectively', these statistics reveal that once the rural population is empowered, the economy can develop more meaningfully i.e. by engaging the majority of the population that lives in the rural areas. Rural Masses in Tororo County already have knowledge on the concept of co-operatives and would find it noble to work through them. Co-operatives also aggregate the market power of people who on their own could achieve little or nothing and in so doing provide ways out of poverty and powerlessness. All in all, around the world co-operatives continue to play a fundamental role in agricultural development. In fact over 50% of the world agricultural production is marketed through co-operatives'. The observations above all point to the fact that agricultural co-operatives played an important role in the economy of Tororo County and continue to play a critical role in other parts of Uganda and the world. Given the above justifications therefore, we conclude that the demand by the people of Tororo County for the revival of agricultural co-operatives is justified. Caution must however be sounded here that the future co-operatives must steer clear of certain misdeeds committed by the former ones. These range from the policy framework, ideology and orientation and international dynamics.

At policy level, such co-operatives will fall under the framework of the 1991 co-operatives societies' statute. Compared to the 1970 co-operative societies Act, the 1991 statute provides a more enabling environment for the co-operatives to realize their avowed principles of mutual self (see the co-operatives societies statute, 1991, part VI). As provided in the statute, politics and political party ideology should be kept out of the new co-operatives to empower members to
truly own the movement regardless of their political affiliations. Members tend to be more committed when they realize the organization is truly theirs. This will go a long way into reducing the drop outs that characterized former co-operatives.

Internally, education for the membership should precede any attempt to rejuvenate agricultural co-operatives. The now defunct co-operatives were largely composed of members and management committees with very limited, if any formal education. While the committee members could not make economically sound and viable decisions, the members were also compromised in their capacity to play the oversight role over the management committees and paid role employees of the societies. Education will go a long way to mitigate problems associated with abuse of committee powers and equip members to efficiently supervise the management committees.

Because mostly only members could benefit from the services of the movement, former agricultural marketing co-operatives were sometimes accused of promoting selective development. For instance the landless and those who possessed uneconomic units of land were not able to join co-operatives. In that way, the now defunct movement has been blamed, quite rightly so for having not benefited the poorest of the poor in Tororo county. Advice is an implied here that sustained effort must be made to have a more open door policy in the admission of members so that even those individuals who do not produce crops can be involved in other activities such as providing labour to those who need it in their farms, ginneries, factories etc.

In relation to the above, efforts should be made to diversify the activities of agricultural co-operatives in Tororo county. As noted earlier, one of the causes of the collapse of the former agricultural co-operatives in Tororo County was the sole-dependence on cotton whose output
locally and price internationally kept falling. The future co-operatives In Tororo County therefore must diversify into value addition and agro processing. This would reduce the margin of profit lost to ginneries and unions and in a way provide the badly needed forward and backward linkages that for long eluded former co-operatives.

An illustration can be made to demonstrate the importance of value addition and forward and backward linkages. There were companies in Eldoret, Kenya interested in local produce particularly groundnuts but often expressed their reservations of having to deal with individuals producers or farmers associations that did not have legal standing. Besides, The Eldoret produce dealers wanted the groundnuts certified by the Uganda Bureau of Standards. This was a tall order for the producers of ground nuts in Tororo County. The implication for future co-operatives is that they will have to cast their net beyond producing and selling cotton to include practices like quality assurance to enable them remain relevant and access market beyond Uganda.

As noted earlier, former agricultural co-operatives also concerned their efforts in fighting income poverty among their members. This was a noble cause but made them vulnerable to critics who have tended to argue that these co-operatives ignored other equally critical areas like health, education, the environment, and climate change and gender issues. These critics are actually right. In order to counter the challenges of rural transformation, agricultural co-operatives should be integrated with other rural interventions and development programmes. For instance it would be totally irrational for agricultural co-operatives not to involve themselves in the food security crusade among its members and cling exclusively to fighting income poverty or to leave the fight against HIV/AIDS among the members and management to other NGOs.
The other dimension that future agricultural co-operatives should look into is the issue of women and youth involvement into their mainstream activities. Women by far constitute the largest proportion of agricultural labour force in Tororo county. Yet as mentioned earlier, they were not proportionately represented in the former co-operatives both at leadership and membership levels. The youth were not any different.

