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ECONOMIC CHANGE IN SAKWA : 1850-1962

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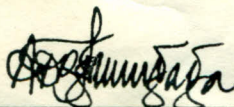
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## ABSTRACT.

This is a study of economic change in Sakwa. It examines Sakwa's pre-colonial system of production and analyses their encounter with the capitalist mode of production introduced through colonialism. The basic theoretical concepts employed in the study are; commercialization, innovation, diversification, adaptation and articulation. They are central to the understanding of the dynamics of change because history being a dialectical process, change that occurs therein is engendered by the contradictions and internal tensions prevalent within a given historical situation.

Within the environment of the pre-colonial Sakwa society, contradictions and tensions that took place contributed in determining the direction of new consciousness thus, leading to technological development as well as the development of novel means of material appropriation and existence. We hence underscore the role of the environment in the evolution of change and argue that it provided the engine that set the Sakwa's pre-colonial economies into vibrant and dynamic entities featuring a thorough-going pace of change at the levels of commercialization, innovation, diversification and adaptation.

The imperialist subjugation of Sakwa, and the systematic articulation of local economies with the capitalist economy, led to marked distortions both within the forms and relations of production. Notable forces and agencies of articulation were education, trade, the



oppressive execution and operationalization of colonial policy through local administrative officials whose co-option put them as facilitators of economic exploitation and material expropriation. They were to execute policies designed by the colonialists upon which capitalist economy was to be established.

Taxation was introduced to generate capital to help in running the administration and to support the capitalist economic undertakings. Further assaults on the indigenous economy by the colonial state lay in the development of wage labour, the introduction of commodity production and the manipulation of market forces to serve the needs of capitalism. These measures distorted the domestic forms of production which had hitherto existed. The argument that therefore goes is that, the process of articulation between the indigenous Sakwa economies and the capitalist one was marked by changes which were inhibitive to the pre-colonial (indigenous) production forms. It precipitated economic disequilibrium between the two economies and also contributed in amplifying the pre-existing inequalities that in effect led to distinctive social differentiation in the society.

From the foregoing, it is important to note that change was an aspect of both the pre-colonial as well as the colonial society of Sakwa. The differences in the processes of change during the two periods should, however, be understood from the fact that, in the later case, changes took place with a capitalist orientation and had no reflections on the Kinship orientation which had

characterised the former. While under the capitalist system the primary focus in production was on profit maximization, under the kinship (indigenous) system, production was focused on satisfying the basic needs. Despite its aberrant tendencies, the contribution of colonial economy towards positive change cannot be gainsaid. It brought forth new tools and new techniques of production, new crops and new market systems based on monetarised exchange modes.