It is however important to note here that co-operatives in Tororo county were not totally detached from the wider economic, political and social life of Uganda. Therefore the issues of creating an enabling environment for women and youth enrollment in co-operatives in Tororo County should go beyond the by-laws. For instance; there must be women friendly laws at the national level. The Domestic Relations Bill CD.R.B) should be expedited and enacted into law. These would enable women achieve decision-making power within the household and have access to title deeds. Such interventions would go a long way into making future co-operatives All-inclusive and economically viable, to borrow the words of Franz Fanon as quoted by Tema and Swai;

Fanon said that the African petty bourgeoisies are a bankrupt lot who are committed to turning Africa, its culture and its wealth into a desert where nothing will grow’. It is envisaged that the above interventions will save co-operatives and the economy of Tororo County from fitting into Fanon’s description.

6.1 CONCLUSION

On October, 16 1991, the ministry of finance planning and economic development through its chief Economist Made the following remarks regarding the co-operatives movement in Uganda in general.

The co-operative movement in this country should be one that is economically viable, self sustaining, structurally and economically integrated from grassroots to the national level and with
maximization of benefits to members as its main goal. In order to attain this goal, there is need to build management and production capabilities in co-operatives enterprises and organizations."

This position was as relevant to agricultural co-operatives in Tororo County then as it is to future ones. A concerted departure ought to be made away from the past way of doing things if truly member - owned and economically viable agricultural co-operatives are to be realized.
ENDNOTES


4. J.M.A Opio (Ed), Opit P. 19
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The Peasants Charter, the Declaration of Principles and Programme of Action of the World Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development, 1 z° -zo° July, 1979, Rome- Italy.

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Opio Odongo, JMA, 1987, "The Agricultural Co-operative Movement and the Emasculation of
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BOOKS


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**NEWSPAPERS**

The Daily Monitor, Friday may 28, 2010.
APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION 1
THE COLONIA ERA

1. What is your name:.................................................................

2. What was the attitude of the colonial government towards cooperatives in the early period of colonial rule.................................................................

3. Did the above attitude change?.................if so, when.............................

4. Name any two factors that prompted African farmers to form or join agricultural cooperatives.................................................................

5. Were there any special interest groups the colonial government sought to protect?

6. Would you argue that cooperatives met the objectives of the members in the colonial period?.................................................................

7. If yes, how and when?............................if no, how and why?......................

SECTION 2
THE OBOTE 1 REGIME

8. What was the difference in attitude towards cooperatives between the colonial government and the Obote 1?.................................................................

9. Was there patronage towards cooperatives during Obote 1 rule?.................................................................

10. How were the office bearers determined?.................................................................

11. Was there any preference for tribe, religion or political affiliation?.................................................................

12. How did agricultural cooperatives fare during the Obote 1 regime?.................................................................
SECTION C
THE IDI AMIN REGIME

13. What was the attitude of the Amin Regime to cooperatives?

14. Did the expulsion of Asians have any impact on agricultural cooperatives?

15. Was the impact above positive or negative. Briefly explain.

16. What form did “magendo: take in Tororo county?

17. How did “Magendo” affect cooperatives in Tororo?

18. How did the cooperatives fare in Tororo county during Amin regime?

19. Did Tororo county’s proximity to Kenya affect the performance of cooperatives?

20. How do you compare the promptness in paying farmers during the Obote 1’s and Amin regime?

SECTION D
THE NRM REGIME (THE FIRST FIVE YEARS)

21. How do you compare the attitude of the Obote regime with that of NRM on cooperatives?

22. What effects did the trade liberalization policy embraced by the NRM have on Cooperatives in Tororo county?

23. Would you call for the revival of agricultural cooperatives in Tororo county and Uganda in General? Briefly explain the reason for your answer in (23) above?

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sub County/Place of residence of Interviewee</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emelait Vincent</td>
<td>73 Yrs</td>
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<td>Omoding John</td>
<td>77 Yrs</td>
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<td>Opolot Egos</td>
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<td>Kampala</td>
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<td>Emojong Constant</td>
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<td>Atabong Scolastica</td>
<td>69 Yrs</td>
<td>Molo</td>
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<td>Oitamong Clement</td>
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<td>Asio Pulgeria</td>
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<td>Emomer Fulgensio</td>
<td>67 Yrs</td>
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<td>Emodo Patris</td>
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<td>Mukuju</td>
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<tr>
<td>Name</td>
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<td>Location</td>
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<td>Oketcho Pilipo</td>
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